

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ALABAMA

# THE VOTER

MARCH 2018

## LWVAL COUNCIL 2018

April 14, 2018

Birmingham/Jefferson County Transit Authority  
New Intermodal Transit Facility

**Registration Deadline: April 5, 2018**

### Schedule

9:30 – 10:00 AM	Registration
10:00 – 11:00 AM	LWVAL Business Meeting
11:10 – 12:30 PM	“State of the State” Panel
12:45 – 1:30 PM	Lunch/ Address by Former U.S. Attorney Joyce Vance: Election Law & Voter Suppression
1:40 – 3:10 PM	“Public Transportation in Alabama” Panel
3:20 – 3:50 PM	Education Fund Business Meeting
3:50 - 4:00PM	Closing Announcements and Adjournment

Plan to join us for an informative day in Birmingham! More information and registration details can be found at [council2018.lwval.org/](http://council2018.lwval.org/)

### PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear League Friends,

I want to thank you for the honor you bestowed when you elected me as your president last April. It has been a very eventful 11 months for the League of Women Voters of Alabama - the special election for US Senate, the various legal battles to fight voter suppression, lots of voter registration activities and workshops for restoration of felon voting rights, the legislative session, and the upcoming statewide election season have certainly been exciting! And, as I am fond of saying, I am not bored!!

*(Continued on page 6)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE	2
ADVOCACY COMMITTEE REPORT	2
LWVUS CONVENTION	3
COUNCIL REGISTRATION FORM	11

## A BANNER YEAR FOR LWVAL MEMBERSHIP!

SUBMITTED BY KRISTEN DE LA FUENTE, LWVAL TREASURER

As of the January 31st reporting deadline to the LWVUS, the LWV of Alabama had a stellar number of members: 405! This is the highest number in recent history. Every one of the six local leagues either maintained or increased their membership numbers from last year. Two stand-out leagues were Baldwin

County, which increased membership by 10 members (50%) to 30 members, and Mobile, which increased membership by 16 members (16.7%) to 112. Local leagues accounted for 368 of the 405 state members.

Member-At-Large (MAL) Units function to recruit

members and act on behalf of the state league where no local leagues are present. The LWVAL supports two MAL Units in North Alabama and membership numbers there are steadily increasing. As of January 31st, the Shoals Area MAL had 11 members and the Tennessee

*(Continued on page 4)*

## ADVOCACY COMMITTEE REPORT

SUBMITTED BY HATTIE KAUFMAN

This year, the priorities for the Advocacy Committee have been Voting Access and Processes, Government Transparency and Accountability, Natural Resources and Energy Policy, Criminal Justice Reform, Education Policy and Funding, Healthcare Policy, Discrimination Laws, Payday Loan Reform, and Public Transportation. The committee has reviewed bills addressing each of these areas, identifying those we support or oppose, based on the positions taken by LWVAL or LWVUS.

In the area of **Voting Access and Processes**, we are supporting bills that

expand absentee voting access, clean up voter registration databases, and allow voter registration up to and including election day.

**Government Transparency and Accountability** bills we support would allow for constitutional amendments proposed by the public in the form of initiative and require additional disclosures to the ethics commission from legislators who perform consulting services. On the other hand, we have opposed a bill that allows the ten commandments to be displayed in public buildings, but prohibits public funds to be used to

defend the constitutionality of the law, as well as a bill proposing a Constitutional Amendment to provide that a vacancy in either house of the Legislature occurring with less than two years remaining would be filled by appointment by the governor instead of special election.

For **Natural Resources and Energy Policy**, we support bills related to water allocation and shoreline restoration. We oppose bills that would require the Forever Wild Land Trust to reimburse localities for lost ad valorem tax revenues.

*(Continued on page 8)*

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT LINES REDRAWN

In early 2017 a federal court ruled 12 Alabama legislative districts unconstitutional. New district maps have been drawn and are effective for the upcoming 2018 elections. The districts surrounding those ruled unconstitutional are also impacted. Please visit [www.AlabamaVotes.gov](http://www.AlabamaVotes.gov) to verify your legislative district.

The districts ruled unconstitutional are listed below.

