



THE VOTER

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Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

President's Message



November was an interesting month. On Election Day, I voted and then, armed with new-to-me information on what makes a polling place accessible to disabled folks and what candidates can and cannot do, I visited or drove past a handful of Polling Places. At the locations I saw, I found that the spirit of the law was upheld where it couldn't be followed to the letter. I breathed easy for a week thinking that democracy was alive and well in the Upstate. Then I learned that some polling places I hadn't seen had longer than expected lines or overly aggressive candidates' representatives. I reminded myself that we must be ever vigilant.

I hope that you had a wonderful holiday season and are ready for the new year! Watch for information about the program planning meeting and the January meeting on Campaign Finance Reform. Planning is happening in the background too, the nominating and budget committees have begun their preparations for the annual meeting in May.

I've been apolitical for most of my life but since I've joined the League, I have a new appreciation for governmental machinations. Thank you to the candidates that ran and to those who thought about running. Thank you to their families. Thanks to poll workers and observers. Finally, thanks to all the behind-the-scenes folks who make things happen.

Yours in League,

Paula Appling

Welcome our newest members!

Our three newest members all have a history – in one way or another – with the Clemson Area League. Elaine Park's mother-in-law is Lauretta. Elaine is a 6th grade science teacher and loves, loves, loves science and her kids! Charlotte Holt's mom is Berneice, a long-time member and hard act to follow. Charlotte stays busy working and taking care of family. Our third new member, Sandia Rosche, is rejoining us after being busy with other things. She loves animals and travel and is very active with the Arts Council, Hospice of the Foothills and the Clemson Little Theatre.

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THE VOTER

League of Women Voter Clemson Area
 P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633
www.lwvclemsonarea.org

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- Sandra Gray, President Elect
- Holley Ulbrich, VP/Program Co-chair
- Elaine Laiewski, Secretary
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- Bill Hare, Voter Service Pickens Co.
- Elaine Epstein, Voter Service Anderson Co
- Della Baker, History and Archives
- Janie Shipley, Nominating Committee

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Thursday, Jan. 3 **PICKENS COUNTY LEGISLATIVE MEETING**, Central Town Hall, 5:30 pm
- Tuesday, Jan 8 **JANUARY GENERAL MEETING: “Campaign Finance Reform”**
Central/Clemson Library, 7:00 pm social, 7:30 pm program
- Tuesday, Jan 15 **REGISTRATION & ELECTION COMMISSION MEETING**, Pickens County
Administrative Office in Pickens, 4:30 pm (Agenda item: Voter Photo ID)
- Tuesday, Jan 15 **LWVCA BOARD MEETING**, Clemson Community Meeting Room, 5:30 pm
- Tuesday, Jan 19 **STATE & LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING**, Jane Polk’s house, 10:00 am.
Food provided by LWVCA Board Members.
- Directions to Jane Polk’s house: From Clemson take 123 toward Seneca. Turn right at the Food Lion onto Old Clemson Highway. Turn right onto Bayshore Drive. In one block turn left onto Alpine Way. This road appears to end at Lawrence Bridge Road but continue straight onto the Polk’s gravel driveway. Keep to the right on this driveway until you arrive at the house.
- Saturday, Feb 23 **WINE TASTING FUNDRAISER**, with David Moore at Palmetto Spirits,
ARTS Center, 6:30 pm. \$30/ ticket or \$100/4 tickets. MORE LATER

January General Meeting: “Campaign Finance Reform”

Professor Joe Stewart of the Clemson Political Science Department will be with us for our regular 2nd Tuesday meeting on January 8th at the Clemson-Central library to talk about campaign finance reform. The LWV has had a long-standing focus on campaign finance reform even before the *Citizens United* decision released a flood of spending on negative ads in the 2012 presidential campaign. What can we as citizens do to try to keep this from happening again? Our action focus will be the proposed 28th amendment defining personhood as only natural persons and not corporations, which would be a step in the right direction, but there are many other approaches to campaign finance reform, including better disclosure and public financing. Come join the conversation on Jan 8th.

~Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

State and Local Program Planning-January 19

On Saturday, the 19th of January at 10 a.m. we will continue a long-standing tradition of a program planning brunch. All Leagues participate in program planning in January—state and local in odd-numbered years and national and local in even numbered years. With a state convention coming up in April, we need to think about what issues we want to study and what action focus we want to have in 2013-15. Our hostess will be Jane Polk, and board members will provide food. We will email you the current state positions before the meeting so that you can think about it, and we have chosen some particular portfolios to talk about in terms of study needs and/or action opportunities.

