

THE VOTER

A Quarterly Newsletter of the LWVAAC

September 2022, Issue 126

Fall Calendar of Events

National Voter Registration Day

Tue, Sep 20

LWVMD Fall Workshop (virtual)

Sat, Sep 24, 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

([click here to register](#))

LWVAAC Registrar Training (in person)

Tue, Sep 27, 12 to 2 p.m.

Severna Park Library, 45 W. McKinsey Rd

(see p. 5 or [click here to register](#))

AA County Affordable Housing Coalition

Conversation with Candidates

Wed, Oct 5, 4 to 5:30 p.m.

Michael E. Busch Library, 1410 West St.,
Annapolis

LWVAAC Board Meeting (in person)

Tue, Oct 11, 4 to 6 p.m.

Crofton Library, 1461 Riedel Rd.

LWVAAC Field Trip to Hancock's Resolution

Tour & Book Discussion (in person)

Wed, Oct 12, 10:30 to 1:30 p.m.

(see p. 5 or [click here to register](#))

Election Day

Tue, Nov 8, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

LWVAAC Holiday Social & Charity Drive

Sat, Dec 3, 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Lighthouse Bistro, 202 West St., Annapolis

LWVAAC Board Meeting (virtual)

Tue, Dec 13, 4 to 6 p.m.

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Donate: lwvaacmd.org/efdonation

Voter Toolkit: lwvaacmd.org/voter_toolkit

Vice President's Letter



Alexis Dorsey

Dear Members,
To those who attended the LWVAAC Annual Retreat on August 16, thank you for your commitment, support, and input. To those who were unable to join us, we're sorry you missed this enjoyable opportunity for good food, camaraderie, and lively discussions.

Although details of the Retreat are addressed on the next few pages, I would like to share my take-away from this invigorating event. As the League of Women Voters, I believe the most important word in the title is Voters. As a League, we work together to defend democracy, reaching consensus on issues to form our policy positions and then advocating for them. We may have been birthed by the women of the suffrage movement, but our focus, as articulated by the participating Retreat members, is on empowering voters. Registering, encouraging, informing, motivating and enabling voters is our *raison d'être*.

Most of our lively discussion centered around ways to improve the election process to make voters' voices heard loud and clear. We have lobbied diligently for years for sensible reform to remove redistricting from the political process. Although we have made some progress, the

battle continues. The LWVMD has a 10-year plan that, hopefully, will lead to more progress.

Our League spoke out in support of and collected petition signatures to get a public campaign finance system amendment on the November ballot; although unsuccessful, we will continue our work to get reform that removes dark money from local elections.

At the Retreat, various members advocated for open primaries and ranked choice voting as ways to empower voters. Several League studies have demonstrated that these changes can encourage greater voter turnout, provide clearer outcomes, and reflect voter opinions more completely. And, don't even get me started on the subject of the Electoral College, now at the forefront of the LWVUS agenda!

As we proceed through the year ahead, the Board will need your help to answer the call to empower voters. As Election Day gets closer, LWVAAC will rely on you to put in the time and energy to fulfill our goals. If you don't help our voter services team register, educate, or inform voters, you are not fully benefiting from your League membership. It takes only a few moments to share our *Voters' Guide* or VOTE411.org with family members, neighbors, and friends. If you don't participate in our discussions or programs, you're missing the opportunity to become a vested League member. An afternoon or evening spent at a program or forum can be enlightening, informative, and enjoyable. Give it a try.

~ Alexis

Member News

Members Retreat to Reflect, Refresh and Reset Our Course

By Kathy Larrabee, Director and Membership Chair

Our League's annual retreat was held in-person mid-August; definitely a treat after several years of Zoom sessions. The LWVAAC Board convenes a retreat at the start of each program year to chart a course for the year(s) ahead. This year, on what could have been a sultry, dog-day of summer, a small group of collective minds were invigorated by spring-like weather as they met in the shade of a pavilion at Lake Waterford Park. Like the cool breeze off the lake, ideas and in-depth discussions flowed easily.

Abby Root, the LWVAAC Action Co-chair, who also serves on the state League's Redistricting Committee, urged other members to join LWVMD's redistricting reform effort. She emphasized the Committee's determination to pursue a multifaceted plan for getting fair maps in Maryland, despite disappointment over the legislature's recent redistricting based on new census data. See Redistricting on page 14.

Abby's report on redistricting, sparked a conversation about ways to support state League action to gain ranked-choice voting and open primaries in Maryland, which now has a closed system. Member Dona Sauerberger will work with the LWVMD on advocacy when the state League says the time is right.