### House

District 32, represented by Rep. Barbara Boyd, D-Anniston

District 53, represented by Rep. Anthony Daniels, D-Huntsville

District 54, represented by Rep. Patricia Todd, D-Birmingham

*(Continued on page 9)*

## NATIONAL LEAGUE CONVENTION IS COMING UP SUBMITTED BY BARBARA CADDELL

The League of Women Voters' 53<sup>rd</sup> national convention will take place June 28-July 1 in Chicago at the Hilton. What an exciting time for us to gather to learn about important issues, to do the business of the League, and (of course) to have fun! As you know, all members are welcome to attend any part of the convention, so think about "dropping in" if you can. Alabama has been in the national news spotlight a good bit this year, and I'd like for us also to be in the national league spotlight by maximizing our participation in national league business with voting delegates. Alabama is allotted voting delegates in

*(Continued on page 9)*



## LWAL FILES AMICUS BRIEF SUBMITTED BY BARBARA CADDELL

On February 28, 2018, the League of Women Voters of Alabama became formally involved in the legal challenge to Alabama's voter id law. As a "friend of the court" we went on record asking the Federal Circuit Court to reconsider a lower court's dismissal of the lawsuit filed by Greater Birmingham Ministries and other organizations representing marginalized people. At issue is the discriminatory effect this law has on historically marginalized persons – persons of color, low income and rural persons, persons experiencing homelessness, persons released from incarceration, LGBTQ persons, etc. The lower federal court did not examine the burdens placed on these persons and their communities by

*(Continued on page 5)*

## **UPDATE FROM TENNESSEE VALLEY MAL UNIT**

### **SUBMITTED BY KATHY JONES**

The Tennessee Valley MAL is concentrating efforts in two areas: high school voter registration and voter rights restoration. Below are the activities conducted in those areas.

#### **High School Voter Drives**

- To date 448 students have applied to become registered voters in the class of 2018 in Madison County during our drives.
- Just began partnership with WLRH public radio to publicize TNV drives and get millennials excited about registering to vote
- Investigating a partnership with Limestone County NAACP to register students in that counties' high schools
- Additional drives scheduled or being scheduled in Morgan, Limestone, Madison, and Marshall Counties

#### **Voter Rights Restoration**

- Created North Alabama Voter Rights Restoration Coalition
  - \* Feb 10th an organizational meeting was held
  - \* Mar 10th there will be 2 clinics and 1 training in Huntsville
- Collaborating with several groups and individuals including Campaign Legal Center, Legal Services Alabama, Jonathan Barry- Blocker, Alabama Non-Violent Offenders Organization, and others

---

## **A BANNER YEAR FOR LWVAL MEMBERSHIP! - CONT'D**

Valley MAL had 23 members. Three other members not associated with a MAL unit round out the state membership to 37. The state membership not associated with a local league has been quite low in most years, often hovering around five or six, and even reaching zero in

2014.

The LWVAL is very proud to have so many members Making Democracy Work in Alabama! We expect this trend to continue as more Alabamians seek out the LWVAL at one of our timely program meetings, important candidate forums, ever-needed voter

registration drives, or other outreach events.

If you have not done so already and would like to join the LWVAL, check out our website at [www.lwval.org/](http://www.lwval.org/) to find a local league or MAL unit near you.

## **UPDATE FROM BALDWIN COUNTY**

### **SUBMITTED BY LYNNE SWITZKY, PRESIDENT**

Baldwin County League held its Annual Meeting in May 2017. We tried something a little different this year, a breakfast meeting. We invited the new Mayor of Fairhope, Karin Wilson, to be our speaker. We had good attendance, a very casual atmosphere, and several new members signed up at the breakfast.

In August, we joined with the NAACP of Baldwin County to invite Legal Services of Alabama to set up a training session and clinic for volunteers interested in helping formerly incarcerated felons apply to restore their voting rights. We met in an African American Church in Foley in the center of the County. Eighteen volunteers were trained. We had publicized the Clinic through churches, fast food restaurants, laun-

dromats, libraries, and the radio stations. Two persons showed up to apply for voting rights restoration. We were a little discouraged, but Baldwin is a big County with little public transportation. We are still interested in setting up another Clinic, and we now have many persons who know how to help fill out the CERV form.

Our Voter Services Chair, Trinkia Hastings, has been meeting with social service agencies to train their staff to help a person register to vote. She also offered a workshop in the fall for any organization wanting to register voters and shared our "expertise."

We have been holding Voter Registration Drives on a regular basis at the largest food pantry in the County,

in libraries around the County, and on the three Baldwin County campuses of Coastal Alabama Community College. If this sounds like a like of traveling, Baldwin County is 100 miles from the northern tip to the southern tip!

