

State Board Letter

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LWVMD

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LWVMD Calendar

- Apr** 1-30 Arab American Heritage Month
~1 Vote411.org goes live
22 LWVMD Day on Capitol Hill
virtual, 10am-4pm
- May** 1-31 Asian American and Pacific Islander
Heritage Month
1-31 Jewish American Heritage Month
27 Memorial Day
- June** 1-30 LGBTQ+ Pride Month
1 LWVMD Council
9am - 12:30pm, virtual
19 Juneteenth
26 LWVMD's Making Democracy Work
Breakfast - Celebrating Democracy
in Maryland
morning time TBD, Annapolis
28-30 LWVUS Convention
Washington, D.C., and virtual

Lobby Day on Capitol Hill

Lobby Day on Capital Hill will be held:

Monday, April 22, 2024
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
virtual



This is a chance to engage with Maryland's U.S. Senators and Representatives in Congress or their knowledgeable staff members. The featured topic will be voting rights, focusing on the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. Click [here](#) to register for this event.

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

President's Message

LWVUS IS ON A TRANSFORMATIONAL JOURNEY

LWVUS reached its 100th anniversary in 2020. Even before then, extensive work was happening on how to build for the next century. The result is a "Transformation Journey" that aims to build a League into an organization that is "renewed, larger, more unified and more impactful."

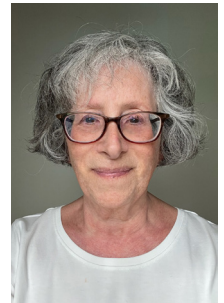
The plans have several components. The League's DEI policy was formalized in the bylaws so it is central to the organization. Member Rights and Responsibilities were written to explain the benefits and expectations of membership, and League Rights and Responsibilities were written to explain what it means for a League to be affiliated with LWV.

A forthcoming change that will affect every League member is a change in the membership system. The goal is to eliminate financial barriers to participation and simplify the mechanics of joining. Starting in January 2025, there will be a unified membership dues structure that will set one dues model for LWV Leagues across the country. No matter where someone lives, they will join through a single "button" on the website. There will be a standard dues amount with a

"pay what you can" option. Lifetime members will continue to have their dues waived. The aim is that by making it easy to join LWV and having a sliding dues scale, we will bring in more members and a more diverse membership.

Changes of this magnitude are never easy. The LWMVD board and the Online Services Committee are closely tracking this. As LWVMD continues to learn more about the process, we will share information in this newsletter and also with local League presidents. We also plan to include this as one part of the agenda for the upcoming virtual Council meeting on Saturday, June 1, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (see article on page 3).

I am excited about the potential to keep all the great members we currently have and optimistic about welcoming many new members. We will work with anyone and everyone who wants to work with us on our mission: Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy. That will not change.



Linda Kohn, LWVMD President

State Board Meeting Highlights

The Board regrets to announce that the April 16 and 17 LWVMD Primary Election Senatorial Candidate Forums will not be taking place. Due to the overwhelming number of requests to partner on candidate forums this year, LWVMD chose to participate in the event that would ensure top candidate participation. We are looking forward to planning a broadcasted General Election Candidate Forum in the fall

Stacey Morrison, SBL editor

Events

In case graduations, the end of the school year, and local League annual meetings weren't enough, the state League will also be having multiple events in June. Participate in one, two—or even better—all of them!

Linda Kohn, LWVMD President

**So Many June
Events are
Happening**

LWVMD Council Meeting

LWVMD will hold its biennial statewide Council meeting on:

Saturday, June 1, 2024
9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
virtual

The agenda is still under development, but we know we will want to share information about the LWVUS Transformation that will affect every League in the country (*see article below*).

LWVMD Super-Duper Spectacular Special Event: Making Democracy Work Breakfast

Plans are underway for a very significant event on this date:

Wednesday, June 26, 2024
morning
Annapolis, MD

It's going to be one of our biggest events yet with some very special guests. Members will be welcome as well as all friends and supporters of LWVMD. Mark your calendar now and look for more information when it becomes available. *Not surprisingly, we could use additional help over the next couple of months planning this event. If you would like to be part of this, please contact Nikki Tyree, Executive Director (ntyree@lwwmd.org).*

LWVUS Convention

LWVUS will hold its biennial national convention on:

Friday, June 28 - Sunday, June 30, 2024
hybrid - virtual and Washington, D.C.

On June 27, those interested can make appointments to visit with their Senators or Representatives. Plenary sessions start on Friday. Each League is allowed a set number of voting delegates depending on their membership roster as of January 2024. You can also attend even if you're not a voting delegate. League business will include voting on a new LWVUS board, budget, bylaws changes, and program priorities for 2024-2026. The agenda always includes some great speakers who are leaders in their field. If you are interested in attending, contact your local League president for more information. Registration information is available [here](#).

Committees

Vote411 is Live for the Primary Elections

As this is being written, it is fully expected that Vote411.org will be live around April 1, 2024, for the May 14 Primary Election.

In the 2022 election, nearly a quarter million Maryland voters used the Voters' Guide, a League brand upon which so many voters rely for trusted information. The online Vote411 platform is the means for reaching voters throughout the state and also how Leagues are able to produce the print versions of the Voters' Guides.

