



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
AUSTIN AREA

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the **VOTER**

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October 2017

Vol 22 #3

Calendar

October 11, 7-9 p.m.

One Judge's Response to Truancy with an Innovative Approach to Support Families. South Unit Meeting.
11001 La Roca Cove, Austin, TX 78739
Hosted by Charlotte Slack



October 11, 11:30-1 p.m.

Position Update Committees Informational Lunch
Cafe Express.
3418 N Lamar Boulevard, Austin, TX 78705

October 14, **Canceled**

The AISD Bond Proposition: Understanding the Purpose and the Plan.

October 18, 7-9 p.m.

One Judge's Response to Truancy with an Innovative Approach to Support Families. North Unit Meeting.
7917 W Rim Drive, Austin, TX 78731
Hosted by Judy Parken

October 25, 6-7:30 p.m.

Innovative Education at Austin Community College: Supporting Student Success, Transforming Learning, and Developing the Austin Area Workforce.
Austin Community College, Highland Campus, meet in front of the Social Staircase.
6101 Airport Boulevard, Austin, TX 78752
Public welcome.



Cinde Weatherby, President

It was a proud League day September 24th on the Huston-Tillotson University (HTU) campus to jointly host a conversation on institutional racism and systemic inequities in Austin. Austin Mayor Steve Adler, AISD Superintendent Paul Cruz and HTU President Colette Pierce Burnette spoke truths and issued challenges to the full audience of League

members and interested citizens to deal directly with the issues. *Austin American-Statesman* senior editorial writer Alberta Phillips posed tough, probing questions to the Mayor and the task force co-chairs Cruz and Pierce Burnette, as well as the City of Austin's first diversity officer Brion Oakes.

We observe a dark spirit of divisiveness across the country. Our League outreach places an emphasis on voting rights and access to participation in democracy for everyone, especially those in minority communities most affected by institutional voter suppression. We also highly value equality and fairness in our policy positions.

Actions After Conversation

After the conversations begin, what actions can we support to foster change? The Mayor's Task Force and its resulting report, provide background on the historical actions leading us to today's landscape. The first step after the program is to continue the conversations on a personal level.

The report recommends many actions for consideration. This League year we are revisiting and renewing our policy positions in six subject areas. Four subject areas - affordable housing, education, criminal justice, and healthcare - were addressed directly by the mayor's task force working groups. We call upon our membership and supporters to take advantage of the hard work these community members dedicated to outlining recommendations. We ask you to study them in detail. Our position update committees definitely will.

I ask you to take time today to look at the report's specific recommendations as they relate to your daily activity, work, home, and community around you. The report is available [here](#) for downloading or reading online. Familiarize yourself with the suggestions and consider them in your personal life, your vocations and avocations.

Continuing the Conversation

During the September 24th discussion, President Pierce Burnette suggested reading the 2016 National Book Award winner, [*Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America by Ibram X. Kendi*](#), to gain a deeper understanding. We've been approached by LWV-AA members and friends about fostering a group reading. In the meantime, we discovered a book club - DiverseCity Book Club -- founded and coordinated by one of our newest members Charlotte Moore. We hope to announce details soon about a joint opportunity to read the book and then discuss it in a more personal setting.

Serious About Collaboration

We also want to reiterate our organization's joy in our rapidly growing, more diverse membership. It could be even more diverse. Whether through membership or collaboration with other groups, we want to make progress in addressing the subject of intended and unintended racism and the inequities it causes. Please reach out to me personally to suggest or propose ideas for making that progress with us.



Dr. Paul Cruz, AISD Superintendent; Mayor Steve Adler, Austin Mayor; Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette, HTU President (photo by Dixie Davis)



City of Austin Equity Officer Brion Oakes and *Austin American-Statesman's* Alberta Phillips (photo by Dixie Davis)



Dr. Cruz and Mayor Adler (photo by Dixie Davis)

The Voters Guide will be available in time for early voting and election day

Frances McIntyre, Voters Guide Editor

This year voters will be voting on Amendments to the Texas Constitution and two bond

issues, one for Travis County and another for Austin ISD. The *Voters Guide* explains ballot language and outlines the pros and cons of the Constitutional Amendments and the AISD Bond proposal.

The *Voters Guide* will be released in mid-October:

- Printed copies will be available at the Austin Library branches and at the LWV-AA office building 1609 Shoal Creek Blvd. on October 14th outside the north entry door by the bike racks and handicapped parking.
- A PDF link will be posted on www.lwvaustin.org and on LWV-AA's [Facebook page](#).

We encourage everyone to become informed about the issues and cast their votes during early voting (October 23-November 3), or on election day, November 7, 2017.

Tuesday, October 10, 2017 is the last day to register to vote in the November 7, 2017 General Election.