---

## **LAWSUIT - CONT'D**

the law – burdens made heavier by Alabama's history of racial discrimination and voter suppression. As a "friend of the court" or "amicus curiae" we have asked the court to re-examine the social science and experiential evidence presented in the lawsuit. To read the complete brief, go to <http://www.lwval.org/GBMvMerrill2018/GBMvMerrillAmicusBrief2018.pdf>

## UPDATE FROM MOBILE

SUBMITTED BY MARY ANNE WILSON

The 2017/2018 year at LWV Mobile has been an active one both with voter services activities and educational programs. We have conducted voter registration and outreach events at local high schools and summer jobs programs; focused on people with past convictions through Project H.O.P.E., the US Attorney's Office initiative, and an annual information fair, sponsored by the Vernon Crawford Bar Association; the homeless through Project Homeless Connect; voter registration at the naturalization ceremony in December 2017;

and National Voter Registration Day. Our Vote 18, youth engagement/voter registration program for high school seniors reached 1,138 students and submitted 314 registrations in 2017/17-18 to date. We also participated in Vote411 for the 2017 Mobile Municipal elections.

The monthly luncheons, which are open to the public, featured speaker panels on various aspects of the coastal impact of climate change for the first half of the year and speakers on topics related to voting beginning in February.

**Elisabeth McNamara, immediate past president of LWVUS, will be the speaker at our Annual Dinner Meeting on Tuesday, April 24.**

Her topic will include looking back and forward as we approach the 100th Anniversary. LWV Mobile would like to **invite the members of the other Alabama Leagues to attend.** Further details can be found on our website, [www.lwvmobile.org](http://www.lwvmobile.org), or by emailing [leagueofwomenvotersmobile@gmail.com](mailto:leagueofwomenvotersmobile@gmail.com)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - CONT'D

The best part of being president is having an active board – thanks from the bottom of my heart to Jean, Kim, Starr, Kristen, Stacey, Renee, Scarlett, Robyn, Haley, and Elizabeth! I had big shoes to fill and they have helped me begin to grow into them. In collaboration with off-board members/committee chairs/local league & mal unit presidents, they have positioned the league to capitalize on a state-wide energy in politics. As Kristen's article demonstrates, our membership is growing and we hope to take

a substantial delegation to our National Convention in June. During the upcoming election season, we hope to produce both Vote 411 and a state-wide televised candidate forum in partnership with Alabama Public Television – in addition to our usual voter registration and voting rights restoration efforts!

I encourage each of you to attend Council in Birmingham, April 14, 2018. It promises to be a very informative gathering as well as an excellent opportunity to network and have fun!

In addition to attending Council, please make sure your league is represented at the LWVUS Convention in Chicago, June 28-July 1. At Convention, Leagues have the opportunity to shape national policy and direction – let's make sure Alabama is heard!

In League,  
Barbara Caddell  
President, LWVAL

## **LWV EAST ALABAMA UPDATE**

### **SUBMITTED BY CORY UNRUH**

The League of Women Voters of East Alabama kicked off their year in August with what is becoming an annual Women's Equality Day celebration. We held a potluck in Martin Luther King Park in Auburn, and encouraged our members to bring their families and friends to help celebrate 97 years of women voting! In October, we invited the City of Auburn Water Resource Management Director and a representative from the Alabama Water Watch to speak about water quality issues in Eastern Alabama. In November, we welcomed a student from Auburn University who presented about Franklin Delano Roosevelt's historic visit to Auburn in 1939 and the LWV's part in the ratifying the 22nd Amendment to the US Constitution.

After a fun holiday party in December, LWVEA hosted a East Alabama Legislative Forum in January. We invited five legislators representing Auburn and Opelika to speak about issues they would be tackling in the 2018 legislative session. We had a great turnout and it was good practice for upcoming candidate forums this summer and fall.

In February, we invited Lucia Hermo from the Alabama ACLU to present about how the Alabama legislative process works, and the most effective ways to communicate with your state representative. We also discussed bills that the LWVAL was tracking during the legislative session, and encouraged everyone to call their representatives regarding the payday lending bill.

This month, we drew from our membership and had a lively discussion at our program meeting about civic engagement at the local level. Many of our members have extensive experience in the city council, city board appointments, and attending city planning meetings. We invited a few to share their experiences, and encouraged members to join our Observer Corps, which acts to hold our government officials accountable.