A number of LWVAAC Board directors candidly presented their portfolios, speaking to limits on

our League's ambitious undertakings unless members step up to help. Vera Herath, Voter Services Co-chair, in particular, stated a need for members to get involved with voter registration events, a primary League responsibility to make

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The LWVAAC annual retreat was held at Lake Waterford Park in Pasadena under a pavilion above the lake on August 16. A small group of highly spirited Leaguers reported, debated, discussed, and ultimately unleashed a host of ideas, recorded by Niecy Chambers and Joyce Martin above, to help move the LWVAAC into a productive new program year and beyond. (Photos by K. Larrabee)

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In the relaxed park setting, Leaguers become better acquainted and enjoy stimulating conversation conducive to new ideas for future programs. (Photo by K. Larrabee)

democracy work. If you joined the League because you want more people to vote, then consider registering for training to become a certified voter registrar. The AAC Board of Elections will provide a private training for our League on Tuesday, September 27. [See registration details on our website.](#)

Also, help will be needed to distribute the printed Voters' Guides throughout the county. Niecy Chambers, treasurer and member of the Voter Services Team, expects delivery of the print Guides toward the end of September. Contact votersvc@lwvaacmd.org to volunteer.

Among retreat participants was consensus that League events should have two core elements: opportunities for members to become acquainted in order to strengthen our infrastructure and to be educated on local government issues. Leaguers tend to be life-learners. To that criteria, Marg Duffy, LWVAAC Events Chair, offered an

idea for a field trip and book discussion on the Electoral College. Since the retreat, she has finalized plans. See page 5 for details; visit the [LWVAAC website](#) to register.

Alexis Dorsey reported on the LWVAAC Observer Corps' importance to Action & Advocacy on local issues. As a longtime observer and chair of the Observer Corps, Alexis encouraged members to become observers as a way to learn about local government while also serving as the League's eyes and ears.

On page 9 is a list of local government agencies from which you could choose one and begin observing with guidance from Alexis. A number of meetings may be observed virtually. Partner as observers with another member for flexibility and support.

No matter how grand retreat ideas, without member participation in League activities the depth of our reach is limited. This is a critical time for our democracy. If you're uncertain about where your interests and talents lie, please call LWVAAC's Member Engagement Team at 410-353-3432 or reach out via email to membership@lwvaacmd.org. #



Increase Voter Turnout!!!

Attend a private, in-person training session to become a Certified Volunteer Registrar, offered to the League by the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections. [Register here.](#)

Tuesday, September 27, 12 Noon - 1:45 p.m.

Severna Park Library, 45 W McKinsey Rd, Severna Park, MD 21146



Member & Guest Field Trip: Two Events in One

#1 Hancock's Resolution Tour
Wednesday, October 12, 2022
10:30 a.m.

Enjoy a private tour of Hancock's Resolution, an Anne Arundel County park on 26 acres, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and on the Star-Spangled Banner National Historic Trail.

[Click here to register for one or both.](#)

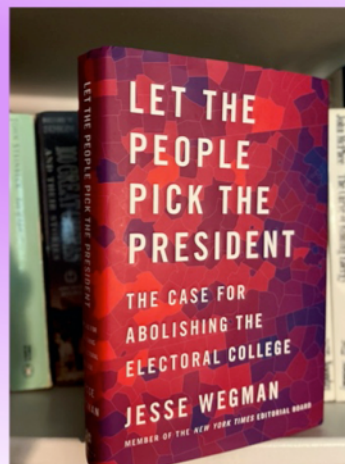
#2 Bring-your-own Brown Bag Lunch and Books for Learning Discussion
Wednesday, October 12, 2022
12 Noon
Hancock's Resolution Visitor Center

Following the private tour, join in an informal book discussion of *Let the People Pick the President* by Jesse Wegman. The author draws upon the history of the founding era, as well as information gleaned from 21st century Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns, to make a case for abolishing the Electoral College.

Private Tour of Historic House & Gardens

Hancock's Resolution
2795 Bayside Beach Rd.
Pasadena, MD 21123

Questions? Contact Marg at
program@lwvaacmd.org.



Enjoy the company and intellect of fellow Leaguers while nibbling your brown bag lunch and exploring the issues and options surrounding the Electoral College.

Hancock's Resolution
2795 Bayside Beach Rd.
Pasadena, MD 21123

LWVAAC Elects 2022-2023 Board of Directors

By Kathy Larrabee, Director and Membership Chair

Congratulations to the newly elected and appointed members of the LWVAAC Board of Directors!

