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Youth Voter Registration

The League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland's 2018 Youth Voter Registration Program, which is funded through a LWVUS grant, kicked off in mid-March. League volunteers throughout Greater Cleveland visited local high schools, community colleges and technical/vocational schools with the objective of assisting as many eligible young people as possible get registered and ready to vote in the May 8, 2018 Primary and beyond. This work will continue throughout 2018, culminating on September 25, National Voter Registration Day.

Millennial voters now make up a major subset of the American electorate and have the potential to affect the outcome of every election. According to the experts at CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement), participation in U.S. elections by young voters is abysmally low. Youth Voter turnout has been steadily declining since 1990 and hit the lowest level, at 20 percent, in 2014, according to the U.S. Current Population Survey. The LWVGC hopes to boost youth turnout by continuing to host high school and community-based voter registration drives, which can help fill the gaps in voter registration among the most underrepresented groups of young voters, including low income and non-college youth—who are more ethnically diverse and more likely to identify as LGBT than their college-educated peers.



LWVGC Shaker Heights Chapter Legacy Fellow
Sophia Gumbs registering voters at Laurel School

League volunteers helped equip the students for a smooth Election Day experience by giving them the tools they need to successfully cast a vote for the first time, making them aware of helpful resources like the League's online Voter Guide, www.VOTE411.org, which provides candidate and issue information for national, Ohio and local races and is invaluable to all voters, not just emerging ones.

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Vote for Issue 1 on May 8

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League volunteers also visited schools across Cuyahoga County, building upon previous relationships established with schools and developing new ones. We want to recognize the schools and how they worked to get their students connected to the political system and make their voices heard. Attention was paid in trying to reach as many eligible students as possible, especially in underrepresented communities. Volunteers were out in full force reminding students in local high schools that the Board of Elections in Ohio permits 17-year-olds to participate in the May 8 primary elections, as long as they will be 18 by the November general election.

Helping empower more young people to participate in government by providing voter registration opportunities has been especially moving in light of recent events. Interested volunteers are encouraged to stay involved (we'll be doing this for a while) and download the LWVUS *Empowering the Voters of Tomorrow* High School Voter Registration Training Manual, which distills the best of what League volunteers have learned about hosting effective youth voter registration drives.

Volunteers said what a joy it was to be with the students, helping them to get registered. Students were standing in line in some schools waiting for us to begin as we set-up. Over and over students THANKED US for being there! Many thanks to LWVGC Voter Services Chairs **Penny Jeffrey** and **Patricia Carter** whose time, effort and dedication made this happen. Additional thanks to all the Chapter Voter Services Chairs as well. It has been beautiful and inspiring to see young people coming together, wanting to become involved and spreading a powerful message everybody needs to hear and understand. Let's hope we hear their voices in future elections.

Volunteers worked hard and were great with the students. Many thanks to: **Mary Rice, Bennanaye Brooks, Roz Peters**, Kristen Fragrassi, Marge Sheridan, **Janet Ghiandoni, Maryann Barnes, Hannah Lebovits, Linda Tobin**, Rachel Sosnowchik, **Sue Pardee, Ketti Finneran**, and **Siobhan Leftwich, Anne Batzell, Audrey Morris, Sue Dyke**, Sophia Gumbs, **Ose Arhegan**, Lisa Vehey, **Sarah Divakarla, Frank Goforth, Lynn Lilly, Janis Ford, Lori Thorrat**.

— *Audrey Morris*

Public Policy Forum

Women in Politics: How to get more women to run for office in Ohio.

Wednesday, May 16, 7-8:30 p.m., Cleveland Heights/University Heights Library

For more information, go to: <http://www.lwvgreatercleveland.org/events/women-in-politics-how-to-get-more-women-to-run-for-office-in-ohio/>

Vote411.org Update

The League's national online voter guide, Vote411.org, is up and running for the May 8 primary. More candidates are responding as we become more widely known among both candidates and voters. We always need help drafting questions for candidates and pros and cons for local issues, so as we approach November's elections please start thinking about what you'd like to ask candidates and what you'd like to know about issues in your community. Then email me, marcia.goldberg@lwvgreater-cleveland.org.

— *Marcia Goldberg*

Dear Leaguers,

On February 6 a remarkable thing happened: compromise occurred in the Ohio legislature. Give yourselves an “attagirl.” It would not have happened without your hard work and persistence.

More than 775 people volunteered to work on the Fair Districts = Fair Elections campaign in many different capacities. We have trained signature gatherers and speakers, staffed petition pick up/drop off locations, raised funds, organized educational forums, obtained permissions and created information networks to publicize fruitful locations for gathering signatures, created and distributed flyers, and most of all stood outside libraries and meeting halls and walked streets and fairs and markets to gather signatures. The Fair Districts coalition in Cuyahoga County alone collected more than 40,000 (unverified) signatures and raised more than \$11,000 for the cause.