We are looking forward to next month's Annual meeting and dinner. We have invited Kathryn Sadasivan from the Southern Poverty Law Center to come speak about the amicus brief filed by the SPLC regarding curtailed access to the ballot in Alabama because of photo voter ID laws. She will also speak to us about helping citizens get their voting rights restored.

Throughout the year, we sold yard signs for \$5 with the words "VOTE TODAY" written in red. They were a big hit with our members and the general public. We made no profit from the signs, and the low price made them an easy sell.

The members of the LWVEA were very active this fall because of the special Senate election. Many of our members worked at polling locations, and we spent a lot of time dispelling myths about what happens at the polls. We also spent the year registering voters and encouraging people to keep their voter information updated so they don't encounter any problems at the polls on election day.



## ADVOCACY - CONT'D

**Criminal Justice Reform** bills we support would reallocate judges to address backlogs, substantially revise the juvenile justice system, require sentences to take into account time served awaiting adjudication, impose a moratorium on use of the death penalty, abolish or limit the death penalty, address indigent defendant issues, require healthcare in county jails and authorize expungement of criminal records for youthful offenders. We oppose bills allowing for use of nitrogen hypoxia in carrying out the death penalty, expansion of capital offences, and limitation on appointment of counsel in parental termination cases.

In **Education Policy and Funding**, we support a bill requiring church-based day care centers to be licensed, and a bill that would provide a graduate of a state college or university, who cannot find meaningful employment upon graduation, tuition to attend a two-year technical or community college free of charge in order to attain an associate's degree or technical certificate. We

oppose a bill that would divert funds from the Education Trust Fund to other expenses. We are also monitoring bills that would address the issues of guns in schools and allow school personnel to carry weapons on school grounds.

**Healthcare Policy** bills providing for scholarships to medical students who will practice family medicine in rural areas of the state and for loan-repayment programs for certain advanced-practice nurses, as well as for an infectious disease elimination pilot program are supported. Bills limiting access to abortions and placing a work requirement on certain Medicaid recipients are opposed.

A **Discrimination Law** that requires equal pay for substantially similar work, regardless of the gender of the employee is supported.

A **Payday Loan Reform** bill that increases the minimum term of a payday loan from 10 days to 30 days is supported.

In the area of **Public**

**Transportation**, we support a bill that would create the Alabama Public Transportation Trust Fund.

I would like to thank my very hard-working committee for reading and following all these bills. Thanks to Robyn Hyden, Barbara Caddell, Haley Colson Lewis, Joyce Lanning, Scarlett Gaddy, Kim Bailey, and Connie Arnwine. A special thanks goes to Jean Johnson for creating and keeping up the Legislative Report on the League website. This would be impossible without her.



**REDISTRICTING - CONT'D**

District 70, represented by Rep. Chris England, D-Tuscaloosa

District 71, represented by Rep. A.J. McCampbell, D-Demopolis

District 77, represented by Rep. John Knight, D-Montgomery

District 82, represented by Rep. Pebblin Warren, D-Tuskegee

District 85, represented by Rep. Dexter Grimsley, D-Newville

District 99, represented by Rep. James Buskey, D-Mobile

**Senate**

District 20, represented by Sen. Linda Coleman-Madison, D-Birmingham

District 26, represented by Senate Minority Leader Quinton Ross, D-Montgomery

District 28, represented by Sen. Billy Besley, D-Clayton

District 99, represented by Rep. James Buskey, D-Mobile

---

**NATIONAL CONVENTION - CONT'D**

the following way: the state board may send 3 delegates and each local league may send 1 delegate plus 1 additional delegate for each 50 members (as of January 31, 2018).

I want to encourage each local league to send as many delegates as possible. We will do what we can to enhance "possible". Let me know who might be interested in attending, and I will try to work out a way for those persons to go! It is a wonderful opportunity for us to learn, to make connections and strategize, as well as exchange information. See YOU in Chicago!!!

## **RUTH WRIGHT (1933-2018)**

**SUBMITTED BY CHARLOTTE WARD**

Ruth Lehmann Wright, who died on February 11, was born and grew up in Lagrange, Georgia. An only child, she was active in her Methodist youth group, attended and graduated from LaGrange College, where she was listed in "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities," and continued graduate studies in English at Auburn University. She did further graduate work at the University of Virginia and the University of London.