As LWVAAC welcomes several new members to the Board, it bids a sad adieu to **Gail Viamonte**, who has served as a director since 2018 and as Vice President for the last 2 years. Along with Gail's notable accomplishments in building partnerships and collaborations, she guided our League capably and graciously in the absence of President Alfa Stevens, who is ill. Gail and her husband Neil Winner, who is also an LWVAAC member, soon will reside in sunny California, fulfilling a retirement dream. **Alexis Dorsey** has assumed the position of Vice President while continuing to oversee the LWVAAC Observer Corps, a dedicated group of members who monitor the public meetings of various local government entities (see page 9).

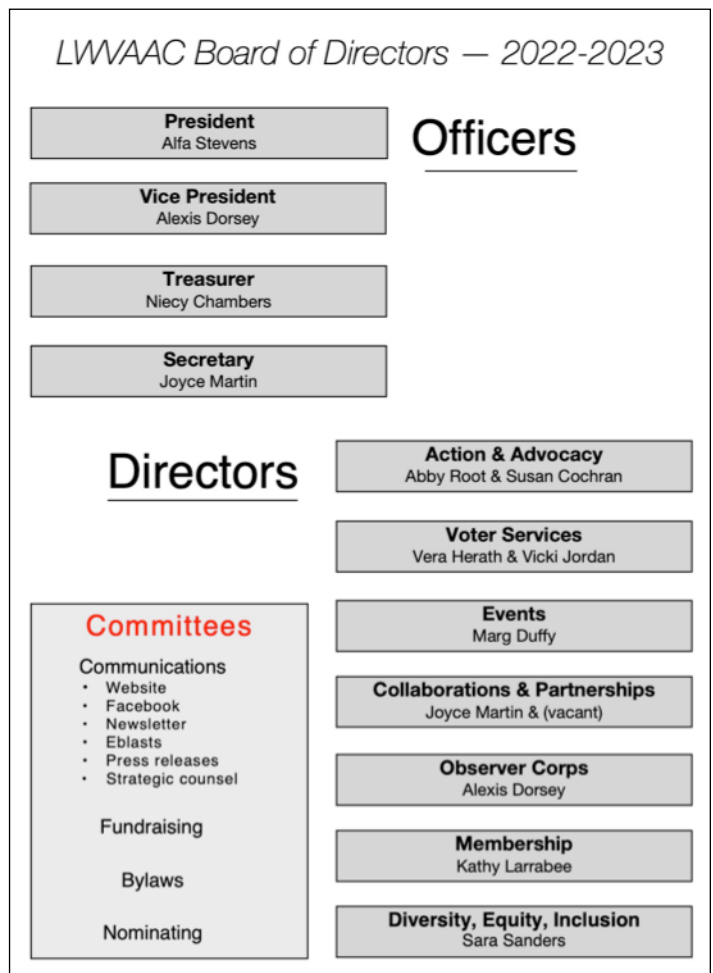
New to the 2022-2023 Board is **Vicki Jordan** who joins **Vera Herath** as a Voter Services Co-Chair, one of the League's largest and most impactful responsibilities. No rest for the weary VS team during this general election cycle!

Amanda SubbaRao is another welcome new addition. Amanda is an elected director, who has already applied her impressive skills to expanding, organizing, enhancing, and managing the LWVAAC website. She is a valued member of the LWVAAC Communications Committee, which also publishes this newsletter.

Returning Board officers and directors include **Niecy Chambers, Carolyn Ciepiela, Susan Cochran, Kathy Larrabee, Joyce Martin, Abby Root, Sara Sanders, Alfa Stevens** and **Carol Sures**. A complete Board contact list may be found on the [LWVAAC website](#) and an organization chart appears below. Thanks to all who have stepped up to serve as leaders for a productive year to come.

About Board Elections and Terms: As terms for LWVAAC Board officers and directors expire, members in attendance at the annual

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membership meeting elect a new slate of officers and directors as proposed by the Nominating Committee. Four officers and six directors are elected to staggered 2-year terms. For leadership continuity, the President, Secretary and three directors are elected in odd-numbered years; the Vice President, Treasurer and the remaining three directors are elected in even-numbered years. All elected Board members take office immediately with the exception of the Treasurer.

Additionally, at the first Board meeting following the annual membership meeting, the Board will appoint up to six directors to serve 1-year terms each. Directors sometimes request a portfolio in advance; otherwise, Board responsibilities are selected at the Annual Retreat held during the summer. #

A Delegate's Perspective on the LWVUS 2022 Convention

By Marg Duffy, Director and Events Chair

This year was my first time serving as an LWVAAC delegate to the LWVUS National Convention held June 24-26 in Denver, CO, as a hybrid event. I was impressed. Attending virtually, the experience confirmed my perception of the League, as a thought-provoking, energized force of smart women, who both study and take informed action.

