

# THE VOTER

*A Quarterly Newsletter of the LWVAAC*

Fall 2025, Issue 138

## Fall 2025 Calendar

### LWVAAC Annual Charity Drive

Nov 1 through Dec 31

[lwvaacmd.org/25charitycampaign](http://lwvaacmd.org/25charitycampaign)

### LWVMD New Member Orientation

Mon, Dec 1, 10 to 11 a.m. (virtual)

[lwvmd.org/new\\_member\\_orientation\\_20251201](http://lwvmd.org/new_member_orientation_20251201)

### LWVAAC Holiday Breakfast

Sat, Dec 6, 9 a.m.

Light House Bistro, 202 West Street, Annapolis

[lwvaacmd.org/25charitybkft](http://lwvaacmd.org/25charitybkft)

## Coming in 2026

### LWVAAC *The League Connection* (TLC)

Sat, Jan 3, Feb 7, Mar 7 10:30 a.m. to noon

Panera, Festival at Riva, Annapolis

[lwvaacmd.org/winter26tlc](http://lwvaacmd.org/winter26tlc)

## LWVAAC Online

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Facebook/Instagram: @lwvaac

Join/Renew: [www.lwvaacmd.org/join2](http://www.lwvaacmd.org/join2)

Donate: [lwvaacmd.org/efdonation](http://lwvaacmd.org/efdonation)

Voter Toolkit: [lwvaacmd.org/voter\\_toolkit](http://lwvaacmd.org/voter_toolkit)

### LWVAAC Board Meetings (virtual)

Thu, Jan 8, Feb 5, Mar 5, 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

[lwvaacmd.org/board\\_meeting\\_info](http://lwvaacmd.org/board_meeting_info)

### LWVAAC Speaker Series & Monthly Meetings

Wed, Jan 14, Mar 11, Apr 8, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Community Room, Southern District Police Dept,  
35 Stepneys Ln, Edgewater

Wed, Feb 11, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Glory Days, 3 Lee Airpark Dr, Edgewater

See p. 5 for more information or visit [webpage](#)



Photo by Kostiantyn Li on Unsplash.com

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## Message from the Editor

Dear members and friends,

As you'll read in this issue, it's been business as usual for LWVAAC this fall, thanks to all of your efforts and support! For our League Board, these past months have involved adjusting to a new governance model.



*Niecy Chambers,  
Secretary/Co-editor*

You may have noticed recent email communications coming from the Leadership Team instead of President. Because no President was elected at the 2025 Annual Meeting, LWVAAC is being governed this year by the full Board, with individual members assuming the President's duties. We'll take turns writing this message, and I'm up first.

Of the many opportunities presented in this newsletter, I hope you'll pay particular attention

to the new Speaker Series and Monthly Meetings (see p. 5). This initiative, to hold informative monthly meetings on a consistent date and time, has been developed with you in mind and with your direct input. Please plan to attend the inaugural session on January 14, and share your comments or suggestions with Committee Chair Karen Agee ([program@lwvaacmd.org](mailto:program@lwvaacmd.org)).

As our League's voters' guide coordinator, I'd also like to call your attention to the Candidate Question survey (see p. 12). Help LWVAAC improve the voters' guide by telling us what you want to know about local candidates' positions. We encourage you to share the survey link with friends, family and associates in the County.

With gratitude and best wishes for the holidays.  
Happy Thanksgiving!

~ Niecy

### In Memoriam: Carolyn Ciepiela (1932-2025)

LWVAAC lost a dear friend and veteran leader with the recent passing of Board Director Emeritus Carolyn Ciepiela. Carolyn was an active League member, first in Texas and then in Anne Arundel County, for over 40 years. When LWVAAC briefly foundered in the early 2000s, Carolyn played a key role in its revival. She held virtually every LWVAAC leadership position and was recognized statewide as a candidate forum expert and mentor.

We've dedicated this year's charitable fund drive in Carolyn's memory. Carolyn believed strongly in the power of education to improve lives, and she was passionate about helping others. Among her many contributions to the League, Carolyn worked to adopt a position on immigration that called for offering access to housing, health care and other services to non-citizens in need. Click [here](#) to support The Light House in Carolyn's honor.



