

State Board Letter

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LWVMD

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LWVMD Calendar

- Dec**
 - 10 Human Rights Day
 - 11 Maryland Charity Campaign ends
- Jan**
 - 1 New Year's Day
 - 5 LWVMD advocacy training on the How to Be an Advocate, part 3 virtual, 3pm
 - 10 MD General Assembly begins
 - 15 Martin Luther King, Jr., Day
 - 27 LWVMD Winter Workshop virtual, 9:00am - 12:30pm
- Feb**
 - 1-29 African American history month
 - 14 LWV's 104th birthday



The SBL is a monthly LWVMD publication that seeks to strengthen understanding and collaboration between the Board and local Leagues statewide

President's Message

WE'RE BUSY, BUSY, BUSY IN 2024

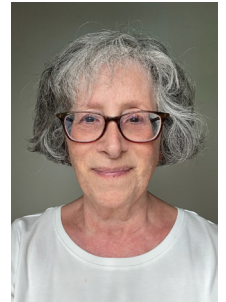
As the calendar turns to 2024, I'm excited about the many activities LWVMD will be taking on. So find your interest, roll up your sleeves and dig in. There's lots of opportunities to get involved!

- **January:** Winter Workshop will be held on January 27 at 9:00 a.m., virtually. The topic is disinformation, and as described elsewhere in this newsletter, we have some great speakers lined up. Be sure to attend! Also this month, our action teams are getting in gear for another lively legislative session that starts on January 10. LWVMD's advocacy work is highly respected and that's due to our member advocates. Work on the issues that matter most to you.
- **February:** Get involved in helping your League prepare its Voters' Guide. This may include helping contact candidates, getting information entered, or distributing print copies and educating voters. The information forms the basis for both the print voters guides as well as online access through Vote411.org. And don't forget to celebrate LWV's 104th birthday on February 14. How many other civic organizations have been around for that long?
- **March:** Planning is underway for a workshop on artificial intelligence. It is a complicated topic with many different aspects to it,

including how it may affect elections. No date has been set yet, but we're looking at sometime in March.

- **April:** Go to colleges, community events, shopping malls, religious and civic organizations—anywhere and everywhere—to let them know about the Voters Guide and Vote411 for trusted, nonpartisan election information. You can do this with the League and also individually by talking with friends, family and neighbors. Research shows that personal communication is the strongest influence on whether someone votes.
- **May:** Primary election day is May 14 and early voting goes from May 2-9. When you talk with voters, be sure to explain that Maryland conducts a "closed" primary.
- **June:** LWVMD Council will be held in June. Also, LWVUS National Convention will be held June 27-30 in Washington DC. More information will be coming out on both.

At the time you're reading this, we're deep into the holiday season. I wish everybody a restful, joyful and peaceful holiday. I look forward to working with everyone in 2024!



Linda Kohn, LWVMD President

State Board Meeting Highlights

The LWVMD board thanks all of its members who represent the League on coalitions around the state in areas of education, transportation, police accountability, and redistricting. A full list of the coalitions of which the LWVMD is a part, visit our [coalitions](#) webpage.

Stacey Morrison, SBL editor

Events

The LWVMD Winter Workshop is just under two months away:

LWVMD Winter Workshop
Saturday, January 27, 2024
9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

virtual

The agenda for the workshop is starting to take shape and promises to be a great one! The theme for the meeting will be disinformation and how to respond to it. As we enter into the 2024 elections, disinformation has not diminished from prior elections. If anything, it is getting more rampant and more sophisticated in its messaging.

The LWVMD is very lucky to have two significant speakers confirmed. Jared DeMarinis has been with the [Maryland State Board of Elections](#) for 18 years and in September 2023 became the State Administrator. He has expressed his concerns with misinformation reaching the point where it affects the integrity of the electoral process. In addition, [Claire Wardle, Ph.D.](#), will join the meeting. She is co-founder and co-director of the [Information Futures Lab](#) and a professor at Brown University. She is a leader in the field of misinformation, verification and user-generated content—or as she calls it, “information pollution.”

Mark your calendar now so you don't miss this workshop!
Registration information is forthcoming.

LWVMD Winter Workshop: Focus on Disinformation



Advocacy Training Webinar



The LWVMD Action Team's final advocate training webinar is only a month away:

How to be a LWVMD Advocate, part 2
Friday, January 5
3:00 p.m.
virtual

In this session, advocate volunteers will be provided further guidance about what to expect, have questions answered, and be given a review of the resources that are available. As noted in the 2024 LWVMD Legislative Priorities article on page 4, there are several Issue Advocacy Teams formed and ready to advocate. If you would like to be part of LWVMD's advocacy effort, please contact co-chairs JC Hooker at jchooker@lwvmd.org or Nancy Soreng at nsoreng@lwvmd.org.

Committees

2024 LWVMD Legislative Priorities

All local Leagues and all members were invited to fill out a survey to indicate the issue areas that they would most like to see LWVMD address in the upcoming General Assembly session. They were advised that the Action Team would make a recommendation to the board about their top priorities for legislative action. The recommendation about our priorities would be based on feedback from the priorities survey, the availability of volunteers to work on those issues, the likelihood that the issue will come before the General Assembly and overall capacity.

The Action team analyzed the feedback from the 8 local League boards and 60 League members that responded to the survey. The graphic below shows the issues that most often were listed as a top priority for LWVMD advocacy. These are the priorities that the Board adopted.

A survey will be sent to all who registered for one or both of the advocacy webinars to determine who might be willing to work on an Issue Advocacy Team. We already have Issue Advocacy Team leaders for education, elections, administration of justice, meeting basic needs, transportation, and the environment. These team leaders will work with their teams to decide which actual bills to work on. Team leaders will reach out to those who have showed an interest in their issue area.

