



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
AUSTIN AREA

www.lwvaustin.org
f lwvAustinArea
@lwvATX

the **VOTER**

512-451-6710
lwvaustin@lwvaustin.org

Summer 2017

Vol 22 #1

Calendar

Tuesday, September 5, 4:00 pm, **Board Meeting**, League Conference Room, 1609 Shoal Creek Blvd. Ste 202 Austin, TX 78701. Members welcome.

Sunday, September 24, 2017, 1:30 - 4 pm, **2017 LWV Austin Area Fall Kick-Off Program**, King-Seabrook Chapel, Huston-Tillotson Campus, Parking in University lot on Chalmers Ave., north of 7th Street. (VDR Training, 4 - 5pm.)



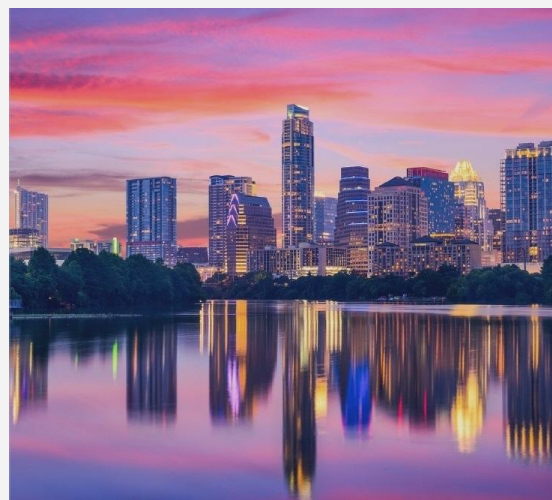
Save the Date: 2017 LWV Austin Area Fall Kick-Off

Cinde Weatherby, President

The League of Women Voters Austin Area is extremely pleased to announce our program kicking off our 2017-18 League year, hosted with the collaboration of Huston-Tillotson University on its campus. The very timely program will feature **Austin Mayor Steve Adler**, **H-T President Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette**, and **Austin Independent School District Superintendent Paul Cruz** talking about the [Mayor's Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic Inequities](#).

Drs. Burnette and **Cruz** co-authored the report released March 31, 2017. This program will provide an overview of Task Force work, including that of Working Groups for education; real estate and housing; health; finance banking and industry; and civil and criminal justice. **Mayor Adler** will offer a status update on implementation activities.

This is the second consecutive year of LWV-AA collaboration with a local university as it begins the new League season calling attention to important conversations in our community and encouraging civic engagement of local university students.



SAVE THE DATE

2017 LWV Austin Area Fall Kick-Off Program
on the Mayor's Task Force on Institutional Racism and Systemic
Inequities

King-Seabrook Chapel, Huston-Tillotson Campus*
1:30 - 4 pm, Sunday, September 24, 2017

Featuring:
Austin Mayor Steve Adler
Huston-Tillotson President Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette
AISD Superintendent Paul Cruz

* Parking in University lot on Chalmers Ave., north of 7th Street

The conversation on race in Austin is not a new one. As noted in the co-authors' letter transmitting the report to Mayor Adler, in 1938 then Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson delivered the "Tarnish of the Violet Crown" national radio address recognizing the pitfalls of a tale of two cities that focused on the existence of slums, housing, and poverty in Austin. Today, while Austin is listed as the 2017 Best Place to Live in the US by U.S. News and World Report, it is also the most economically segregated major metro area in the country.

The League encourages informed and active voter participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Local leagues concentrate on local government in our education and advocacy, and we have established positions on many of the areas covered in the Racism/Inequities report.

Please join us to learn and participate in the discussion. I highly recommend reading the [report](#) before the event. You will find detailed recommendations, and come away with a clearer understanding of the issues from the history and personal stories included.

As in 2016, at the completion of the program, Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector/Voter Registrar Bruce Elfant will train and certify Volunteer Deputy Registrars at 4 pm. If you have not renewed your VDR certificate since January 1, 2017, this is a great opportunity.

For additional information, or to RSVP for the free event open to the public, please go to our [website](#).