Returning to Auburn in 1965, she married fellow English professor, Tom Wright, and taught, among other things, the rigorous composition

courses that prepared generations of Auburn students to write well in whatever business or profession they pursued.

Ruth joined the Auburn League not long after joining the Auburn faculty, and over the years, the League benefitted from her writing skills in many ways, from the minutes she prepared during several terms as secretary to informative reports of her observations of City Council meetings to the professionally written reports for both local and state-wide studies.

Ruth served two terms as president of the East Alabama (formerly Auburn) League, during which she became the face of the

LWV in her community, representing the League with integrity and passion. Whatever Ruth undertook, she did well, and happily, the local League recognized her gifts with the Phyllis Rea Award for community service in 2003 and the Sue Flood Award for service to the LWV in 2011. Ruth served for many years as a director on the state board, and in 2005, LWVAL honored her with the Joyce Woodward Award for service to the state organization.

Ruth's dedication and cheerful (one of her favorite words) spirit will be sorely missed by her League friends across the state of Alabama.

---

## **IN MEMORIAM: DR. MARTHA BLACKWELL**

**SUBMITTED BY ANNE PERMALOFF**

Dr. Martha Blackwell passed on December 19, 2017 after a long illness. Martha served the Montgomery League as president and vice president for multiple years as well as a director. She was an Auburn University at Montgomery psychology professor before her retirement.

---

## **JEANNE BERMAN HONORED**

**SUBMITTED BY BARBARA CADDELL**

On March 8, 2018, League activist Jeanne Berman was inducted into the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame at Judson College. Ms Berman was an early president of both the Montgomery League and the LWVAL. She joins other Alabama League leaders such as Dixie Bibb Graves, Pattie Ruffner Jacobs, Jane Lobman Katz, Annie Lola Price, and Hattie Hooker Wilkins as members of the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame. Dot Moore, Myra Evans, and Barbara Cooper-South represented the LWVAL at the reception and induction ceremony.

**The League of Women Voters of Alabama  
2018 State Council Registration Form  
April 14, 2018; 9:30am-4:00pm**

**Birmingham/Jefferson County Transit Authority New Intermodal Transit Facility  
1801 Morris Ave., Birmingham, AL 35203**

*Registration Deadline: April 5, 2018*

Please send a separate form for each member and guest who will be attending Council. Want to register and pay online? Go to <http://council2018.lwval.org/payment/index.html>

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**League/MAL Unit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I will attend as a...(check one)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local League/MAL President | <input type="checkbox"/> League Member      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local League/MAL Delegate  | <input type="checkbox"/> State Board Member |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> GUEST              |

- Registration (check one):**
- |   |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting with lunch \$30.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch only \$18.00         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registration ONLY \$12.00  |

**Box Lunch (check one):**

- |  |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular - includes choice of Turkey or Ham sandwich |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian  |

**Payment Method (check one):**

- |  |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Send this form and your check (made payable to LWVAL) to:<br>Kristen De La Fuente, LWVAL<br>660 East Lane<br>Auburn, AL 36830 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Pay online</a> with PayPal (small processing fee applies)   |

**Visit [council2018.lwval.org](http://council2018.lwval.org) for LWVAL Council information and payment info.**



---

WWW.LWVAL.ORG

---



Like LWVAL on Facebook @LWVAL



Follow LWVAL on Twitter @LWVAL

## OFFICERS 2017-2019

Barbara Cadell, President

Jean Johnson, 1st Vice President

Kim Bailey, 2nd Vice President

Star Culpepper, Secretary

Kristen De La Fuente, Treasurer

Stacey Blersch, Director

Renee Collini, Director

Scarlett Gaddy, Director

Robyn Hyden, Director

Haley Colson Lewis, Director

Elizabeth Messer, Director

PO Box 530522  
Birmingham, AL 35253

Phone: 205-871-8194  
Fax: 205-879-8936  
E-mail: [admin@lwval.org](mailto:admin@lwval.org)

Editor: Kim Bailey

## ABOUT THE LEAGUE

The League of Women Voters is a citizens' organization that has fought since 1920 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. We operate at national, state, and local levels through more than 800 state and local Leagues, in all 50 states as well as DC, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong.

### League of Women Voters Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

### League of Women Voters Education Fund Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters Education Fund works to encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government to increase understanding of major public policy issues.