



**P.O. Box 56126, Little Rock, AR 72215-6126**

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## **The Voter December 2019**

Edited by Danielle Butler

### **Upcoming Events:**

#### **Monday, December 16: "Immigration and the Path to Citizenship" regular meeting**

Fletcher Library, 823 N. Buchanan, Little Rock; 6:00 PM

Speakers: Patrick Galleher, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Arkansas;  
Jennifer Verkamp-Ruthven, Director of Catholic Charities Immigration Services

As so many organizations do around the holiday season, the League will be collecting gifts at the December meeting. Maybe not what you usually think of as a present, but certainly something that can make the holidays more pleasant for many women. I hope you will generously support this effort by bringing sanitary products on December 16th.

PERIOD @ Little Rock provides period packs to homeless shelters and women's shelters in Central Arkansas, and to schools in Little Rock and North Little Rock. Period Packs are composed of enough pads and tampons to last a menstruator one menstrual cycle. We are in need of regular pads, overnight pads, and tampons of all sizes.

### **A Note from the Treasurer:**

While 'tis the season to be jolly it is also the season to renew your LWV membership. Membership dues for 2020 are due by December 31, 2019. There is no doubt that 2020 will be a very important year for democracy. It is comforting to know that the League of Women Voters will be front and center tackling issues that make democracy work for all at every level of government. Thus, your continued membership is vital.

You can renew your membership (\$50 individual/ \$70 household):  
online at [www.lwvpc.org](http://www.lwvpc.org) , click on the membership join/renew button  
mail check to LWV of Pulaski County PO Box 56126, Little Rock, AR 72215  
\*please make checks payable to LWVPC\*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,  
Devita Harden  
Treasurer, LWVPC

## **Convener's Corner:**

Many thanks to Jay and Chuck for opening their lovely home, and to Sheila and Mary for organizing the event and preparing all the scrumptious food. I think I can safely say that a good time was had by all!

We had 8 new members and one returning member join us, and several of our donors expressed their appreciation for being invited. The new members are: Skye Adams, Lucy Thompson, Barrett Goodwin, Fran Carter, Sydney Rasch, Ben Phillips, Janna Knight, and Vickie Westerfield. The member returning from the D.C. area, is Gloria Cabe. We will introduce them in later Voters.

I hope everyone will join us for our last meeting of the year, on Monday, Dec 16th, and bring your donations for The Period Project.

Have a Happy and Safe Holiday Season, and buckle up- 2020 is gonna be a doozy!

Carol

## **Democracy in Action:**

From State President, Nell Matthews:

Because of the work of two newly joined Members at Large in Benton County, the LWV US has been involved in ending the practice of altering voter registration forms that have been used for at least a year in Arkansas.

These forms had a stamped 12th question asking in what state the applicant was born. The Sec. of State's office and the State Board of Election Commissioners were pretty unconcerned, initially, when I contacted them last week. They have now been put on notice that altered forms are illegal and are actively fixing this problem.

LWV US is looking hard at this issue. It is absolutely a form of voter suppression and I am so grateful for the work on Carol Bobek of Bella Vista and Connie Hoffman of Rogers for continuing to pursue this issue - it has taken a year since they first noticed this to get anyone's attention. I am proud that LWV on the state level and national level has shown a spotlight on this issue and we are getting it cleaned up. Benton County promised to destroy all the stamped forms.

Now, we need to check all the counties to see who else thinks that this is an OK practice.

## **Name Tags, Everyone?**

How about giving yourself a lovely LWVPC nametag for the Holidays? I PROMISE I will order them this week, but I really need at least 10 more names to make them \$10 each. So far I have the following names: Becky Jackson, Nell Matthews, Alfreda Brown (pd), Devita Harden, Germaine Swinton, Rachel Howell, LeeLee Doyle(pd), and Mindy Morrell. You can wear them to public meetings, as well as our meetings- heck wear them everywhere, and tell people about the League!