# Member Spotlight

## Faces of our League

### Karen Agee

**What prompted you to join the League?**

A well-timed invitation from friend and member Vicki Jordan brought me to the League. I was recently retired and looking for volunteer opportunities, and Vicki shared that she felt that the League is an organization that can really allow you to make an impact. At the same time, I was also very concerned about the attacks on our democracy and civil rights, so becoming active with the League felt like a good fit.



*Member since April 2025*

**What civics issues do you care most about?**

I'll confess that I was one of those folks who largely took our democracy for granted, so recent events have brought about an awakening of sorts. In the current environment, there are so many issues to care about. At a high level, for me it boils down to protecting our democracy and our civil rights. These issues are foundational and funnel down to many critical, related issues: maintaining checks and balances, free and fair elections that reflect the voices of all citizens, due process and rule of law, ensuring civil/human rights for citizens and non-citizens alike. Without this basic foundation, we'll be hard pressed to focus on making communities more equitable and inclusive so they can thrive.

**What is/was your primary career or occupation?**

I didn't follow a very linear career path. I have worked in administrative roles in Higher Education and in Human Resources at a Healthcare non-profit, was a stay-at-home mom for a time, and taught elementary ESOL.

**What might other members be interested in knowing about you?**

Not sure I have a good answer for this. #

*Editor's note: Karen chairs LWVAAC's new Speaker Series and Monthly Meetings Committee.*

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<p><b>Annapolis</b> Marjorie Davidson Patricia Wyatt</p>	<p><b>Brooklyn</b> Kathleen Phelps</p>	<p><b>Odenton</b> Jeanne Mignon</p>	<p><b>Shady Side</b> Melissa Curry</p>
<p><b>Arnold</b> Dr. Tanya Millner</p>	<p><b>Edgewater</b> Lauren Kirby</p>	<p><b>Severna Park</b> Mary Dearing Sheila Glesmann</p>	

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## Sheila Glesmann

### What prompted you to join the League?

My mother Mary was an active member for many years, so I was aware of the League's work! Today, I am seeing more clearly the urgent need to support basic voting rights and civic education that I may have taken for granted. I attended an initial meeting this summer and found people of like mind, who are finding ways to take some positive actions. I think right now, this is where some people are struggling, wondering "what can I do?".



*Member since August 2025*

### What civics issues do you care most about?

I care deeply about the causes and impacts of poverty, especially food and housing access. These issues affect people unevenly and often unfairly, based partly on past policies or immigration status. League member Alfa referred me to Anne Arundel County's "Poverty Amidst Plenty" report as a great local resource. Listening to a presentation of that report has helped me identify groups doing great work in these areas.

### What is/was your primary career or occupation?

I am a Professional Engineer and a Certified Energy Manager. I spent 30 years in a variety of intense, industrial projects, which has been everything from incredibly high-pressure to really fun and rewarding. In the process I got to learn how to navigate complex projects and get things built that improve our air and water. Currently I am looking at my next way to contribute and hopefully have some fun. I would love to find a way to apply my technical and management skills to housing and food.

### What might other members be interested in knowing about you?

My family loves the outdoors, including annual camping trips. We live in Severna Park near the bike trail, where we walk our two goldens. My son in college and daughter in high school both run - I would say "like their mom" but they have way surpassed me! I am looking forward to meeting and getting to know more LWV members. #

## League Activities

### Make a note on your calendar: January 14, 2026, 7pm-- Gerrymandering!

By Karen Agee, Committee Chair

With the new year fast approaching, the LWVAAC Board is excited to announce a new initiative in 2026 to engage and grow our membership--Speaker Series and Monthly Meetings including guest speakers.

In response to our member survey this fall, we will host speakers and/or meetings on the **second Wednesday of each month from 7-8:30pm**. We are hoping that a consistent date will make it easier for members to plan ahead and attend. **Mark your calendars!** These in-person meetings will be a chance for you to hear from League members and guest speakers on hot topics; learn about our committee work; discover what the League is doing in the community and with the County Council and State legislature; and, most importantly, explore volunteer opportunities.