Programs

Lea Masiello, VP Programs



Scheduled programs in October include:

October 11 and 18, 7-9:00 p.m., One Judge's Response to Truancy with an Innovative Approach to Support Families.

South Unit Meeting:
11001 La Roca Cove, Austin, TX 78739
Hosted by Charlotte Slack

North Unit Meeting:
7917 W Rim Dr, Austin, TX 78731
Hosted by Judy Parken

Justice of the Peace Susan Steeg will discuss her innovative program to decriminalize truancy by providing social services and support to families. These unit meetings will bring together topics relevant to education and criminal justice. The two committees working on position updates in these areas should find these meetings relevant to their research.

October 11, 11:30-1 p.m., Position Update Committees Informational Lunch.
Cafe Express. 3418 N Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78705

Chairs, committee members, and mentors/assistants are invited to lunch to discuss the process and purpose of position updates. All who have volunteered will receive more information on this meeting soon.

October 25, 6-7:30 p.m., Innovative Education at Austin Community College: Supporting Student Success, Transforming Learning, and Developing the Austin Area Workforce.

ACC Highland Campus (meet in front of the Social Staircase)
6101 Airport Blvd, Austin, TX 78752

How does the ACC Highland Campus support student success, transform learning and

develop the Austin Area workforce? Tour the Math Accelerator with 600 computer stations, the largest in the country. After a tour of the Learning Lab, LWV-AA will hold a forum with speakers from ACC administration, the Math Accelerator, ACC students representing the adult population seeking an associate's degree, faculty from Free Minds, and faculty from the Biosciences Incubator. LWV-AA member and Austin Community College Co-Chair of the Board of Trustees Gigi Bryant will be one of our speakers at this meeting. Dr. Molly Beth Malcolm, VP of Community Engagement and Public Affairs, will help us learn more about how ACC's programs for strengthening student success connect to the Austin community and workforce. Vive Griffith, another LWV-AA Member, will speak about the program she has been involved in, Free Minds, which provides free ACC courses to selected students from Foundation Communities. We will also have speakers from ACC in the areas of math, supplemental instruction, and the bio-sciences to make this program very STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) relevant.

There are ALWAYS opportunities to get involved. Please contact Lea Masiello (leamasiello@gmail.com) for more information on volunteer opportunities, or questions regarding upcoming programs.

Voters Service

Joyce LeBombard, VP Voters Service

We have exciting events coming this fall including:

- **First Vote!** a free, nonpartisan program to help high schools build voter education and registration into their curriculum.
- **Premium Volunteer Deputy Registrar (VDR)** training to provide knowledge that goes beyond basic VDR training, including voter id requirements, 17/10 regulation, important election dates, and how to find what county a voter is in. (Basic VDR training must be completed first.)



Training for First Vote! and Premium VDR begins in October. Please contact Joyce LeBombard (VP-VotersService@lwvaustin.org) to learn more.

Volunteer to be a VDR and register citizens to vote! It's the easiest and most rewarding thing you can do to make democracy work! VDRs help register eligible citizens to vote by distributing, reviewing, and accepting completed voter registration applications. This training must be repeated every two years. If you haven't attended a training since January 1, 2017, new training is required. VDR training is available:

Travis County:

- 1st Tuesday of every month at 10:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m., and 6:30 p.m.
- 1st Saturday at 10:30 a.m.
- No reservation needed - just show up.
- Travis County Tax Office at 5501 Airport Blvd., Austin Texas 78751.

Williamson County:

- 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- Class size is limited - call 512-943-1630 to schedule
- Williamson County Voter Elections Office at 301 SE Inner Loop, Suite 107, Georgetown, Texas 78626.

The Register & Vote Committee, led by JoAnn McKenzie and Mollie Snow, has been busy! Volunteers held 13 events in September, including 4 on National Voter Registration Day. This month League volunteers registered 127 citizen and collected 87 new applications!

LWV-AA Advocacy

Frances McIntyre, Director of Advocacy

Commentary: Trump's 'integrity' panel spreads falsehoods about elections

(Reprinted from *Austin American-Statesman*)

The right to vote is a critical principle of our democracy. We want our election system to be free, fair and accessible to all eligible voters.



President Donald Trump's sham panel - the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, which was formed in May - has launched an assault on the right to vote.

Led by Vice President Mike Pence and Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, this so-called Commission on Election Integrity is laying the groundwork for potential voter suppression by the wrongful removal of eligible voters - including black, Hispanic, elderly and student voters - from the rolls. The agenda of this commission is part of a wider effort to suppress the vote, keep certain politicians in power and undermine our elections by spreading falsehoods about our elections system.

Kobach's request in July for sensitive voter roll data - including the names, addresses, dates of birth, political party affiliation, past voter history and even partial Social Security numbers of registered voters - is a dangerous violation of privacy. The League of Women Voters has serious questions about the legality of releasing this personal information.