Well organized and efficiently run, the virtual aspect was top notch, allowing great viewing of speakers, presenters, and audience questions. Most impressive was listening to wise and passionate women from Leagues across the

Welcome New Members

Annapolis:	George Anzalone Nancy Bromberg Catherine Krohn Anne Myers Jan Tyree
Arnold:	Jessie Merson Ted Sonde
Edgewater:	Jessie Carman
Gambrills:	Derek Thompson
Glen Burnie:	Danielle Dyer
Odenton:	Hannah Collins (student) Judith Wagner
Severn:	Heidi Carney
Severna Park:	Joyce Cooper-Kahn Mya Stengel (student at Ithaca College)

country, 1,000 of us from all 50 states. Weighing the pros and cons of actions aided delegates like me in our understanding of issues, before electronically voting yay or nay. If I felt a consult necessary with another member of our League, she was an easy text or call away.

Especially notable was LWVUS Board President Dr. Deborah Ann Turner, a physician and longtime League member. The Convention coincided with the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the right to abortion, and her powerful address to delegates opened with the League's dedication to women's rights and reproductive justice. Moreover, Turner addressed League

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challenges and focused delegates on action ranging from bylaws and membership to climate challenges, criminal justice reform, and abolishing the electoral college. Visit LWV.org for a full summary and recap.

Despite the urgency of our work, I am inspired by the thoughtful involvement of the League. The League always offers something interesting and provides many avenues to jump in, observe, learn, or work on something new. I encourage everyone to take the leap, attend anything and everything, and come full-circle by participating in Convention. #

Face of Our League

Karen Cook

Q: When and where did you first join the League; what prompted you to join?

A: I joined the League in the mid-1970s while finishing my undergraduate education at the University of Colorado, Boulder—the precise details are lost in the mists of time! My membership in the League has always reflected my fundamental belief that all citizens have a duty to actively participate in governance and the formulation of public policies. One motivator for me in the 1970s was, undoubtedly, voter education initiatives surrounding the proposed Equal Rights Amendment.

Q: What civics issues do you care most about?

A: The issue—or, more accurately, a broad complex of issues—that I care about most passionately is encouragement and facilitation of

widespread voter participation. Voter education is necessary for an informed and active electorate. Citizens who are inspired to vote and knowledgeable about the issues need effective access to voting. To achieve one person, one vote requires, at a minimum, the following: fair, non-partisan redistricting; reform of campaign finance laws to diminish the influence of big donors in politics; and easy access to polling places and ballots for all citizens.

Also, in my opinion, finding and implementing solutions to a host of environmental issues is both critically important and urgent. Living green is essential for the health and survival of our planet. Changes to laws and policies must be grounded in sound science.

Q: What is/was your primary career?

A: I began my professional life as an attorney, but then I had the good sense to switch to library and information science 30 years ago. I am semi-retired; I still teach part-time for an ALA-accredited master's program.

Q: What might other League members be interested in knowing about you?

A: I raised 6 children and take great delight in my 6 grandchildren. I also line dance for fun! #



Join an Elite League Group

By Alexis Dorsey, VP and Observer Corps Chair

The Observer Corps (OC) is an LWVAAC group of individuals who actively observe Anne Arundel County government to gain understanding, promote transparency and accountability, and identify issues of importance to the League, our members and ultimately voters.

I invite and encourage you to join the OC. A couple of hours of your time monthly can help your League achieve an ambitious goal. You'll become the LWVAAC Board's eyes and ears on legislation or actions that align with League interests and policy positions (both are easy to learn). You'll enjoy sharing the knowledge of local government you'll gain as an Observer. While members of government always appreciate seeing a League member in the audience, many agencies hold their meetings virtually or may be viewed on Arundel TV without leaving the comfort of your home.

Please contact me at observer@lwvaacmd.org if you have questions about the OC process, or interest in one of the following County agencies or departments:

[AA County Council](#) generally meets on the first and third Monday of each month, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Arundel Center. Garage parking is nearby. Council meetings are also available on Arundel TV. Additional meetings or work sessions may be scheduled as needed.

[Planning Advisory Board](#) (PAB-P&Z) meets on the second and fourth Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Heritage Complex on Riva Road. The PAB-P&Z makes advisory recommendations to the County's Planning and Zoning Officer and the County Council relating to the Master Plan, the zoning maps, and rules and regulations relating to zoning

[Transportation Commission](#) meets monthly on the second Wednesday from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Heritage Complex on Riva Road. Meetings are virtual at this time.