When more than 200,000 verified signatures had been collected state-wide, the majority leadership in the Ohio Senate decided to talk to us. We had been trying unsuccessfully to get them to agree to real Congressional redistricting reform to end gerrymandering since the successful ballot initiative in 2015 that created a seven-member apportionment commission to draw state legislative district lines. Only at the last possible moment, when it appeared that we would be successful in placing our initiative on the November ballot, did the Senate majority reach a compromise with the minority party and with the Fair Districts coalition. It passed both houses of the legislature and will appear on the May ballot as Issue One.

Issue One is not perfect (it is not as good as the Fair Districts proposal) but it is good enough. It requires transparent procedures, and a redistricting plan must be bi-partisanship or meet strict anti-gerrymandering criteria. We rapidly revised flyers, retooled our power-points and re-trained speakers to educate the community on Issue One at dozens of meetings and public events. Because nothing is certain in politics, we have continued to collect signatures for the Fair Districts ballot initiative and if Issue One does not pass we will try to put the Fair Districts initiative on the ballot in November. But we fervently hope Issue One passes in May. We are ready to move on and engage with new challenges.

Spring is always a busy season for LWVGC and this spring is no exception. Because gerrymandering has made so many congressional and state legislative districts uncompetitive, the May primary has become much more important. We anticipate that more competitive elections will be held in the May primary than in the November general election this year. There are contested elections in the Democratic primary for the 16th Congressional District, and in many primaries for seats in the Ohio House and Senate. Many of these primaries are in geographical districts with small chapters that cannot possibly provide the manpower to produce candidate forums or in geographic areas that do not have chapters. We hope that you will consider volunteering to join a cadre willing and able to help with candidate forums not only in your chapter but throughout greater Cleveland. If you are willing to do this, please contact the co-presidents or the voter service director. And we wish to remind you that we always need local volunteers to formulate district specific questions for VOTE411 and to make follow-up calls to candidates.

This year the LWVUS annual convention is being held in our backyard, Chicago, from June 28 through July 1. We can bring nine voting delegates to convention and we will subsidize the registration fee for voting delegates, but any member can attend. Convention is an opportunity to help shape the future of pro-democracy activism and a whole lot of fun too. You can find more information about the convention here: <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/council-and-convention/convention-2018> If you are interested in attending the national convention please contact the co-presidents.

The last few months have been extraordinary, but you ain't seen nothing yet!

Yours in league,

— *Susan Murnane and Marcia Goldberg, co-presidents*

Annual Meeting, “Sustaining Our Democracy” Saturday, May 19, 9:15 a.m.

Guest speaker, Sunny Simon, Cuyahoga County Councilperson, who will talk on “Sustainability in Cuyahoga County”

For information, go to:

<http://www.lwvgreatercleveland.org/lwvgc-annual-meeting-2018-page-coming-soon/>

LWVUS 53rd National Convention 2018, “Creating a More Perfect Democracy”

June 28 - July 1, 2018, Hilton Chicago

Represent our League; have a voice in pro-democracy activism; have some fun! For more information, go to <http://www.lwvgreatercleveland.org/events/lwvus-53rd-national-convention-2018/>.

Have you renewed your LWV membership? It's easy to do. Go to: <http://www.lwvgreatercleveland.org/join/> to see how you can join/renew online or through the mail.

Visit the LWVGC website: <http://www.lwvgreatercleveland.org/> to see Fair Districts information, all upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and more.

VOTER Co-Editors

Wendy Deuring

Anne Engel



Follow us on twitter @ LWVGrCleveland



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All League members and their guests are invited to the

Annual Meeting 2018, Saturday, May 19
“Sustaining Our Democracy”

The agenda includes the following: Proposed Budget for 2018-19, Program for 2018-19, Bylaws Updates, and Nominating Committee Report.

featuring guest speaker, **Sunny Simon, Cuyahoga County Councilperson**

“Sustainability in Cuyahoga County”

Annual Meeting is a business meeting, but also a social event, with lunch and a speaker to follow the business meeting. This is an excellent opportunity to meet other League members, learn about League activities, and come to understand the organization, principles, and culture that form the basis of League’s mission and action. Feel free to bring guests.

Schedule: Sign-in – 9:15 a.m.; Business meeting – 9:30 a.m.
Catered lunch – Noon; Speaker – 12:30 p.m.

Location: Canalway Center at the
Cleveland MetroParks Ohio and Erie Canal Reservation
4524 East 49th Street in Cuyahoga Heights

Lunch fee: \$10 per person

RSVP by MAY 7

LWV of Greater Cleveland Fourth Annual Meeting Registration Form.

Fill out and mail this form by Monday, May 7 to:

LWV of Greater Cleveland c/o Michael Baron, 25477 Bryden Road. Beachwood, OH 44122

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Chapter _____

(If no chapter affiliation, put down “unaffiliated”)

Are you bringing guests? If so, how many? _____

If having lunch, include a check for \$10 per person, payable to LWV of Greater Cleveland.