~Submitted by Holley Ulbrich



DIALOGUE WITH B.R.SKELTON: RECAP

The General meeting of the Clemson Area LWV was held on November 13, 2012 at the Central-Clemson Library at 7:00 pm. The topic for the meeting was "A Dialogue with the Legislative Panel". Three incumbent state representatives, one from each county, were invited to participate on the panel to discuss the achievements, the failures, and unfinished business in the last session of the General Assembly as well as the issues they expect to dominate the next session. Although Rep. B. R. Skelton, who serves on the Ways and Means Committee and the Higher Education and Property Tax subcommittees, was the only member of the legislative delegation who participated, it was an informative discussion.

Rep Skelton discussed some of the issues that were addressed in the last session. He thinks the legislature did the best they could with the budget under the economic circumstances. He was proud for the increase achieved in the K-12 Education Fund. Another accomplishment was the passing of the new voter ID law. Rep. Skelton felt the signature accomplishment was the revision of the retirement system and the termination of the TERI program. He believes that South Carolina retirees are now more secure.

There are several legislative issues to be addressed in the coming year including

- Decision to accept the Federal funds available for Medicaid. The governor will have the final say.
- For the budget, the issue will be how to spend the extra 150 million dollars available from revenues this year.
- Correcting the election fiasco that occurred this year. He believes that the county election commission will be more involved and will receive the candidate paperwork.
- The governor's restructuring the proposed budget and the Control Board. He believes the House will pass a bill on this issue.
- Funding K-12 education by property taxes will be considered.
- Aid to Subdivisions – the issue is how to fund since services are mandated. City and county taxes will probably be increased to cover mandate.
- Tuition increases are a form of taxes and there needs to be more control over Education taxes.
- His pet peeve is smoking in public places and he hopes to have more uniform laws passed.
- He hopes the legislation will revisit the Home Rule and believes that all knowledge does not reside only in Columbia.
- A Highway system bill may be proposed that would increase the General Budget by 5% over a 5-year period and the monies would be sent to the DOT for road improvements. A 5 cents gas tax may be considered.

Several questions/topics from the audience were posed to Rep. Skelton for his comment. These topics included merit system base pay for teachers, hacking investigation and what is being done, and funding for the Department of Mental Health.



The League Assists with Research on Voting

League members participated in research to determine if a verification tool created in the School of Computing at Clemson University will improve verification in a variety of environments. Specifically, they investigated different forms of identity verification for voting. The studies involved the Clemson University team playing the role of voters. The “voters” presented various forms of ID to the participants, who then tried to verify the voter's identity claim in order to allow them to vote or not.

The research goal is to determine the effectiveness of various forms of ID for voting. Dr. Gilbert expects to have results to share with us sometime in December.

Participants were Linda Gahan, Elaine Laiewski, Matt Laiewski, Alice Flower, Mary Ann McKenzie, PattiLee Tate, Diana Stafford, Mike Stafford, Aleta Robinson, Sandra Gray, Laura Goldstein, Ron Goldstein, Starlett Craig, Della Baker, Ellen Reneke, Patty Warner, Arlene Stewart, Bill Hare, Elaine Epstein, Bill Epstein, Rosellen Aleguire, Ellen Magee, Frances Plotnik, and Don Plotnik. Paula

Appling and Eleanor Hare assisted with organization. *~Submitted by Eleanor Hare*



SC SENATE DISTRICT 2 FORUM-OCT 24



PAULA APPLING, LARRY MARTIN, REX RICE



LEAGUE PARTICIPANTS: RENEE, CAROL, ALICE & CHARLOTTE

PICKENS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 5 FORUM



CANDIDATES:

Judy Edwards,
Valerie Ramsey,
David Whittemore,
Jr.



League Participants: Paula Appling (moderator), Frances Plotnik, Alice Flower. Not shown: Elaine Laiewski, Claudette Bennette, Mary Ann McKenzie, Charlotte Holmes, and Eleanor Hare

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VOLUNTEERING AT THE PICKENS COUNTY ELECTIONS COMMISSION

My volunteer effort consisted mostly of assigning absentee voters at the county office to iVotronic voting machines and selecting the correct ballot type for each voter. The voters presented absentee ballot requests, containing their name, address, and the ballot type for their home precinct. Absentee voting in the county office began October 8 and a total of 3,784 voters cast their ballots in person. As a volunteer, I worked for three hours a day, beginning two weeks before Election Day. We were very

busy and more volunteers would have been very helpful.

On a day-to-day basis, the Pickens County Elections Commission operates with a director, a clerk, and occasional temporary employees who register voters, provide information about our electoral system, store and maintain our voting machines and conduct local special elections. Pickens County also provides an up-to-date web site and e-newsletter.

