

State Board Letter

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LWVMD

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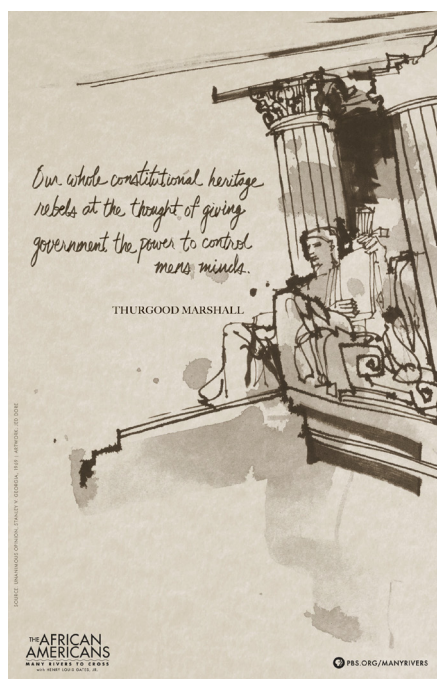
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LWVMD Calendar

- Feb**
- 1-29 African American History Month
 - 14 LWV's 104th birthday
 - 19 ERA Rally
Annapolis MD Lawyers Mall, 1-2pm
 - 26 LWVMD Legislative Day
virtual, 9:00am-12:30pm
- Mar**
- 1-31 Women's History Month
 - 4 LWVMD Lobby Night
Annapolis, time TBD
 - 8 International Women's Day
 - 16 Artificial Intelligence Workshop
virtual, 9:30am
 - 31 International Transgender Day of
Visibility
- Apr**
- 1-30 Arab American Heritage Month



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

President's Message

I HAVE A COMPLAINT

Anybody who knows me has heard my rants about primary elections. While all elections are important, I think voters often underestimate the importance of the primary elections. According to data from the State Board of Elections, overall state turnout in 2022 was 27%, meaning that only about one-quarter of voters are determining the outcome. Counties varied in their turnout, ranging from a high of 42% in Talbot County to a low of 21% in Cecil County. Maybe turnout is higher in years with a presidential election? A bit. In the 2020 primary, overall turnout was 42%, with a high of 48% in Baltimore City and a low of 34% in Caroline County. These figures vary for different elections depending on the issues and candidates on the ballot. Go to the [State Board of Elections](#) to see the turnout trends for your own county.

Although LWVMD supports an open primary, Maryland conducts a "closed primary" meaning that voters must generally be registered with either the Democratic or Republican Party in

order to vote. However, all voters may vote in nonpartisan primary elections, such as those for school boards. Regardless of the rules, we want to see every voter turnout for every election.

I urge you to talk to anybody and everybody you know—or even don't know-- about the importance of the primary, what a closed election means for them and tell them about [Vote411.org](#) as a trusted source for nonpartisan election information. I've never talked to anybody, of any age, who hasn't welcomed nonpartisan information from the League or become enthused about Vote411.org when they checked it out. Thank you all for the hard work that has been done and will be done throughout 2024 for the voters of Maryland. You make a difference.



Linda Kohn, LWVMD President

State Board Meeting Highlights

LWVMD signed on to a letter with the [MD National Organization of Women](#) (NOW) that will be sent to federal members of Congress encouraging them to publish the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) as the last amendment to the constitution.

LWVMD received 2 seed-money grants from LWVUS to be used for voter service outreach for incarcerated voters and new citizen voters.

LWVMD is now a member of the [Tax Credits for Maryland Families coalition](#), a group of more than 20 organizations committed to educating policymakers and the public about the state's working family tax credits, the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) (EITC) and [Child Tax Credit](#) (CTC).

Stacey Morrison, SBL editor

Events

Hold the following date for a FANTASTIC workshop:

Saturday, March 16, 2024
9:30 a.m.