Our first monthly meeting will be held on **Wednesday, January 14, 2026 in the Community Room at the Southern District Police Department, [35 Stepneys Ln, Edgewater, MD 21037](#)**. The topic will be **gerrymandering**, which was the number one topic chosen by our members in that survey, so come with your questions, concerns, and ideas.



Ashley Oleson will speak and lead our discussion. Ashley is an LWVAAC Board member and the former State Director for the League of Women Voters of Maryland. Ashley's primary policy work in Maryland centered on redistricting reform. In 2015, she was appointed to serve on

Maryland's Redistricting Reform Study Commission and in 2019 she served on the Emergency Commission on Sixth Congressional District Gerrymandering. She traveled the state to educate citizens and to learn about what they think about gerrymandering in Maryland and how we should reform the process. Beyond gerrymandering, Ashley is active in promoting increased access to the ballot box and helping people get ready to vote with League's nonpartisan Voters' Guide, [Vote411.org](#).

The LWVAAC mission of championing voting rights and supporting democracy has never been more important. Growing our membership and engaging the community is critical in meeting this mission, and you can **help by inviting friends and family** to join you at our monthly meetings! As always, we look forward to learning together and engaging with you in the coming year. **See you on January 14th!!! #**

*Note: Our meeting location may change periodically. Check your email or our website to confirm where we are meeting, the date and time (2nd Wednesday of the month), who will be speaking and what you can learn at each meeting.*

## Fifth Annual Holiday Breakfast



**Saturday, December 6      9 a.m.      Light House Bistro**

Join with League members and friends as we kick off the Season of Giving and share a meal at the Light House Bistro, 202 West Street in Annapolis. Bistro staff will accommodate our party with separate checks. Space is limited. Please let us know you're coming and who you're bringing by Tuesday, December 2. #

**RSVP**



**Light House**  
A HOMELESS PREVENTION  
SUPPORT CENTER

### Annual Charity Campaign Benefiting The Light House

The Light House provides shelter and services to prevent homelessness and empower people as they transition toward employment, housing and self-sufficiency. People with employment barriers work at the Bistro to gain experience while developing a resume and earning a living wage.

LWVAAC's annual charity campaign for the Light House continues through December. Please [click here to donate](#). To show your support in other ways, please go to [lwvaacmd.org/25charitycampaign](http://lwvaacmd.org/25charitycampaign). #

## Make The League Connection (TLC)

Connect with members of our League and learn more about what our organization does to support democracy.

TLC events are informal gatherings for conversing and idea sharing, held at a local coffee shop or restaurant on the first Saturday of each month. Anyone interested in the League is invited to stop by...just look for the LWV sign!

**DATES:** Sat. Jan. 3, Feb. 7, Mar. 7, Apr. 4, 2026

**TIME:** 10:30 a.m. to noon

**LOCATION:** Panera Bread, Festival at Riva, Annapolis

**QUESTIONS?** Contact [the LWVAAC membership team](#).



## Be in the ZOOM where it happens!

Monthly Board of Directors meetings are where important League issues are discussed and plans are made. All LWVAAC members are welcome to participate. Meetings are held via Zoom from 4:30 to 6 p.m. and scheduled on the following Thursdays:

**2026: 1/8, 2/5, 3/5, 4/9, 6/4**

Any changes will be posted on the [LWVAAC calendar](#).

Sign up at [lwvaacmd.org/board\\_meeting\\_info](http://lwvaacmd.org/board_meeting_info) to receive Board meeting notifications and agendas.



## Fall Welcome Back event focuses on county immigrants

By Niecy Chambers, Co-editor

In early September, LWVAAC members and friends gathered at the Odenton library to initiate the 2025-26 program year. The first order of business was purely social, allowing time for participants to meet, catch up and enjoy a light midday spread. Next, Board members shared information about League initiatives, upcoming activities and volunteer opportunities. We then welcomed our guest speaker, Alison Flores, Director of the Anne Arundel County Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Ms. Flores spoke movingly about the impact of ICE detentions on local immigrant communities. She cited examples of long-time county residents whose lives had been disrupted, despite their own years-long efforts to achieve legal status. She believes responsibility for our country's "broken immigration system" lies with Congress.