[Immigrant Affairs Commission](#) meets on the first Monday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Meetings are virtual at this time.

[Human Relations Commission](#) meets monthly on the third Thursday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Meetings are virtual at this time.

[Board of Elections](#) meets monthly on the second Thursday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Meetings are virtual at this time.

[Police Accountability Board](#) (PAB-LEA) meets as needed at the Arundel Center. Meeting dates are posted to the PAB-LEA webpage. Currently, meetings have been held on Monday but that may change. State law requires the Board to hold quarterly meetings with heads of law enforcement agencies and otherwise work with law enforcement agencies and the county government to improve matters of policing among other mandates. See page 16.

[Board of Education](#) meets at various times at the AAC Public Schools Headquarters Board of Education building on Riva Road. Click here for the meeting schedule. Meetings are in-person and also available on AACPS-TV.

[Housing Commission of Anne Arundel County](#) meets on the third or fourth Monday at 11 a.m. Meetings are virtual at this time.

Several entities on the above list currently are being covered by an LWVAAC member, but according to the old sayings: "Two's company" and "Two heads are better than one". I look forward to hearing from you:
observer@lwvaacmd.org #

Voter Services

Primary Election Wrap-up

by Vera Herath, Director and Voter Services Co-Chair

After being delayed by legal challenges to proposed redistricting maps, the Gubernatorial Primary election took place on July 19 at 195 precincts throughout Anne Arundel County; in-person early voting took place July 7-14 at 9 polling locations. According to Board of Elections official statistics, there were 302,714 registered voters eligible to vote in the Primary. (Because Maryland has a “closed” primary



Key Voting/Election Dates

Sept 20: National Voter Registration Day

Sept 24: Ballots mailed to voters who requested mail-in ballots; VOTE411 goes live

Oct 1 (on/about): Drop boxes expected to be in place

Oct 18: Last day to register to vote in General election, update registration, or change party affiliation

Oct 27-Nov 3: Early voting (in person), 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Nov 8: Election Day, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Check out the county Board of Elections website at www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/board-of-elections or call 410-222-6600.

system, voters had to be registered as Republican or Democrat to be eligible to vote.) Voter turnout for in-person early voting was a mere 3.79 percent; the total Primary turnout was 29.87 percent. While that number may not sound too inspiring, it's a significant improvement over the 2018 Primary, which saw 20.37 percent.

A crucial difference between 2022 and 2018, which may well be a major factor in the increased turnout, was the availability of mail-in ballots to all

eligible voters. In 2018, a voter had only two options: request an absentee ballot, or vote in person. This year's option of mail-in ballots afforded voters much greater flexibility and likely made it simpler and more appealing for more voters to cast their ballot. Even returning a mail-in ballot was a breeze: return it via USPS in the postage-paid envelope provided; deposit it in one of 32 drop boxes (locked and camera-monitored 24 hours a day) throughout the county; or return it in person to Board of Elections

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headquarters or to any polling place during voting hours.

Board of Elections officials correctly anticipated the widespread use of mail-in ballots and prepared for extra canvassing days, if needed, to count the mail-ins, plus provisional, e-mail, and overseas ballots. The concern was sparked by Governor Larry Hogan's veto of a bill that would have allowed boards of elections statewide to start counting mail-in ballots up to 8 days before the start of early voting. Fortunately, Anne Arundel County's canvassing was smooth and efficient, and no extra time was required to meet the deadline for finalizing election results. It turns out that Maryland is the only state where ballot counting begins after Election Day. To prevent any potential delayed results in the November General election (particularly since voter turnout in a General is typically much higher than in a Primary), in mid-August, the Maryland State Board of Elections took legal steps to allow early counting. It is not known when a legal decision will be made.



LWVAAC certified registrars (l-r: Symonds, Herath, Lottenbach and Larrabee) stand ready to help newly naturalized citizens register to vote following a July 4 ceremony held by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service at the historic William Paca House in Annapolis.

On November 8, Anne Arundel County voters will decide 13 local races and 9 US and state races. In addition, there are five statewide and 8 county ballot questions to be decided.

In other voting news, Maryland began an Election Day Page Program in 2022. The program encourages students, who are ages 14 or 15 and meet specific qualifications, to assist election judges and voters at the polls on election day. The Program provides an opportunity for

students to learn the democratic process in elections. On primary election day, 10 pages were assigned to 6 different precincts.