## **Report on the Little Rock School District:**

The League believes strongly that the Little Rock School District is undergoing major changes that could have a devastating effect on parents, students, teachers, and the communities that support LRSD.

The Little Rock School District's Community Advisory Board voted 5-1 late Thursday in support of a high school attendance zone plan that will make Hall High School a special program magnet school without an attendance zone, enabling it to draw students from across the district.

The recommended plan, known as Option 2 to go into effect in the coming 2020-21 school year, also would give west Little Rock students the option of attending a high school program at Pinnacle View Middle School rather than Central High, which would be their attendance zone school. That Pinnacle View School of Innovation program currently offers a ninth grade, which will expand in the coming year to include a 10th grade.

The CAB also Voted 5-1 to recommend that current high school students be permitted to complete their high school careers at their current schools if they choose and if their high schools remain open.

The advisory board recommendations now go to Arkansas Education Secretary Johnny Key for final action. Key acts in place of a school board in the state-controlled school district and has the authority to accept, reject or alter recommendations from the advisory board

We as the League, can still make recommendations to Johnny Key and the Board of Education on the focus of the new Hall magnet, and ask that the district be returned to local control with no oversight after the 2020 election of a new school board. Their next meeting is Thursday, December 12, so we don't have much time to prepare our statement.

**Please send your comments to [norma\\_johnson58@yahoo.com](mailto:norma_johnson58@yahoo.com)**

*Congratulations to our member, Dr. Jay Barth, on his appointment as the first Chief Education Officer for the City of Little Rock!*

## **Info from our Observers Corp:**

Thanks to Ruth Bell, Mary Wilgden, and Carol Young for the updates below.

**Little Rock Planning Commission:** Little Rock Planning and Zoning Department will produce two studies in the new year. A study of impact of Airbnb use in residential areas, requested by LR City Board, will be presented to the Board in late January or early February. LWVoters advocated for such a study so the City could enact effective ordinance changes to accommodate that use. A study reviewing existing planning for the downtown Little Rock area will be completed by mid-summer. Among the things it will consider is traffic and parking needs and usefulness of the UU (urban use) district in downtown Little Rock. In the past LWVoters has supported planning elements that make downtown an attractive and livable space. LR Planning and Zoning Department will contract with a consultant to perform this study. When the LR Planning Commission recently revised its bylaws, observers Kathleen Olsen and Ruth Bell advocated for continuation of citizen ability to comment on issues before the Commission. Despite our opposition, the Commission decided to no longer have Subdivision and Planning Committees. However, partially in response to our comments, it was determined that in depth information on subdivision applications will be made available to all Planning Commission members before the item is heard.

**Pulaski County Election Commission:** Observer Mary Wildgen reports no new information of availability of new voting devices in 2020.

**Public Service Commission:** Carol Young gave public testimony along with member, Scharmél Roussel, and donor, Barry Haas, asking the Public Service Commission to continue the current 1:1 net metering rate. Carol quoted from the LWVUS' *Impact on Issues*. Which states: "The League supports action by appropriate levels of government to encourage the use of renewable resources and energy conservation through funding for research and development, financial incentives, rates-setting policies, and mandatory standards. "

## Observing Opportunities:

Please click links for calendar of each committee's meetings. I am also putting names of current League members who observe these meeting. If you have any interest in observing these ladies would love your help! If there are any other committees/observation opportunities you would like to suggest to the League, please let us know and we will add it to the next newsletter.

### [Volunteers in Public Schools](#)

Meets September to May on second Mondays at noon in the Fair Park Early Childhood Center on Harrison St. Contact Denise Ennett at 817.894.4628 or [ennettdenise@gmail.com](mailto:ennettdenise@gmail.com).