In 2025, the Anne Arundel County Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) launched a [Family Protection Initiative](#) to provide legal assistance and support services to immigrant residents. The OMA works with public and private community partners to protect children and families and inform residents of their rights. Please visit the links below to learn about these programs and ways you can help.

[Presentation](#)

[Volunteer signup](#)

[Donate](#)

Our thanks to the Welcome Back Committee, Abby Root, Chair, Alexis Dorsey, and Dona Sauerburger for an informative event. #



*AACo Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) Director Alison Flores. The OMA's mission is to enhance access for the County's multicultural communities to engage in the economic, civic, social, and cultural sectors. (photo by M. Duffy)*

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!**  
Protect Yourself And Your Family During Immigration Raids  
CASA Raid Hotline Number: 888-214-6016  
TO REPORT ANY ICE ENCOUNTERS

You have the right to...

- Remain silent.
- Deny access to your home (unless the police or ICE have a warrant signed by a judge)

If you are arrested, you have the right to...

- Speak to a lawyer
- Make a phone call

Updated January 2025

\* The contents of this booklet do not constitute legal advice. Consult an attorney for legal advice.

Visit the [CASA website](#) to learn about the rights of the immigrant community.

Learn more about LWVAAC's [immigration position](#).

## Voter Services

### It's a wrap! Summer/Fall 2025

By Vera Herath, Voter Services Co-chair

In August, LWVAAC Voter Services (VS) again hosted a table at National Night Out at Busch Annapolis Library. It's always a fun family event and a great opportunity to "show the flag." Many attendees, including Annapolis candidates, stopped by to say hello and to express their support and appreciation for what we do.

Also in August, VS organized a voter registration training class led by Nicole Hill, AAC Board of Elections, via Zoom. It was open to LWVAAC, American Association of University Women (AAUW), Junior League of Annapolis (JLA) and NAACP members and was very well attended.

**Voter registration volunteers are now known as Voter Registration Distributors (VRD) and must attend training to be (re)certified.**

*LWVAAC hosts NVRD event at the Y in Arnold on 9/15/25. Members Jessica Burns (far left) and Lynn Mortoro (far right) answer voters' questions.*



Certification will be valid through the end of 2026. Please make a note to get certified ASAP! If you have questions, please visit [our website](#) or [contact VS](#) or the AAC Board of Elections.

In September, we commemorated National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) by hosting tables at two events: one at the Y in Arnold and the second at Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) as part of their Constitution Day activities.

In partnership with the AAUW, JLA, and the Annapolis Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority (AACDST), we hosted a highly successful Annapolis mayoral candidate forum on September 30 at Congregation Kneseth Israel. Approximately 125 people attended and many stayed after the question/answer panel portion of the forum to meet candidates Littmann and O'Shea in person. The atmosphere was respectful and informative and for that the League is very grateful. VS highly recommends you view the forum video posted on the [LWVAAC website](#).

A poster for the Annapolis Mayoral Candidate Forum. The poster features two candidates: Jared Littmann (Democratic Party) on the left and Bobby O'Shea (Republican Party) on the right. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, September 30, at 7:00 PM at Congregation Kneseth Israel, 1125 Spa Road, Annapolis, MD. The forum is moderated by Tanya Millner, Ed.D., AACC Provost and VP of Learning. The event is hosted by the Nonpartisan League of Women Voters of Anne Arundel County, Annapolis Alumnae Chapter, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and Junior League of Annapolis. The poster also mentions free parking and information on the LWVAAC website.

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On the following day, LWVAAC and the NAACP-AAC Branch supported the Board of Elections at Annapolis High School's Election Fair, assisting the students with voter registration and answering questions. (See sidebar on right.)



*Delia Miller stands beside LWVAAC's voter information table, awaiting rotating classes of students at the AHS Election Fair. (photo by V. Jordan)*

We were most pleased to participate again in the Annapolis Pride Festival, held October 18 this year due to bad weather in the spring. As always, it was a fun, energetic, and lively event. (See photo collage p. 12) There were lots of visitors to our table, and we distributed 50 of the *American Legacy* booklets – a record! The fall date was such a success that Annapolis Pride has scheduled next year's festival for October 3, 2026. VS will be there!