A Summer of Community Engagement

Lea Masiello, Joyce LeBombard and JoAnn McKenzie

Summer is here, but our work continues. League volunteers are busy with community programming, registering voters and sharing our mission of Making Democracy Work. Highlights include:

Voters Service gave a presentation to the American Heritage Girls for their Capitol Day covering the history of the League of Women Voters, Voter Registration, Why Vote, and a demo of a voting machine. About 300 girls (3rd to 10th grade) participated to earn the Civics & Government badge.

We participated in Austin Young Chamber of Commerce's non-profit fair. While we registered a few people there, the focus was on recruiting more members, and making contact with other nonprofit organizations we may collaborate with for First Vote!, and voter registration & GOTV events.

Voters Service worked with ADAPT/RevUp, Disability Rights



Texas, and other nonprofit groups to execute National Disabilities Voter Registration Week, July 17-21, 2017. We attended the Travis County Commissioner Court ceremony proclaiming support of the week. President Cinde Weatherby spoke at the kick-off celebration on July 17th, at the Disability Rights Texas office. Bruce Elfant, Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector/Voter Registrar presided over a special VDR training.

Partnering with Travis County, the League set up a voter registration booth at the Greater Austin Juneteenth Celebration in Rosewood Park. Volunteers braved the heat to walk along the parade route and stroll through the array of food trailers, registering voters and celebrating the anniversary of news of the Emancipation Proclamation reaching Galveston, TX in 1865.

On the July 4th, Mollie Snow and JoAnn McKenzie set up a table on the parade route of the Northwest Hills parade, registering several voters, handing out about 140 cups of free lemonade, and having many engaging conversations about the League and making democracy work.

July was National Ice Cream Month and League volunteers spent July 20th registering voters and recruiting new members at Amy's Ice Cream in the Arboretum.

At several blood drives, a health fair, and dinners during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, League volunteers enjoyed the hospitality of several Austin area mosques and their members. We were able to inform and register voters and engage in conversations about the history of the League, and opportunities to become involved with us locally.



Supporting Educational Success through After School and Summer Programs.

May 24, 2017. LWV participated in an informational luncheon and tour at The Learning Center at Heritage Oaks, one of Foundation Communities facilities providing affordable housing for families. Foundation Communities supports education through its after school programs, including summer programs open to all students in the area around Learning Centers. These programs are a model for how schools can help everyone achieve academic, personal, and career goals.

Code Next and Affordable Housing: A Good fit? June 4, 2017. We had a wonderful gathering to learn more about CodeNEXT and Affordable housing, as part of our LWV Austin study this year to update our current positions on affordable housing. Five distinguished speakers helped us understand some of the complexities of the new land development policy in CodeNEXT, the problems of affordable housing in Austin, and what we might do as advocates for more affordable housing. To access the information presented, click on the speaker's name to view his/her presentation slides.



[Greg Anderson](#)



[Jim Duncan](#)



[Francisco Enriquez](#)



[Amy Wong Mok](#)



Kathie Tovo

Protecting the Water of the Texas Hill Country: Studies, Research, and Advocacy. June 22, 2017. This forum was part of the LWV Austin's 2017 study to update our position on environmental quality. We heard from a variety of perspectives about water management in the Hill Country and Austin. It touched on a broad and deep picture of the "water grab" in the Hill Country, as well as flood management, two sides of the same topic. Our featured speaker, Jim Blackburn, [[presentation slides](#)] discussed the science and legal issues involved in protecting Hill Country water. Jensie Madden and Carol Olewin commented on LWV-Texas legislative work to protect water and results of an Austin local study of flood mitigation needs, respectively.

Programs

Lea Masiello, VP Programs

The LWV Austin Area's program goal for 2017-2018 provides a wonderful opportunity for members to meet and discuss current topics of concern in our area, as well as to enjoy the company of your fellow LWV-AA members.



Opportunity to Get Involved

We will be reviewing six of our local position statements that are of most concern to our membership. Most of these positions have not been updated in awhile. LWV-AA positions are statements on local issues that we have reached through research and study. We use these positions to inform the membership and the general public as well as guide our local advocacy work. You can find our LWV-AA positions at [this link](#) to our 2017 annual workbook.