A final briefing for our teams will take place on January 5th at 3:00 p.m.

**League of Women
Voters of Maryland**
2024 Legislative Priorities



Making Democracy Work

- Protecting Voting Rights
- Local Election Accountability & Reform
- Enhancing Transparency and Public Access

Social & Economic Justice

- Promoting Affordable Housing
- Equity & Accountability in Education
- Expanding Behavioral Health Services
- Equity in Criminal Justice
- Juvenile Justice Reform

Protecting the Environment

- Reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions
- Advancing the renewable energy transition
- Promoting Environmental Justice

LWVMD.ORG

Committees

As we look to 2024, we have a unique opportunity before us - to actively shape the future of the League of Women Voters (LWV). This opportunity revolves around the program planning process for our upcoming biennial convention, and it's an endeavor that calls for the participation of every single member. Program planning is more than just a routine exercise; it's a pivotal moment where we collectively determine the LWV's agenda and priorities for the next two years.

Your Voice Counts: Regardless of your role in the League, your voice matters. As members, your insights and perspectives are invaluable in ensuring that our organization remains relevant and responsive to the pressing issues of our time.

Empowerment Through Education: This process is designed to engage us in discussions about vital civic issues and provide education about the LWV's advocacy positions. It's an opportunity for every member to become well-informed about the positions we advocate for.

Program Planning for 2024-2026



The Process in Brief

Phase 1 - Reviewing Existing LWVUS Positions: We take a closer look at our current positions. This should begin soon to allow members of each local League to contribute to the discussion. Each League (as a unit) is invited to submit a survey to LWVUS by March 10, 2024.

Phase 2 - Proposing New Positions: This is where local and state Leagues have the chance to propose entirely new positions based on study and consensus within our Leagues. Be on the lookout in the new year for opportunities to learn more from other Leagues across the country.

Phase 3 - Convention: Delegates from local and state LWV chapters will gather at the biennial Convention in Washington, D.C., to discuss and vote on positions. Your involvement in this democratic process is vital. Save the date: June 27 - June 30.

Your active engagement in the program planning process is an opportunity to contribute to the LWV's vitality and impact. Regardless of whether you serve on the board or are a dedicated member, your participation is essential in maintaining our legacy of promoting democracy and informed decision-making.

If you're eager to dive deeper into the process, you can find details and links in this [program planning information sheet](#). If you have questions or need more information, don't hesitate to reach out to Genie Massey at gmassey@lwvmd.org.

Let's embrace this moment and work together to collectively shape the future of the League of Women Voters.

Genie Massey, LWVMD Vice President

Committees

The 2023 [National Student Vote Summit](#), a dynamic gathering of #StudentVote leaders and experts from across the country, was an inspiring event.

The [Students Learn Students Vote](#) (SLSV) Coalition is the largest nonpartisan network in the U.S. dedicated to increasing college student voter participation. They connect campuses, nonprofits, students, and leaders, focusing on removing barriers and ensuring access to elections. Their strategy involves integrating voter engagement into campus culture, emphasizing racial justice, and making democracy engaging and fun.

During the opening plenary, we delved into the power and strategy behind successful coalitions, exploring how they can be a launchpad for our movement to grow the student vote in 2024 and beyond.

The breakout sessions were a treasure trove of knowledge and practical insights. From building inclusive campus voting coalitions to asking every student to engage students in the often-overlooked primary elections, and from voter ID laws' impact on students to fostering habits of civic participation through the [Ask Every Student \(AES\) Toolkit](#), there was a wealth of expertise shared.

Communications strategies aimed at impacting student voters in 2024 were also discussed, recognizing the need to empower students to take ownership of their democracy. The power of collaboration between nonprofits and college campuses was emphasized, highlighting how this partnership can elevate the campus experience and foster robust civic engagement.

The summit also celebrated the importance of making democracy fun and celebratory, especially on college campuses, by integrating culturally relevant events into democratic engagement efforts.

SLSV Talks provided brief but insightful presentations on various topics, shedding light on critical issues requiring action and attention in the year ahead.

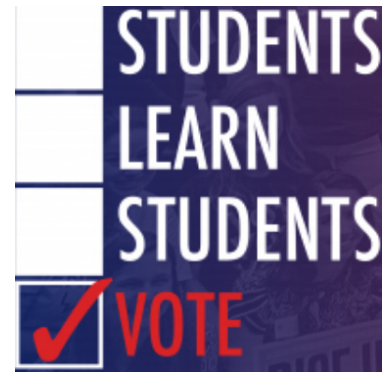
In a politically polarized climate, the plenary on leading through nonpartisanship emphasized the strength of nonpartisanship and the challenges it presents. Campus leaders and leaders of national civic engagement organizations engaged in an unscripted conversation on championing nonpartisan student voter engagement and supporting equitable efforts during the 2024 election season.

The summit was not just about learning; it was also about networking and building connections. Open networking hours allowed attendees to exchange information and ideas, fostering a sense of community and collaboration.

The event ended with discussions on defining goals for 2024, recognizing the growth and impact of the #StudentVote movement, and the importance of continuing to make voting easy and accessible for students.

In summary, the 2023 National Student Vote Summit was a transformative gathering that ignited enthusiasm, shared expertise, and fostered collaboration among those dedicated to empowering student voters and defending democracy.

SLSV National Student Vote Summit



*Genie Massey, LWVMD Vice President, and
Jacquelyn Slade, LWV Carroll County Co-President*