On November 1, VS Co-chair Vicki Jordan, along with LWVAAC member Donna Williams, participated in a Relationship Building workshop sponsored by LWVMD. They gained useful tools and especially valued the opportunity to connect and exchange ideas with other local Leagues.

## Election Fair at Annapolis High School

By Alexis Dorsey, Vice President

Do you remember the first time you voted? When you walked into the polling place, were you excited? Intimidated? Hopeful? The US Government teachers at Annapolis High School want to ensure that their students are prepared. That's why they organized an Election Fair in the school auditorium on October 1 and why LWVAAC gladly assisted.

With help from Nicole Hill, Outreach Coordinator for the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections (BOE), AHS teacher Steve Bellizzi arranged a series of stations to walk the students from registering to vote, through gathering information, to completing a ballot and having their vote counted. LWVAAC and the NAACP were available to answer questions about the registration process and to help eligible students register to vote. We also explained how the League empowers informed voting through [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org). Several local elected officials, including State Sen. Shaneka Henson (D-30) and Del. Dylan Behler (D-30A), were available during different class periods to answer questions and discuss issues. Ms. Hill's material explained what an Election Judge is, why they are needed and how to apply to be a judge.

Finally, BOE personnel set up voting booths with ballots (either digital or paper) and machines just as you would see at a polling place on Election Day. The student's ballot was not political but asked them to vote for their favorite bird, Olympic sport, type of music, etc. The ballots were scanned and the votes tallied with results to be announced later. All in all, it was a very educational and enjoyable activity for students and volunteers! #

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November 6 found VS at Severna Park High School, hosting a table at the CRASC (Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils) General Assembly. Five students registered to vote, and four of them applied to work as election judges. It was a great opportunity to connect with students and very inspiring to see their interest and enthusiasm.

**Save the dates!** The Anne Arundel County Public School (AACPS) High School Voter Registration program is tentatively set for February 18, 2026 through March 12, 2026. Specific schools and dates will be announced in January. If you have any interest in volunteering, please keep this timeframe in mind, and **please be sure to complete your VRD training!** It's not a huge time commitment, and helping inform prospective voters is fun and rewarding.

We will also partner with various branches of the Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) system to bring voting and election information to the public before the 2026 elections.

The VS team is meeting in early December to begin laying out plans for 2026. [Send us](#) your thoughts, suggestions, ideas! Even better, come work with us! #



*LWVAAC volunteers at the CRASC General Assembly on November 6. (l-r) Vicki Jordan, Vera Herath, Alexis Dorsey, Sheila Glesmann and Karen Agee.*

**See next page for an opportunity to help with LWVAAC's 2026 election voters' guides.**

## Election 2026: Questions for local candidates

Every two years, LWVAAC publishes a free voters' guide containing current election information, and including verbatim responses from candidates on questions of interest to voters. An interactive version of the voters' guide ([VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org)) can be accessed online 24/7 prior to each election, and print copies are available at public libraries, community centers and on the [LWVAAC website](http://LWVAAC website).

At the local level, Anne Arundel voters will elect a County Executive, County Council members, State's Attorney, Sheriff, Judges and other officials in 2026. To prepare the voter's guide, LWVAAC will invite candidates to discuss several different issues facing the county. **We'd like your help in deciding the questions to ask.**

[Click here](#) to submit your suggestions. If you're interesting in helping produce the voters' guide or have questions, please email Niecy at [votersvc@lwvaacmd.org](mailto:votersvc@lwvaacmd.org). Thank you!

*Annapolis Pride Festival 2025: VS Co-chair Vera Herath made sure the table was ready for festivalgoers. Members Karen Agee, Cindy Barry, Alexis Dorsey, a brightly-wigged Janice John and Delia Miller were on hand to answer questions and assist with voter registration.*



## Action and Advocacy

### County Stakeholders Renew Commitment to Affordable Housing

By Abby Root, Action Chair

On October 22, LWVAAC Affordable Housing liaison and Action Chair Abby Root, Treasurer Alfa Stevens and League members Lisa Shore and Sheila Glesmann, attended the 3rd Annual Anne Arundel Affordable Housing Symposium at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. LWVAAC was a co-sponsor of this year’s event, which Chase Home Inc. ([chaselloydhouse.org](http://chaselloydhouse.org)) hosted.