If you have questions about the voting or the election process, email Voter Services at votersvc@lwvaacmd.org or visit our [website](#). #

LWVAAC Voter Registration Drives: Where We've Been — Where We'll Be

Juneteenth (partnered w/NAACP), June 18
HACA Bloomsbury Square Community Resource Day, June 25
The Gatherings residents' meeting, June 28
Naturalization ceremony at William Paca House, July 4
NAACP Family Day, July 30
National Night Out, Busch Annapolis Library, August 2
Heritage Harbour Meet-and-Greet, Sept 1
National Voter Registration Day:
 Odenton library, Sept 19
 Arnold YMCA, Sept 20
Kunta Kinte Festival (partnered w/NAACP), Sept 24
HACA Eastport Open House Resource Day, Sept 24
AAC Affordable Housing Coalition *Conversation with Candidates*, Oct 5
Ordinance Road Correctional Center, Glen Burnie, Sept-Oct
Help our League empower voters by becoming a certified volunteer registrar. **SIGN UP** for our group training on Tuesday, September 27, 12 noon - 1:45 p.m at Severna Park Library.

An LWVAAC Voter Services team (l-r Herath, Miller, Dorsey) sets up at the Michael E. Busch Annapolis Library, one of several venues county-wide that participated in the recent National Night Out to show support for law enforcement that works to keep communities safe.



(Photo by V. Jordan)

Commission's Review Results in Seven Ballot Questions

By Niecy Chambers, Voter Services

As reported in the June 2022 Voter (p. 14), LWVAAC members attending the April 9 Annual Meeting heard a first-hand account of the challenges this year's Anne Arundel County Charter Revision Commission faced due to the postponed release of 2020 U.S. Census data. In her remarks, our keynote speaker, Commission Chair Andrea Mansfield, mentioned several charter amendments then under consideration, including one to safeguard against future census delays.

The Charter Revision Commission submitted its [final report](#) to County Council on May 31, 2022. After months of research, public testimony and deliberation, the Commission recommended seven charter amendments, all of which Council approved. Now the decision lies with Anne Arundel County voters who will be asked to consider the proposed

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amendments as ballot questions in the 2022 General Election.

Question G addresses the Charter Revision Commission itself. To avoid the time crunch that resulted from delayed census results, the amendment proposes appointing the Commissioners at the start of its legislative session rather than waiting for the census data. The amendment also changes the name of the body to the Redistricting and Charter Revision Commission, to reflect the full scope of the Commission's duties.

The League commends Andrea Mansfield and her fellow Commissioners for their thorough and thoughtful work on our county's behalf. Their [final report](#) is a must-read for anyone seeking a better understanding of our county government. #

Did you know?

League members research and explain the implications of all ballot questions as part of the election information provided in [VOTE411.org](https://vote411.org) and our print Voters' Guides.

*Kudos and thanks to this year's researchers, **Abby Root** and **Delia Scott!***



(Photo by K. Larrabee)

LWVAAC laid the groundwork for the Civic Association of Heritage Harbour Homeowners, led by Vicki Hutchins, to hold a candidates forum for its residents on August 29, 2022. Candidates for Anne Arundel County Executive and County Council District 6 participated. Mary Gunther, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate and leadership development specialist, deftly moderated the well-attended event. A videorecording is available on YouTube.



Vera Herath, LWVAAC Voter Services Co-Chair, speaks with residents at The Gatherings at Forest Glen in Odenton about League resources for candidate information, including the newly published AAC Voters' Guide.

Action and Advocacy

Advocates Undeterred by Failed Petition Drive

By Abby Root, Director and Action Co-Chair

The Anne Arundel County Board of Elections recently announced that a petition drive to add a question to the November ballot on creating an optional public campaign finance for County Executive and Council candidates failed to get enough verified signatures. The Fair Elections Maryland Coalition, which included the LWVAAC, collected well over the 10,000 signatures required for a petition. However, after 2 weeks of signature verification, the Board determined that more than half were invalid, primarily because petition signees were not registered to vote, a requirement to legitimately participate.

A public campaign finance system would give candidates the option of receiving government funding if they commit to accepting only small public donations. Both Howard County and Montgomery County currently have this system available. The decision for a candidate to participate is voluntary.

The petition drive kicked in when a campaign finance system resolution before the AA County Council failed to receive a super majority (5-2) vote required for any County Charter amendment. Prior to the vote, LWVAAC testified in favor of the bill and participated in a pre-hearing rally. To help educate voters about the petition, a letter LWVAAC wrote to the *Capital Gazette* editor was published, and then

LWVAAAC worked in earnest to get League members, family, and friends to sign the petition.