We need committee volunteers. Each committee will examine one position area and make recommendations for an updated statement, if the committee finds changes warranted. Each committee will meet for an initial assessment of their position and then determine a speaker for a Unit Meeting, which is a small-group meeting. I will provide a timeline, overall structure, and discussion questions for each committee. Following the unit meeting, each committees will then meet once more to draft an updated position which will be presented at one of two General Meetings in April 2018.

Which position interests you?

- * Education
- * Transportation
- * Healthcare
- * Affordable Housing
- * Criminal Justice
- * Environment

How would you like to participate?

- * Chair of committee
- * Member of committee
- * Participant in unit meetings
- * Host a unit meeting in your home
- * Organize a unit meeting at another venue

You can expect to attend a total of no more than four meetings. Each one, except for the general consensus meeting, to last just one hour. All committee and unit meetings will

be held in the early evening and will be geographically scattered throughout the Austin metro area.

To participate, please email Lea Masiello at leamasiello@gmail.com.

Voters Service

Joyce LeBombard, VP Voters Service

I'm excited about Voters Services' plans and progress already made this year. We held our first Voters Service Leadership Team meeting in June in order to get to know one another, discuss our mission, vision, and goals in the short-term (now through 2018 election) and longer-term (next 2-5 years), and to discuss the dependencies and synergies between the sub-committees. We are also fine tuning how we are organized which currently includes:



- Candidate Forums (Carol Eckelkamp)
- Voter Education Campaigns (TBD)
 - * First Vote! (TBD)
 - * K-10 Civics (Gina McCool)
 - * PSA YouthCam Contest (Dixie Davis)
 - * You're Not to Old to Vote (TBD)
- Voter Education Materials (Elizabeth Swaminathan)
- Voter Registration & Get Out The Vote (JoAnn McKenzie & Mollie Snow)
- *Voters Guide* (Frances McIntyre)

The First Vote! committee has made good progress. They've held several committee meetings and are exploring ways to increase engagement. There is a great deal to accomplish in order to deliver the First Vote! program to high school juniors and seniors. So far the First Vote! committee:

- * met several time with our co-sponsor, Travis County Tax Office - Voter Registration Division and Travis County Clerk - Elections Division;
- * developed list of all Travis County High School Principals;
- * designed and mailed out 'heads-up' postcard to the principals;
- * developed a detailed project plan;
- * developed a draft lesson plan, slide presentation, presentation talking points, and activity handout.

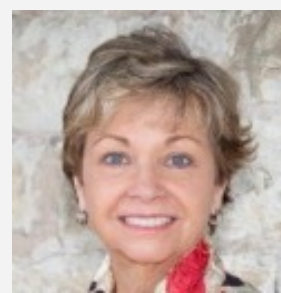
A big Thank You to Maureen Mercado for her excellent work developing First Vote! materials drafts, and JoAnn Furner on the initial planning and coordination with the schools.

If you have time and are interested in volunteering with Voters Service, please contact Joyce LeBombard at VPvotersService@lwvaustin.org.

Voter Registration, Get Out The Vote

JoAnn McKenzie, Voter Registration Director

We are now coordinating with Texas Civil Right Project representatives to assist in development and implementation of Volunteer Deputy Registrars (VDRs) training to provide VDRs with a deeper knowledge of rights, laws, rules, regulations, and standards for voter registration and voting. LWV-AA will make this enhanced "premium VDR training" available to League VDRs, members, and volunteers.



In early May, Voter Registration held a well-attended committee meeting to clarify our priorities and focus. Noting that more than 90% of Travis County eligible voters were registered for the 2016 election, VR committed to making the registration experience also a motivation to vote experience, with a goal of improving voter turnout. Given that Voter Registration's priorities and work align and overlap with those of Get Out the Vote, the two committees are now combined and are co-chaired by JoAnn McKenzie and Mollie Snow.

The committee's goals are to increase:

- the number League members who become certified or recertified as VDRs,
- League VDR's knowledge through enhanced training
- the number of organizations with whom we partner for recruitment and registration.

We wish to increase:

- the number of voters registered by League members and
- the number of voters who exercise their right to vote.

To join us on the committee, become certified or re-certified as VDR, or learn more about opportunities to volunteer, please contact JoAnn McKenzie VoterRegistration@LWVAustin.org or Mollie Snow msnow1@austin.rr.com.