Conducting a General Election requires a greatly expanded workforce. Pickens County has 64,107 registered voters, casting ballots in 61 precincts. A Poll Clerk and additional Poll Managers for each precinct must be found and trained. Absentee ballots must be sent in response to requests and ballots received in the mail must be checked against signatures. All voting machines (at least 3 per precinct) must be initialized with the correct date and time and operating components must be checked before delivery to precincts. Phones must be answered and, beginning October 8, absentee voting made available in the county office. Everyone in the county office was working from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. to meet the workload.

The 2012 General Election in Pickens County was further complicated by the redrawing of precinct lines in response to the 2010 census. Nine new voting precincts were added. Mailing new Voter Registration Cards to all registered voters, an expensive process that had not been done in many years, revealed many inaccuracies in the voter rolls. Although changes in voting precincts caused some problems in this election, the new districts insure that no precinct has more than 1500 registered voters and, if watershed elections are ignored, only 8 of 61 precincts have more than one ballot style. If SC changes to paper ballots in the future, minimizing the number of ballot styles per precinct will greatly simplify elections.

Volunteering was a good experience for me. The employees at the county office were genuinely appreciative of the hours that I contributed and I enjoyed working with them.

~Submitted by Eleanor Hare

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Forums for SC Senate District 2 (Sen. Larry Martin, Rex Rice) and Pickens County School District 5 (Judy Edwards, Valerie Ramsey, David Whittemore) were held at the Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Library in Easley. An attempt to provide a forum for SC House District 3 was unsuccessful when the Petition Candidate told us that he would participate only in the Pickens County Taxpayers' forum.

One interesting agreement among all three School Board candidates was that the six-member School Board was not functioning well because four of the six members, a two-thirds majority, must support an issue in order for it to pass. All three agreed that the School Board should have an odd number of members.

~Submitted by Eleanor Hare



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 10, 2012

CONTACTS:
Barbara Zia (LWV SC)/ 803/251/2726
ziab1@comcast.net
Kelly Ceballos (LWV US)/ 202 263 1331
KCeballos@lwv.org

THREE-JUDGE PANEL BLOCKS SOUTH CAROLINA VOTER PHOTO ID LAW FOR 2012
Court Decision Based on Expansive Interpretation of Law

Today, [a U.S. Federal District Court](#) blocked implementation of South Carolina's new voter photo identification law for the November 6th general election, giving South Carolina voters a big victory.

The federal three-judge panel approved the law for elections thereafter, but did so under an expansive interpretation of the law. Specifically, in future elections, voters who do not have a required form of photo ID will still be able to vote so long as they sign an affidavit stating the reason for not having obtained a photo ID.

"We are pleased that this court has applied common sense and blocked the state of South Carolina from requiring photo ID from all eligible voters on November 6th. We believe it would have caused too much confusion at the polls for voters and poll workers alike," said Elisabeth MacNamara, President of the League of Women Voters of the U.S. (LWVUS). "In addition, the court has interpreted the law in such a way that voters will not absolutely be required to show a photo ID in order to vote in later elections, in 2013 and beyond. This is a victory for voting rights."

The League in South Carolina and other states around the country will continue to fight against restrictive voting laws. "We are cautiously optimistic about today's decision," stated Barbara Zia, Co-President of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina. "Voting is the one time all citizens have an equal say in molding our collective future here in South Carolina and across this great country. Barriers such as photo ID threaten that equality. We will work to ensure that the law is applied fairly and let voters know that a photo ID is not required in 2012."

"Politicians should not be allowed to manipulate election laws for their own personal gain. It is time for us to move beyond the rhetoric and work to pass laws that will ensure that everyone who is eligible to vote can vote and will have their vote counted without any barriers. Nothing less than protecting America's great democracy is at stake," concluded Zia.

Originally, the Department of Justice (DOJ) denied preclearance to South Carolina's restrictive photo voter ID law. The League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC) joined the lawsuit in support of the DOJ decision.

OBSERVER CORPS

Clemson City Council	1 st and 3 rd Monday, 7:30 pm.	Anderson County Council	1 st and 3 rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm
Seneca City Council	2 nd Tuesday, 7:00 pm.	Pickens County School Board	4 th Monday, 7:30 pm.
Pickens County Council	1 st and 3 rd Monday, 7:00 pm.	Oconee County School Board	3 rd Monday, 6:00 pm.
Oconee County Council	1 st and 3 rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm.	Anderson Co. School Board	3 rd Monday, 6:00 pm

Contribution Form

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area LWVCA, P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Phone (opt) _____

____ I wish my contribution to remain anonymous.

____ I wish my contribution to be tax deductible where allowed by law. My check is made out to the "*League of Women Voters Ed Fund*" which is a 501(c)(3) organization.

____ I wish to support the League's action priorities. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters" and is not tax-deductible.

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

P. O. Box 802
Clemson, SC 29633

[Recipient]

Address Line 1
 Address Line 2
 Address Line 3
 Address Line 4