



LEAGUE LINES

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Calendar

January

Mon., 8 – 5:30-7:30. Columbia Board Meeting at Jason’s Deli, 823 Gervais Street 29201. Members are welcome to observe; if you wish to speak, please contact Janelle to be placed on the agenda.

Tues., 9 - General Assembly reconvenes

Thurs., 18 - Public Policy Luncheon this month will be our annual program planning meeting See details on this page ->

Sat., 27 - Annual LEAD meeting at the SCEA building, 421 Zimacrest Drive in Columbia. League Education and Advocacy Day is one of the League’s two big education and advocacy events each year. 10-2:30. REGISTRATION \$25 per person includes materials, light breakfast, and lunch. See [page 6](#) to volunteer. Register by mail with this [form](#), or <https://www.facebook.com/events/794556694049673/permalink/794572610714748/>

February

Thurs., 15: Public Policy Luncheon. City Council member Greg Pierce on the Penny Sales Tax.

Future Events

Fri., April 27 - State Council in Columbia

Thurs. – Sun., June 28 – July 1- National Convention in Chicago.



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JANUARY PUBLIC POLICY LUNCHEON



ANNUAL PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING

Thursday January 18, 2018 – 11:45 AM

LOURIE CENTER – PARK CIRCLE (AT PICKENS & BLOSSOM STREETS)

Join us for a lively discussion. We'll briefly review League positions as necessary (we will not refine positions), and determine our priorities for the near future. This is the year that local Leagues participate in the LWVUS Program Planning process by making recommendations concerning program issues and/or discussion issues for the national level.

We will continue state and local priorities as established in the past with a focus on voter participation in the primary elections in 2018, and nonpartisan redistricting after the 2020 consensus.

The purpose of this meeting is to decide how to best use our energies and resources to meet the most important current issues. Summaries of League positions can be found here: <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/book/summary-public-policy-positions>

All League members are welcome. RESERVATIONS for a catered lunch are required no later than Wednesday NOON, January 17

Cost of lunch: \$10.00

(Attendees may bring a lunch)

Please RSVP to Susan James: sc.susanbjames@gmail.com

or call 256-6822

*VIEW FROM RIVER'S EDGE**Janelle Rivers*

The Columbia League began the holidays by celebrating Sarah Leverette's December birthday with a grand party and fund raiser at the beautiful home of Laurel and Arthur Suggs. Everybody was relieved that Sarah recovered from a recent illness in time to attend. Because of Sarah's generous request that her birthday gifts be directed to the League, we received more than \$3,600. Thanks to Pam Craig and to the planning committee for hosting a wonderful event. More thanks to those who provided the decorations and the sumptuous array of delicious refreshments and to each of the generous contributors who helped to expand the local League's bank account.

As 2017 drew to a close, we reflected on a year of chaos and suspicions of corruption in many places. At the federal level, the changes had been so numerous and so frequent that it was difficult to keep up with the news and difficult to decide where to focus. What would be the long-term effects of overhauling the tax system; abandoning net neutrality; holding business leaders, media personalities, and politicians accountable for unwanted sexual overtures; and investigating the degree to which our elections may have been influenced in ways that would have been impossible to imagine five years ago?

At the state level, ownership and regulation of public utilities, an inadequately funded public school system, and environmental concerns appeared regularly in the news, while the issue of partisan redistricting lurked in the background. At the local level, diminished funding, budget allocations for services, and use of money intended to improve transportation competed for attention. At every level of government, we saw hints of possible corruption.

As we begin 2018, the role of the League of Women Voters seems particularly important. Unlike numerous single-issue organizations that have cropped up in response to specific problems, the League has a rich portfolio of carefully developed policy positions and is well positioned to advocate on a myriad of issues where action is needed. Where should we focus our efforts?

It's time to set priorities and choose activities for the future. Give some thought to how we can best use our energy and resources. Then make plans to participate in the planning session, which will be held in lieu of our regular Public Policy Luncheon for January.