Additionally, LWVMD has ordered 10,000 Vote411 business cards to distribute to the local Leagues. These cards are always popular hand-outs at your community events.

A HUGE thank you goes to all the volunteers who put in so many hours to get the candidates' information and enter it into the Vote411 platform. In addition to all the volunteers at local Leagues who contributed to the effort, special thanks go to the LWVMD Voters Services Team of Gail Clark, Barbara Crain, and Ralph Watkins. And thanks go to all of you who gave during the fall campaign so LWVMD could purchase the Vote411.org platform and print the Vote411 business cards.

Linda Kohn, LWVMD President



Probably everyone reading this newsletter knows the Primary Election is on May 14, 2024, with early voting available from May 2-9. While Leagues offer voter education throughout the year, get-out-the-vote activities typically happen in the last few weeks before the election. The aim is to support turnout, making sure that registered voters actually cast their ballot. It's not enough to be registered—we need people to vote!

GOTV Activities for the Primary Election

Many local Leagues are having various events and activities planned to help get-out-the-vote for the upcoming primary. These range from voter registration events around the community to candidate forums to social media. Everything matters!

The [League of Women Voters of Frederick County](#) shared information about one of their events in case it jogs ideas for anyone else!! They will hold a **Voting Basics 101 Workshop** planned for **April 16, 2024, from 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.** at the STEM Lab at the C. Burr Artz Public Library in Frederick, MD. The LWV of Frederick County will demonstrate voting basics such as how to register to vote, finding your polling place, voting deadlines, and more.

Linda Kohn, LWVMD President

Committees

Dr. Patricia J. Jamison Joins LWVMD Board

Dr. Patricia (Pat) Jamison has joined the LWVMD board, which brings a much needed representation from the eastern shore as well as a wealth of experience in League life.

Dr. Jamison received her Ph.D. from the UMD at College Park in 1981, and was a leader in the field of special education in Maryland for many years. She developed the field program for the Special Education Department at College Park while working on her Ph.D. and went on to be a Specialist for the Department of Defense (DOD) Dependents' Schools in Germany from 1985-1987.

Returning to Maryland, Pat held a number of positions for the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), and was the Director of the Special Education Program, one of the largest in the state, from 1996-2004. After retirement, Pat took a position as Special Education Supervisor in the Kent County Public Schools from 2004-2008. She was an Adjunct Faculty Member for the UMD at College Park where she supervised special education interns; and taught courses for DOD in Germany from 2012 until 2018. She was also a Special Member of the Graduate Faculty, UMD Eastern Shore, where she taught a Special Education Inclusion Course in the [Educational Leadership Doctoral Program](#) from 2010 until 2019.

Pat has been active in the community since her retirement. She is a member of the Queen Anne's County Ethics Commission; is a past president and on the board of the [LWV of Queen Anne's County](#); and is a hospice volunteer.

According to LWVMD bylaws, the sitting board can vote to appoint additional members, Pat will serve until the next state convention in June 2025.

Linda Kohn, LWVMD President



LWV of Queen Anne's County President, Dr. Patricia Jamison, at the 2023 LWVQAC Annual Meeting

Committees

Over the last three months, the LWVMD's awesome Advocacy Teams have submitted testimony on 113 bills and submitted 24 sign-on letters for which the Action Team gave approval to add LWVMD as a signer. These bills cover a range of issues including Administration of Justice; Elections and Voting; Education; Health Care; Meeting Basic Human Needs; Protecting the Environment; Transportation and Taxes; and Revenue. Our testimony has been posted on the LWVMD website [here](#).

The League is Making Noise

LWVMD Executive Director, Nikki Tyree, also organized two successful events:

- February 26 - LWVMD hosted a virtual Legislative Day where members of the Advocacy Team spoke about the issues they were working on, five legislators highlighted their priority bills, and the Executive Director of the Department of Legislative Services, Victoria Gruber, presented an overview of the state budget followed by Q&A. 81 members attended.
- On March 4 - LWVMD held a Lobby Night where League members met for dinner in Annapolis, had a briefing on the state League's priority issues, and then went to the House and Senate Office Buildings to speak with legislators and drop off League materials. 39 members attended.

The last day of the 2024 General Assembly session is April 8. A wrap up of LWVMD accomplishments and bills that the League will continue to work on next session will be shared with members later this spring after Nikki has time to catch her breath following the hard work she did during session. Nikki will report the status of the priority bills that were either supported or opposed by advocates on behalf of LWVMD based on their expertise of the issues and knowledge of League positions.

Nancy Soreng, Action Co-Chair

By the Numbers



Each year, LWVUS surveys state Leagues across the country to help understand the League's impact. In Maryland, 10 of 16 Leagues responded about their activities in 2023. Compiling all the Maryland responses, we learned that together League members:

- ☀ Registered almost 2,000 voters
- ☀ Contributed more than 5,600 hours to League activities from 751 volunteers
- ☀ Hosted more than 200 events

Nationally, LWVUS was able to:

- ☀ Register more than 173,000 voters
- ☀ Contribute more than 500,000 hours toward League activities from more than 50,000 volunteers
- ☀ Host almost 2,000 debates

And 2023 wasn't even an election year. If you're feeling tired, now you know why!

Linda Kohn, LWVMD President