LWV-AA successfully moves into new space

Debbi Voss, VP Organization

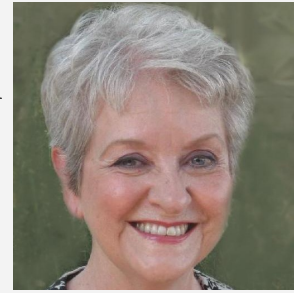
In May, we moved into our new office at 1609 Shoal Creek Blvd. #202, with Leadership Austin as our good neighbor and fellow tenant. Thirty-five years of "stuff" from our 31st Street office was evaluated to determine if it would make the trip to our streamlined new facility. We sent 193 files which included minutes, workbooks, member rosters, *VOTER* newsletters, *Voters Guides*, studies, consensus statements, testimony, correspondence and speeches from the 1960's through 2011 to the Austin History Center, part of the Austin Public Library. We have retained precious historical material to use in the next couple of years to celebrate LWV-AA's 100th Anniversary.



Our office also includes twice-monthly usage of a large conference room and a small meeting room for 8 people on a first-come-first-serve basis. To make a reservation for the conference room, please contact Debbi Voss at daracobs@aol.com. The Office Corps is fully staffed and getting comfortable in the new space. Drop me a note if you would like a personal tour by an Office Corps volunteer.

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 new members 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:

Anissa Allbritton, Sue Anderson, Sally Baulch and Donis Rhoden, Vicki Carow, Elizabeth Haltom and Clay Newman, Mary Anne Hunt, Aletha Huston, Taylor Jackson, Jennifer Sharp, Samantha Sheffield, Carthy and Robert Shelton, Stephanie Swanson, Meme Thomas, Mary Trimble and Conrad Mattox, and Rochelle Wilk

Thank You, Sustaining Members:

Sue Anderson, Vicki Carow, Jaci Collins, Dana DeBeauvoir, Mescal Evler, Elizabeth Haltom and Clay Newman, Sula Howell, Taylor Jackson, Hal and Judy Jennings, Kimberly Levinson, Kathryn Mettelka, Jodie and Julie Moore, Catherine and Joseph Nall, Jennifer Sharp, Carthy and Robert Shelton, Stephanie Swanson, Mary Trimble and Conrad Mattox

Thank You, Renewing Members:

Heather Becker, Mara Coleman, Mary Cullinane, Jacquie and Tom Graves, Kathleen Hackett, Clark Jobe, Shelley Koegler, Sherry Lee, Martha Maxwell, Laura Morrison, Anne Peticolas, Janice Williams, Betty Williamson

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 help us connect you to 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 of:

Barbara J. O'Brien by Judy O'Brien Chavis

The Koegler Family by Gwen Santiago

Alicia Koegler by Audrey Wick

Margaret LeBombard by Joyce LeBombard for *Voters Guide*

In Honor of:

JoAnn McCarty by Cinde Weatherby

Garland Asman by Deborah Voss

Donations:

Cecilia Burke for *Voters Guide*
Frances McIntyre for *Voters Guide*
Janice Williams
Gwendolyn Santiago
Frances McIntyre
Anne Peticolas
Aletha Huston

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.

Board of Directors

[Cinde Weatherby](#)
President

[Lea Masiello](#)
VP Programs

[Mary Jane Burson](#)
VP Community Relations

[Debbi Voss](#)
VP Organization

[Joyce LeBom bard](#)
VP Voters Service

[Gina McCool](#)
Secretary

[Gwen Santiago](#)
Treasurer

[Brenda Koegler](#)
Membership

[Frances McIntyre](#)
Advocacy & *Voters Guide* Editor

[Cindy Schaufenbuel](#)
Communications

[JoAnn McKenzie](#)
Voter Registration

[Chrissy Nanton](#)
VOTER Editor

[Melissa Crijns](#)
Development

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.

Join Our Mailing List!

 Forward to a Friend

League of Women Voters of the Austin Area
1609 Shoal Creek Blvd. Ste 202
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 451-6710
lwvaustin@lwvaustin.org



[How to Follow the League on Social Media](#)