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PUBLIC POLICY LUNCHEON RECAP:

October's luncheon was "how to get the vote" out. November's was "who's going to keep people from voting?"

John Ruoff spoke to us about voter suppression, a means of influencing an election outcome by limiting the number of people who could/would vote in opposition to power. As credentials for this topic, he has over thirty years of experience with electoral district lines and is considered an expert on racial polarization in voting and electoral participation. Additionally, John is married to our treasurer, Ann Maletic.

John described the November Public Policy meeting as a continuation of the LWVSC November 4th meetings on redistricting in Columbia and other regions. The core of John's presentation was an economic analysis. To suppress voting, the cost of voting can be raised, or the value of having voted can be lowered. Voter suppression can be both formal and informal. He stated that political scientists don't know exactly why people vote, but they will tell us that voting is correlated to income and education. Keeping people poor and minimally educated can suppress voting. In early years, economics directly played a part because owning property in the US was a prerequisite to voting. Other factors that played a role in keeping voting levels low or restricted were poll taxes and "literacy" tests, both methods largely directed at the black population in the South, and later blocked by the Voting Rights Act (VR Act) of 1965. Male suffrage, of course, kept half of the population from voting.

For example, in 1960 the City of Tuskegee was reshaped so that Tuskegee Institute (now University) and almost all the black voters were no longer within the city limits. However, all the white residents remained. This situation and others like it gave support to the VR Act.

Today, the classic suppression is photo ID requirements. It is a different version of the poll tax because now people need to produce a birth certificate. This becomes a problem for elderly people born in rural areas, often by a midwife, so there is no legal record of their birth, or their certificate does not exactly match their name. The problem compounds itself when these same people, most of whom are over seventy years in age, have to obtain affidavits from persons who were present at their birth. Although this is a problem now, in the future having identification will become a way of life; other methods may be created by the party in power to limit voter registration and turnout.

The Supreme Court ruled in 2013 to restrict Section 5 of the VR Act by no longer making it necessary for political jurisdictions to have administrative review of changes to election practices or procedures to determine if there is a discriminatory purpose or effect before it could be implemented. This may allow those groups drawing the municipal lines to choose among the following now-legal strategies: (1) annex new sections favorable to their

politics; (2) collapse polling places making certain groups travel farther; (3) limit registration hours; (4) make voting forms/ballots difficult to obtain; (5) pack districts so that members of one party, race, or similar politics are in the same district; or (6) crack districts by splitting people of similar racial or political make-up to keep them from electing a candidate of their choice. Those maneuvers, especially when along racial lines, directly impact partisan gerrymandering.

These types of practices have created voter suppression. In districts where it is difficult for voting to count, people have the sense that there is no need to vote. It lowers the value of voting, giving a sense of a non-democratic society.

One of the things that could change this is an independent commission to resolve redistricting. John pointed to events in the past where citizen advocacy has changed legislation--Act 388 (the school tax), the EIA, and the recent gas tax increase. We, as citizens, need to pressure our legislature for a more equitable system. We also must push to follow many of the rules that are already in the system for fair voting (e.g. a precinct for every 1000 voters). This will be a League priority, and we will be working with other organizations.

Pam Craig

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REDISTRICTING - The process of actually drawing district lines will take us into early 2022 for that November election. The currently widespread practice in both parties is to establish districts to enable power to be retained by whichever party is in control of the legislature. The LWVUS is playing an active role in the legal issues, which are covered by the press. See the Winter *VOTER* for more details regarding LWVUS leadership.

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MEMBERS REACH OUT: **Marianne McGrath** and **Janelle Rivers** offered an Orientation Meeting for members. **Janelle Rivers** presented our redistricting goals at the Greater Irmo Democratic Club. **Pat Mohr** has agreed to start working on the piece to support League registration of high school students to vote in the 2018 election. Pat will develop a short class participation element to support the new Social Studies Standards and work with teachers who may be reluctant to give up class time. Thanks to each of you for making the League what it is!