### [Jacksonville City Board](#)

Meets first and third Thursday at 6 pm. In the City Hall Council Chambers at 1 Municipal Drive, Jacksonville. Contact Rachel Howell at 501.942.3086 (H) 501.580.2782 (C) or [rachel\\_howell@yahoo.com](mailto:rachel_howell@yahoo.com)

### [Little Rock Planning Commission](#)

Meets every other Thursday at 3:30 for agenda meeting and the commission public meeting meets same day at 4 at Little Rock City Hall in the City Board Room. Contact Ruth Bell at 501.225.2538 or [rfbell@aristotle.net](mailto:rfbell@aristotle.net).

### [Little Rock Board of Directors:](#)

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 6 pm. Agenda Board (to look at the items that will be discussed at the next board meeting) meets 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday at 4 pm. Both meet at Little Rock City Hall, 500 West Markham Street, Board of Directors Chambers, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Little Rock. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351.

### [County Planning Board](#)

Meets the 4th Tuesday of every month. Agenda discussion starts at 2:30 pm and actual meeting follows at 3pm. Held at Jeffery Hawkins Conference Room – Pulaski County Regional Center. 501 W. Markham Street, Little Rock. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351.

### [Quorum Court](#)

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month for agenda and then the full court meets 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday. Both meetings start at 6 pm at 201 S. Broadway 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Quorum Court Room. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351 or Ruth Bell at 501.225.2538 or [rfbell@aristotle.net](mailto:rfbell@aristotle.net)

### [Central Arkansas Water Board](#)

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 2 pm at the 221 East Capitol, Little Rock. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351 or Ruth Bell at 501.225.2538 or [rfbell@aristotle.net](mailto:rfbell@aristotle.net)

#### [Water Reclamation Commission](#)

Meets the third Wednesday of each month at 4 pm in little Rock Wastewater Offices, 11 Clearwater Drive. Currently no one is observing so we need someone to volunteer!!!!

#### [Pulaski County Election Committee](#)

Meets at Pulaski County Election Commission, 501 West Markham St., Suite A, Little Rock. Contact Mary Wildgen at [mzwildgen@ualr.edu](mailto:mzwildgen@ualr.edu)

#### [Little Rock School District](#)

Meet 5:30-6:30 at 810 Markham, Little Rock. Contact Norma Johnson at [norma\\_johnson58@yahoo.com](mailto:norma_johnson58@yahoo.com)

#### [MetroPlan](#)

Executive Committee meets at 501 West Markham St., Suite B, Little Rock on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every other month from 10 am-12 pm. Board meets last Wednesday of every other month from 10 am to 12 pm. Contact Mindy Morrell at 501 951 7773 or [mindymorrell@hotmail.com](mailto:mindymorrell@hotmail.com)

#### [North Little Rock Planning Commission:](#)

Meets the second Tuesday of every month at 4 pm at North Little Rock City Hall.

#### [North Little Rock City Council](#)

Meets every other Monday at 6 pm at City Council Chambers at City Hall. 300 Main Street, North Little Rock. Not certain if anyone is observing this meeting.

#### [North Little Rock School District:](#)

Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month from 5:30 to 7 pm at 2700 North Poplar St., North Little Rock Administration Board Room. Not certain if anyone is observing this meeting. Not certain if anyone is observing this meeting.

[All Boards and Commissions for North Little Rock Government](#) are broken down at this link.

#### **Leadership Team For 2019-2020**

Ruth Bell- one year remaining. 501.225.2538 or [rfbell@aristotle.net](mailto:rfbell@aristotle.net)

Jogee Detchemendy - new term. 662.312.9277 or [jogeeduzzi@gmail.com](mailto:jogeeduzzi@gmail.com)

Devita Harden- Treasurer new term. 770.617.3096

Norma Johnson-new term. [norma\\_johnson58@yahoo.com](mailto:norma_johnson58@yahoo.com)

Carol Young- President one year remaining. 501.680.3947 or [cyoung8151@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cyoung8151@sbcglobal.net)

#### **League Links:**

[League of Women Voters \(National\)](#)

[League of Women Voters \(State of Arkansas\)](#)

[League of Women Voters of Pulaski County](#)

\*Special thanks to Michelle Rhoden for managing the LWVPC website.