I would like to give a huge shout out to LWVAAC member Dona Sauerburger for her persistence and energy in working to get many signatures.

Though the question of a campaign finance system will not be on the November ballot, the League and other coalition organizations will remain at the forefront of this issue in the future so voters may decide yes or no to having a public campaign finance system that makes running for office feasible for candidates of diverse backgrounds and helps remove dark money from campaigns. #

Proponents of Redistricting Reform Adopt 10-year Plan

By Abby Root, Director and Action Co-Chair

Rather than disband when the post-2020 census redistricting process was complete, the LWVMD Redistricting Committee, with members representing local Leagues throughout Maryland, has become more determined than ever to ensure Fair Maps in the next decade. If you care about redistricting reform, I encourage you to get in on the ground floor of this coordinated effort by contacting me at action@lwvaacmd.org.

The re-energized Redistricting Committee has developed a 10-year plan to include a process by which the LWVMD stays aligned with LWV positions, focuses on previous redistricting cycles at the local, state, and congressional

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levels, studies lessons learned, and examines similar activities in other states.

The core elements of the plan are:

- To conduct a comprehensive review of the LWVMD positions.
- Educate high school students, communities of interest, new legislators at the county level, and the public.
- Advocate by drawing our own maps with assistance from a demographer, and identify legal partners to help us weigh in with the courts.
- Continue to engage existing partners within the Tame the Gerrymander Coalition and deepen relationships with other organizations.
- Ensure ongoing communication by developing a permanent, dynamic website, develop and maintain active social media, clarify ties to relevant topics like voter suppression and the U.S. Census.

Please join us. Questions are welcomed:

action@lwvaacmd.org. #

Lobbying Maryland's Congressional Delegation for Climate Action

By Marg Duffy, Director

This May, LWVMD hosted its annual Day on Capitol Hill, an opportunity for League members to learn lobbying skills and immediately put them to practice. LWVAAC Action Co-Chair Abby Root and I took part in this year's virtual event. Along

with other Maryland Leaguers, we spent the day preparing for, and engaging in, lobbying U.S. Senators and Congressmen from our respective districts to support LWV environmental and social positions.

The League's focus this year was on four bills dealing with climate change. One of the bills stressed the need for transparency by requiring companies to assess and disclose climate risk and safeguard against environmental catastrophes. The second bill supported legislation guaranteeing everyone's right to clean water, air, and good health. The third required the government to develop a holistic agenda to respond to climate change and environmental injustice and the fourth called for leadership to address how children are disproportionately affected by climate change.

All Maryland congressional offices* participated in this year's event. Delegation members expressed a willingness to look into specific bills, stating that new environmental bills are introduced daily.

Subsequent to our lobbying effort, the four climate bills were packaged into the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, an omnibus bill that President Biden signed into law on August 16. Congressman Harris (Dist. 1) stood alone among the Maryland delegation in opposing the omnibus bill. #

**Senators Cardin and Van Hollen, Representatives John Sarbanes (D3), David Trone (D6), Kweisi Mfume (D7) and Jamie Raskin (D8) joined in person. Representatives Andy Harris (D1), Dutch Ruppersberger (D2), Anthony Brown (D4), and Steny Hoyer (D5) were unable to attend and delegated to knowledgeable staffers.*

County Insights

County Hires Police Accountability Board Executive Director

By Kathy Larrabee, Director

Anne Arundel County Executive Steuart Pittman recently announced the appointment of Janssen Evelyn as the first Executive Director of the Anne Arundel County Police Accountability Board (PAB), mandated by the state legislature as part of a larger police reform effort and established by County Council legislation in April 2022.

Evelyn was selected by a diverse group of internal and external stakeholders, Pittman said. He is a government administration professional and licensed Maryland attorney with a decade of experience in local and state government roles. Most recently, Evelyn worked as counsel at Baker Donelson, a large Baltimore law firm.

Evelyn has served in a variety of county government positions, including as Howard County's Assistant Chief Administrative Officer and in the Office of Law as an Assistant County Solicitor; and in Prince George's as an Associate County Attorney in the Office of Law, Government Operations Division.

Originally from Barbados, Evelyn was raised in Maryland and holds a JD from Washington and Lee School of Law and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Saint Mary's College of Maryland. He serves as the Vice-Chair of the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights and is a Member-at-Large of the Howard County Branch of the NAACP. He has been recognized as a "Leadership in Law" honoree by *The Maryland Daily Record*. #



AAC Police Accountability Board
Executive Director Janssen Evelyn

Police Accountability Board Responsibilities

- Provide policy advice through meetings with law enforcement agencies, review of disciplinary matters stemming from public complaints, and annual reporting.
- Appoint two civilian members to the Administrative Charging Committee and one to the Trial Board to adjudicate complaints submitted by members of the public.
- Work with law enforcement agencies and the county government to improve policing and police accountability in the County.
- Receive complaints of police misconduct filed by members of the public.