The [LWV of Montgomery County](#) and LWV of Maryland will be co-hosting a workshop on election threats and artificial intelligence. Due to the amazing efforts of Jackie Coolidge (LWVMC), we have secured [Dr. Danielle Allen](#) as a speaker. Dr. Allen is a nationally recognized speaker on threats to elections and reviving democracy. She is the James Bryant Conant University Professor at Harvard University and Director of the [Allen Lab for Democracy Renovation](#) at Harvard. She is also a seasoned nonprofit leader, democracy advocate, tech ethicist, and author. We are working to secure an additional speaker to delve deeper into the specific election threats from artificial intelligence. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

Hold the Date: Artificial Intelligence & Election Threats

Linda Kohn, LWVMD President

Equal Rights Amendment Rally

Join representatives from the [Women's Legislators of Maryland](#) and [Maryland National Organization of Women \(NOW\)](#) for a rally in support of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA):

Monday, February 19, 2024
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Annapolis MD Lawyers Mall

Organizers anticipate a variety of speakers from the national and state public figures to attend the rally. Click [here](#) to RSVP for this event and add your voice to the call for the passage of an amendment long overdue.



Committees

LWVMD Partners with the Maryland Chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) and the Maryland chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. are gearing up for the 2024 election season. This election season, the Delta chapters around the state will be working with LWVMD and local Leagues in their respective areas to conduct voter registrations, use social media to educate prospective voters across the state, and encourage participation in election protection. Members of both organizations will also be encouraged to communicate regularly with its members. Both organizations recognize the importance of strong citizen participation in elections and have a commitment to maintaining a nonpartisan approach to any communications and outreach.

Both organizations will be encouraged to participate in some or all of the following activities and we hope local Leagues will find ways they can participate!

- **Voter Registration.** There are 10 Delta chapters at Maryland colleges and universities and 15 non-collegiate chapters across the state. Delta chapters and LWVMD, and local Leagues are encouraged to work together to conduct a voter registration event leading up to the primary election.
- **Social Media Campaign.** The League (with local Leagues) and Delta will work together to post weekly, pre-planned social media messages to educate and encourage voter participation.
- **Cross-posting Between Organizations.** Both organizations will commit to re-posting the other's social media messaging to amplify voter participation.
- **Distribution of Voters' Guides.** For local Leagues that print Voters' Guides, LWVMD and those local Leagues can work with the local Delta chapter to help distribute guides within the community, potentially reaching additional voters.
- **Election Protection.** Members of both organizations will be encouraged to participate in election protection training and during the election.

The League of Women Voters of Maryland is excited to join with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. to ensure Maryland voters are registered, informed, and participate in the upcoming elections.

Nicole Drew, LWVMD Board Director



Committees

LWVMD is convening 2 committees, and while each has at least one board member on it, we would love to see some general members participate. These are both “temporary” committees that should only last a few months.

Council Planning Committee

The first is on planning for Council that is scheduled for **June 1**. Unlike convention, council is “usually” smaller and shorter, but we have flexibility to design it as we like. It covers League business (like budget approval) but it would be nice to also include some thought-provoking sessions to spice it up. We would like some participants from local leagues to help us plan it. Your commitment will end when Council ends!

Get to the Polls Fun Run Committee

The second committee is to help plan a Get to the Polls Fun Run. In 2022, we did a “Get to the Polls” fundraiser where members obtained donations for walking/running/cycling up to 102 miles (LWV’s anniversary then). It was a fun way to raise some dollars for the League and get some wider communications. We’re aiming for a fun run, maybe around Annapolis (TBD). We could really use some help from members who are good at event planning and promotional activities or want to learn about organizing something like this to translate locally. It will be an awesome way to call attention to the League and our elections work.

No experience is needed and you will not be on your own for either of these. Please consider helping us out. Contact Linda Kohn at lkohn@lwvmd.org or Nikki Tyree at ntyree@lwvmd.org. Thank you!

Linda Kohn, LWVMD President

**Help Needed
for 2 Short
– but
Important –
Committees**