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OTHER NEWS

SARAH SAYS: THANKS. During my recent “stop off” at the hospital and beyond, there has been a flood of expressions of friendship. I have received letters, gifts, calls, and cards, each evidence of the deep friendship of the donor. I search for words to express my appreciation. To my culinary providers, I continue to enjoy home-cooked meals. I can’t thank all of you enough. What a wonderful evening. Thank you to the planners, donors, and attendees for a memorable happy birthday party. I received a “good” report when I left Still Hopes, and look forward to being in even better shape after three weeks of rehabilitation. *Sarah Leverette*

Here are a few photos of those who attended the party in Sarah’s honor:



Hostess Laurel Suggs with Christina Goodwin



Seated: Sarah, Eve Stacey, Laurel, Sara Rannawaz, Missy Caughman, and Janelle Rivers



Lynn Teague with Ann Maletic



Mr. & Mrs. Howard Duvall



LEAD MEETING: Saturday, January 27. We need a bit of assistance from a few participants. The State treasurer, Fran Holt, will be registering attendees. She and others would appreciate support. Volunteers will help Suzanne decide lunch and snacks (either a large spread or a more basic box lunch or wraps); “meet & greet”; help share either set up or cleanup; and/or mostly just stay alert to whatever may be needed. Many hands and brains make light work. If you can help to setup, plan to arrive about 9:15. Reach Suzanne at 803-546-5800 or suzrhodes@juno.com to coordinate efforts.

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THE BUMP STOCK RESOLUTION: Second reading approval was given on December 5 by Columbia City Council and is being followed by leaders of LWV of the Columbia Area. The Board has sent a letter of support to the Mayor and Council. LWV US positions enable us to participate actively, see *Impact on Issues*, in part: “The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens. The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety”.. <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/book/gun-control>.

The Columbia proposal is “Ordinance No.: 2017-109 - Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 14, Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions, Article IV, Offenses Against the Public Peace and Order to add Sec. 14-100 Enhanced trigger devices declared illegal.....WHEREAS, the City Council of Columbia recognizes gun violence represents a significant health risk to the citizens of the City of Columbia, the State of South Carolina and the United States of America...”

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ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES FOR 2018: It's hard to stay focused on

local environmental issues with so much going on at the national level. Things such as cutbacks at the EPA, climate change denial at the Whitehouse, threats to environmental protection grants, offshore drilling, and political posturing on environmental laws draws attention from many groups and political parties. Unfortunately, SC candidates for Governor and Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, seem to be avoiding environmental protection issues. Practically nothing appears on their campaign web sites.

Locally, the cleaning up of old messes in the Congaree River and responding to sewer spills are getting great attention from Bill Stangler, our Congaree River Keeper.

Chester Sansbury

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BOARD CONTACT INFO 2017 - 2018 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE COLUMBIA AREA

OFFICERS

President	Janelle Rivers	rivers12@bellsouth.net
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LWVSC VP Issues & Action	Lynn Teague	Teaguelynn@bellsouth.net



Websites:

National: www.lwv.org/

State: <http://lwvsc.org/>

Columbia: www.lwvcolumbiasc.org

Facebook: *To see our Facebook Page:*

1. Go to YOUR Facebook page and begin typing "**League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area**" in the search box until a list pops up.
2. Click on the name **League of Women Voters of Columbia, SC** with the familiar blue LWV Logo on the left.

That's it!

Twitter:

1. Go to YOUR Twitter account and search for the League of Women Voters Columbia Area and connect.

Facebook and Twitter email address:

@LWVColumbiaSC

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Columbia City Council

1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM City Hall 1737 Main Street Columbia, SC 29201

Check website at www.columbiasc.net

for more information.



Lexington County Council

Meet: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 4:30 PM 2nd Floor County

Administration Building 212 South Lake Drive Lexington, SC 29072

For confirmation of meeting dates, please call 785-8103 or check website www.lex-co.com

www.lex-co.com



Richland County Council

Meet: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM 2nd Floor County

Administration Building 2020 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29202.

For more information, please contact the Clerk of Council Office @ (803) 576-2060 or check:

www.richlandonline.com

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