The symposium is a one day in-person gathering of stakeholders involved in housing and community development working together to better understand affordable housing issues and to discuss and identify a range of solutions to meet the needs of Anne Arundel County residents. The stakeholders, including policy makers, government agencies, developers, non-profit organizations and key State and Federal elected officials, convened to address the affordable housing crisis in Anne Arundel County. Following welcoming remarks, we heard two ninety-minute panel discussions presented by involved stakeholders.

Congresswoman Sarah Elfreth opened the symposium. She talked about solutions she has been working on to expand affordable housing options for our communities by advocating for federal and state funding to boost housing supply and development that assist low- and moderate-



income families. She has worked to increase access to affordable housing through partnerships and has supported funding initiatives like the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, the National Housing Trust Fund, and local projects, such as the investment in the Housing Authority of the City of Annapolis (HACA).

She emphasized that tackling the housing crisis requires partnerships between industry, advocates, and all levels of government.

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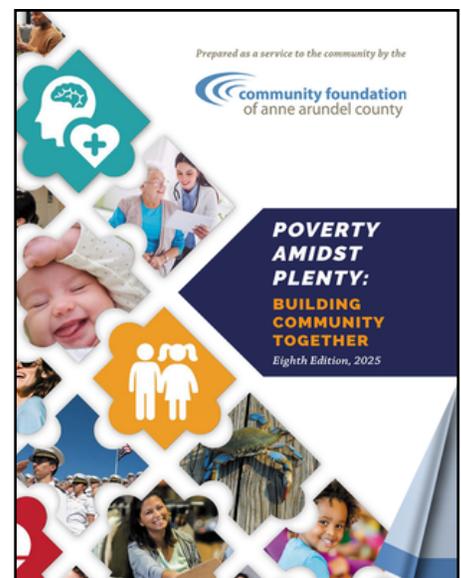
Senator Chris Van Hollen, speaking via video, emphasized that the most important affordable housing partnerships involve state and local governments and community input. He stressed that we need to close the gap of affordable housing by making more newly-built housing affordable.

In October 2025, the Senate passed the ROAD to Housing Act of 2025 with bipartisan support. This bill aims to increase housing supply and affordability by streamlining regulations, reforming existing programs, and providing new tools for communities. The bill has since moved to the House of Representatives for consideration.

The emcee for the day, Dr. Pam Brown, Executive Director, Anne Arundel County Partnership for Youth, Children and Families, presented the elements of her report, *Poverty Amidst Plenty VIII*, related to homelessness in the county.

**Key takeaways:**

- The number of families experiencing homelessness is growing.
- The positive housing market has led to a decrease in affordable rental housing in a county where there is already a huge shortage of affordable housing.
- Evictions are happening more often as families become less and less able to manage higher rents as well as the rising cost of food and electricity.
- Lack of affordable childcare hinders parents trying to get into the workforce.
- Families need accessible transportation to get to and from employment.



*Poverty Amidst Plenty VIII* was produced by the Community Foundation of Anne Arundel County. [Click here to download the report.](#)

**Panel 1: Big Picture: Federal and State Government Current State of Housing Affairs**

**Moderators:** Georgi Banna, General Counsel and Director of Strategic Initiatives, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, and Janssen Evelyn, Anne Arundel County Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**Panelists:**

Mayor Gavin Buckley, City of Annapolis

Secretary Jake Day, Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Development

Nicholas Finio, Ph.D., Associate Director, National Center for Smart Growth and Assistant Professor, University of Maryland Center for Smart Growth

Willy Moore, Chief Executive Officer, Southway Builders

County Executive Stuart Pittman, Anne Arundel County

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**Key takeaways:**

- Federal funding, which is mostly for vouchers, threatens to stop, which will create more homelessness.
- HUD is walking away from Housing, buildings are deteriorating.
- Utilize land more efficiently, build where people want to live.
- Turn vacant strip malls into housing.
- People cannot afford what is being built now.