These requests come from an individual who has no interest in free and fair elections - and with a record of preventing eligible citizens from participating in our democracy. Kobach has been brought to court - and lost - several times for suppressing the constitutional rights of citizens to vote in his home state of Kansas.

The commission's views on elections are well-known; its members have already been discredited as political ideologues with dangerous agendas. This commission intends to use its "findings" and recommendations to legitimize policies that are known to prevent eligible voters from having a voice in our elections.

The cost to voters is far greater than anything to be gained from collecting this data. Dozens of secretaries of state agree with the League and have said publicly that they will not comply with Kobach's request to turn over sensitive voter information.

On June 30, 2017, Texas Secretary of State Rolando B. Pablos agreed to Kobach's request for voter information. His statement: "The Secretary of State's office will provide the Election Integrity Commission with public information and will protect the private information of Texas citizens while working to maintain the security and integrity of our state's elections system. As always, my office will continue to exercise the utmost care whenever sensitive voter information is required to be released by state or federal law."

The League of Women Voters of the Austin Area is dedicated to ensuring that all eligible voters - particularly those from traditionally underrepresented or underserved communities, including first-time voters, non-college youth, new citizens, communities of color, the elderly and low-income Americans - have the opportunity and the information to exercise their right to vote.

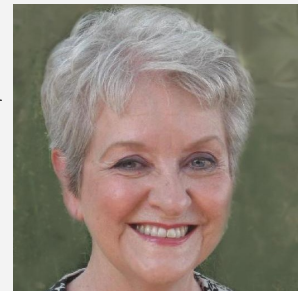
We urge Pablos to reconsider this request and defend the privacy of American voters. Democracy works best when everyone participates. The League of Women Voters encourages you to tell the sham commission you want to see them work on ways to increase participation and modernize our elections.

We will not allow them to intimidate voters or prevent them from exercising their right to vote. Our democracy must work for all so we can have thriving communities, a just economy and a healthy planet. We need to give local election officials the tools they need to ensure our elections are secure, modern and accessible for all Americans.

Membership Report and Interest Survey

Brenda Koegler, Membership Director

Welcome New Members! Hope you have had the chance to attend one of our new member monthly coffees. We hold new member coffees to serve as a mini-orientation to help them get involved as soon as possible. If you have not had a chance to attend one or would like another opportunity to learn more about the League, please let me know. And a special thank you to this month's Renewing and Sustaining members! We are grateful to Sustaining Members for their additional financial support for our local League.



Welcome, New Members:

Meagan Bennett, Patricia Burger, Colette Pierce Burnette, Sarah Currie, Denise Earhart, Laura and Greg Hitt, Sara Hunt, Kathleen Puchek, Caitlin Roetheli, Taryn Stoneking and Jane Swanson

Thank You, Sustaining Members:

Joann Lovelace, Margit and Arnold Orange, Gretchen Otto, Colette Pierce Burnette, Joan Quenan, Caitlin Roetheli, Jane Swanson, Debbi and Chuck Voss

Thank You, Renewing Members:

Carole Buckman, Leslie Hall, Vicki Kullberg, Angela Philley and Carol Todzia

As a member of the Austin League, each of you is also a member of the national and state leagues. See the links below for an abundance of educational information.

www.lwvaustin.org

www.lwvtexas.org

www.lwv.org

Member Interest Survey: If you have time to volunteer for the League (either regularly or occasionally), please complete this [Member Interest Survey](#). This information will help us identify your skills and interests, and connect you to the appropriate League leaders.

Need more information? Visit our webpage for more information on [new memberships](#) and [membership renewals](#).

Thank you for supporting the League!

In Memory/Honorary

John Trainor donated in memory of Zora Evans

Sarah Currie donated in honor of Rev. Kyra Fitzgerald

Ruth Davis donated in honor of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

Donations

Mary Blackstock, Marjorie Loehlin, Frances McIntyre, Mary Jane Burson, Gwendolyn Santiago, Vicki Kullberg, Dee Jackson, Ellen Strong and the Alamo Draffhouse Ritz Cinema

YouthCam PSA Program

Mary Beth Maher, Joyce LeBombard, Elliot Johnson, Randall Slagle, Dolores Ortega, Velva Price

Voters Guide

Guadalupe Sosa, Leon and Peggy Holland

Randall's Good Neighbor Program gives the Austin League a percentage of sales from members who link the League to their Remarkable Cards. Complete this [document](#) and return to any Randall's store. Our account number is 465.

Making a legacy donation to the League of Women Voters Austin Area in your will is the easiest way to offer support of the League's work for years to come. [Learn how](#) to leave your legacy and become a member of our League's Legacy Society.

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The League shall not support or oppose any political party or candidates. It may take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest after significant study and consensus is reached.

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