Role of the County School Board Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

The CAC Executive Panel is a structured group appointed by the Anne Arundel County Board of Education (BOE) to advise the BOE on specific issues impacting educational policy, activities, and programs. The CAC may choose to study and report on educational issues of countywide concern. It also responds to requests from the BOE for research and recommendations on specific educational issues.

The CAC Executive Panel is composed of county residents who represent the diversity of parents and citizens in the county. The panel consists of:

- Two members from each high school cluster, one representing elementary schools and one representing secondary schools
- Two at-large county-wide representatives
- One at-large member designated by the President of the Anne Arundel County Council of PTAs to represent its interests
- One at-large member designated by the Special Education Citizen Advisory Committee to represent special education interests across the county
- One at-large member designated by the Chairperson of the Parent Involvement Advisory Council to represent its interests across the county
- One military representative.

On July 14, 2022 BOE appointed 12 new members to the CAC and extended the terms of four others. See press release. #

CONVERSATION with the CANDIDATES

Candidates for County Executive and County Council are invited to share their thoughts on affordable housing issues in the County. Join us for a lively discussion.

**WEDNESDAY
OCTOBER 5**

4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Michael E. Busch Annapolis Library
1410 West St, Annapolis, MD 21401

County Seeks Applicants for the Administrative Charging Committee

Anne Arundel County is currently accepting applications from residents who wish to serve on the new Administrative Charging Committee (ACC). The ACC has been created as part of the state-mandated Police Accountability Board complaint process. Members will receive a minimum annual stipend of \$10,000.

In accordance with state law, the ACC will be tasked with:

- Reviewing the findings of the law enforcement agency that conducted the investigation and requesting additional information, as needed; and
- Making a determination whether or not to administratively charge the police officer subject to the complaint.

The application process will remain open until the ACC is fully seated. Questions may be directed to ACC-comments@aacounty.org. #

AAC School System Hopeful to Regain Normalcy in Public Education

By Kathy Larrabee, Director

In June, Anne Arundel County welcomed the new AACPS Superintendent, Dr. Mark Bedell, following an extensive BOE search, selection, and confirmation process. Dr. Bedell, who once lived in Anne Arundel County while serving Baltimore County public schools, also served public school systems in Houston and most recently Kansas City, MO. He has 15 years of experience; he is lauded as a relationship builder, leader, and administrator by former colleagues according to a recent *Capital Gazette* article. At his first Board of Education meeting, he made “practicing kindness” the centerpiece of his remarks.

With the start of the 2022-23 school year on August 29, Dr. Bedell faced a number of challenges, including severe teacher and bus driver shortages. The teacher shortage is driven partly by pandemic-era teaching conditions, low pay, and an imbalance between the



Dr. Mark Bedell, AACPS Superintendent

number of teachers needed and the number graduating from Maryland colleges. In early August, at least 385 classroom teachers were needed in AAC public schools, down from 418 on July 27. Since then, the public schools situation continues to make daily headlines. The AAC teachers' union and Board of Education are in opposition on how best to address teacher shortages, and new start times for students has compounded the issues of bus driver shortages and new routes. Parents and students are frustrated.

Bussing issues existed before the pandemic but then worsened when the private contractors the AACPS hired to provide bus service failed to provide an adequate number of drivers.

Because of the driver shortage, last year when schools resumed in-person classes, thousands of students were affected by late bus service or no bus service at all. The contracted companies are continuing driver recruitment and training. In a recent news conference, County Executive Steuart Pittman said that the school system is suffering despite the \$4.4 million in signing and retention bonuses for drivers and aids that were allocated last year.

The LWVAAC welcomes Dr. Bedell and is hopeful AACPS soon will find new footing in a post-pandemic environment. #

*In the mid-90s, based on the research of a member study, the LWVAAC adopted a position to support a fully **elected** Board of Education (BOE) to oversee the administration of Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS). The first step toward our goal was achieved when the General Assembly passed legislation in 2017, and completed in 2020 when the last appointed members departed and newly elected members stepped in. The newly constituted BOE recently hired Dr. Bedell as AACPS Superintendent.*

LWVAAC continues to observe the work and issues of the AACPS system, which supports approximately 83,000 students. #