**Panel II: *Local Housing: The Real Issues, Impact and Solutions to Affordability***

**Moderators:** Georgi Banna, General Counsel and Director of Strategic Initiatives, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, and Dr. Pam Brown, Executive Director, Anne Arundel County Partnership for Youth, Children and Families

**Panelists:**

Tanya Dempsey, Co-Chief Executive Officer, CSG Advisors New York

Erin Karpewicz, Chief Executive Officer, Arundel Community Development Services

State Senator Shaneka Henson, District 30

Molly Knipe, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County

Zachary Marks, Executive Vice President, Head of Real Estate, Enterprise Community Development

Danielle Meister, Assistant Secretary of Homeless Solutions, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

**Key Takeaways:**

- The Anne Arundel County Housing Trust Fund has enabled the county, through ACDS, to plan and build more affordable housing with more in the pipeline.
- Need more support for transitional housing for people with special needs.
- Need more conversations with the stakeholders to increase access to housing for all groups.
- Issuing bonds as a creative way to finance affordable housing without using Federal funds.

**Keynote Speaker: State Senator Shaneka Henson**

Senator Henson highlighted recent actions the State Legislature has taken and what needs to be done to make housing affordable for all residents.

The Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program in the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) provides vouchers and housing assistance payments for low-income families that are currently on a waiting list under the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP).

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In 2025, the General Assembly passed **HB 390 Affordable Housing Payment In Lieu of Taxes Expansion Act**. It authorizes an owner of real property used for rental housing and the governing body of a county to enter into a payment in lieu of taxes agreement for maintaining at least 25% of the rental housing units located at the real property as affordable dwelling units for at least 15 years; and authorizes the governing body of the county to require the owner of real property to maintain a higher percentage of rental housing units as affordable dwelling units than the minimum percentage specified in the Act. The legislation took effect in June 2025.

Senator Henson suggested that hiring more minorities in stakeholder organizations is a start in making affordable housing available for people who need it. #

## ADVOCACY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

LWVAAC is looking for volunteers to testify before the Anne Arundel County Council and the Annapolis City Council on issues that align with League positions. Instruction, mentoring and oversight will be provided by experienced League advocates.

### Interested in learning more?

- ➔ Contact LWVAAC Action Chair Abby Root, [action@lwvaacmd.org](mailto:action@lwvaacmd.org)
- ➔ Get to know League positions and read prior testimony, [lwvaacmd.org/action](http://lwvaacmd.org/action)
- ➔ Watch videos of past County Council meetings, [aacounty.org/county-council](http://aacounty.org/county-council)
- ➔ Accompany Abby when she testifies

### Unable to attend meetings in person?

County Council encourages anyone who cannot attend in person to watch and listen to the meeting on local cable channels or Arundel TV Live.

- Channel 98 for Comcast and Broadstripe
- Channel 998 for HD Comcast
- Channel 2138 for HD Verizon
- Channel 498 for HD Broadstripe

The City Council website is [www.Annapolis.gov](http://www.Annapolis.gov). City Council meetings are generally televised live and re-broadcast at a later date. The meetings can be viewed on City of Annapolis TV (Comcast channel 99/100 and Verizon channel 34). All City Council and Committee meetings are streamed and recorded on [the city's YouTube page](#).

Email Abby at [action@lwvaacmd.org](mailto:action@lwvaacmd.org)  
with any questions and to volunteer!

## In League

### NONPARTISAN DOES NOT MEAN NON-POLITICAL

By Cheryl Steinbacher, LWV Carroll County President and LWVMD Vice President

**Editor's note:** This article appeared in the March 2025 *State Board Letter*.

As we find ourselves under a new administration of government, many nonpartisan organizations, including LWV, are anticipating a rise in accusations of conducting partisan activities. In an effort to prepare for this possibility, the following will provide guidance to help chapters and members respond.

Quite simply, we are a political organization that does not support or oppose candidates or parties, even when their views may differ from or agree with ours. However, it is important to note that being nonpartisan does not mean we are nonpolitical. The issues for which we advocate are not partisan!

**Following is guidance from the League of Women Voters of the United States for responding to accusations of partisanship.**

1. If at all possible, do not respond directly to accusations of partisanship.
2. Consider issuing a statement and/or social media post proactively stating your League's

nonpartisanship stance and what that means without directly referring to accusations.

EXAMPLE: "The League of Women Voters of Anne Arundel County is a nonpartisan community organization. Our foundational principle of nonpartisanship states that "The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate."

"The League is and has always been a political organization advocating for equitable voting access for all and working on vital issues of concern to our members and the public. We never ask our members' political affiliation when they join our organization. The League's advocacy work is issues-based, and we arrive at our policy positions through careful study and input from our members. We never derive our positions from politicians, and even when candidates or parties support the same issue, we never endorse them. To learn more about the League's commitment to nonpartisanship, check out [this piece](#) from the League of Women Voters of the United States."

3. Be prepared with talking points if you are asked by media or others:

- a) Do not repeat misinformation, even to correct it.
- b) The League's nonpartisan stance states that we do not endorse or oppose political candidates or parties.
- c) Nonpartisan does not mean non-political; issues are not partisan.



Cheryl Steinbacher

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- d) LWV never asks members about their political affiliation.
- e) LWV positions are arrived at through rigorous study and democratic adoption by a majority of members.
- f) LWV's positions around climate, health care, and voting rights have been in place since the 1970s and earlier.

### Proactive Steps to Consider

Include the LWV nonpartisan statement, "The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate," on everything that makes sense, such as:

- the homepage of your website
- social media (if space available)
- link to your website blog
- community announcements.

To recap, the LWV is a political organization that is NOT partisan, and advocacy is NOT a partisan activity.

For additional information or assistance in responding to accusations, reach out to Nikki Tyree at [ntyree@lwvmd.org](mailto:ntyree@lwvmd.org) or Linda Kohn [lkohn@lwvmd.org](mailto:lkohn@lwvmd.org) for help in strategizing whether or how to message your response. #

## Constitution Day 2025

By Marg Duffy

The 19th Annual Constitution Day Program was held September 17, 2025 at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law in Baltimore. Our State League co-sponsors this annual event and LWVMD President Linda Kohn

offered the opening remarks. This year's topic was *Realizing Full Citizenship: The American Experience*. Between League members and law students, there was standing room only!

Law Professors Paula Monopoli, Monique Dixon and Cori Alonso-Yoder discussed past issues with the Fourteenth Amendment and recent challenges to the traditional understanding of birthright citizenship. The professors explored who has been included in citizenship status, the differential rights afforded those deemed citizens, and the limits of citizenship.

The Constitution Day program is always stimulating and worthwhile. Mark your calendar and plan to attend the 20th Annual in 2026! #



**19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONSTITUTION DAY PROGRAM**

**REALIZING FULL CITIZENSHIP: THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE**

**Wednesday, September 17**  
12:00 p.m. | Ceremonial Courtroom

Paula Monopoli      Monique Dixon      Cori Alonso-Yoder

Join us for this Constitution Day panel to examine historical and contemporary understandings of citizenship in the United States. Panelists will explore the scope of who has been included in that status, the differential rights afforded those deemed citizens, and the limits of citizenship. Recent challenges to the traditional understanding of birthright citizenship under the Fourteenth Amendment have once again raised these important questions in our civic discourse.

**Paula Monopoli** is Distinguished University Professor and Sol & Carolyn Hubert Professor of Law at Maryland Carey Law where she founded its Women, Leadership & Equality Program. Professor Monopoli's scholarship focuses on feminist legal history and the intersection of gender and constitutional design.

**Monique Dixon** is the Executive Director of the Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law at the School of Law. An experienced civil rights attorney, Dixon joined the School of Law after serving as the deputy assistant secretary for policy at the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

**Cori Alonso-Yoder** is Assistant Professor of Law and Director of the Immigration Clinic, an affiliate of the Chacon Center for Immigrant Justice at the School of Law. Professor Alonso-Yoder's scholarship focuses on immigration legislation and the impacts of state, local, and federal laws on immigrant communities.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND FRANCIS KING CAREY SCHOOL OF LAW

Co-sponsored by The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD)