



THE DC VOTER

A Voice for Citizens - A Force for Change

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Summer 2011

President's Message

By Kathryn Ray

Who Among Our National Leaders is Brave Enough to Speak Up? Mr. President? Speaker of the House? Senate Majority Leader?

These questions I posed at the DCVote rally in Upper Senate Park on May 11. Citizens of the District of Columbia suffered unprecedented abuse by the 112th Congress. We were shamefully used as political pawns in the great federal budget debacle. Why should our D.C. tax dollars be subject to the political whims of someone else's Congressman? Why should the budget of D.C. be entangled in federal budget battles that have more to do with ideology than fiscal responsibility? Who will call a halt to the hypocrisy? Who will end this reprehensible abuse of power?

Taxation without representation is wrong. Treatment of DC residents as colonists is wrong. Reprehensible violation of our most sacred political rights as citizens of the United States is wrong, and must stop now!

Our suffragist grandmothers asked "Mr. President: How long must we wait?" Today the League asks the same question. "Mr. President: How long must we wait for equal treatment?"

Today's national political leaders may not be brave enough to act, but Dr. Billie Day, LWVDC's Immediate Past President, has what it takes! Read her account of being arrested and renew your pride in being "In League" with the likes of Billie.

The DC 41

By Billie Day

Along with other members of the League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia, I participated in the April 11 demonstration against the placement of specific DC riders on the Federal Budget bill. Since its inception in 1920, League members have worked on issues affecting the District including full democracy for its citizens. I did not go to the demonstration planning to be arrested, but once there, and thinking of all those who have ever **gone to jail for their beliefs, I didn't feel I had a real choice.** I thought: what action will be necessary to get attention to this issue and for

the Congress to respect the rights of DC citizens? While the six DC officials received the most publicity, thirty-five others from across the city chose to make a statement by being arrested (followed by twenty more in subsequent weeks). As Eleanor Holmes Norton recognized on the floor of the House of Representatives: "The message of the DC 41 was that **D.C. elected officials and residents will not walk away from the infringement of their right to govern themselves and to spend their taxpayer-raised local funds as they choose.**"

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LWVDC MEMBERSHIP FORM

2011

The date of renewal for all memberships is March 31 of each year. For questions about membership please call the League office at 222-0710.

Annual Dues Rate

\$45 individual _____ \$60 Joint Household _____

Make check payable to LWVDC

For a small handling charge, you may also join or renew online at www.lwvdc.org.

(Please print)

Name

Street Address

Apt. No.

City

State zip code

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email address

In addition to my dues, I enclose a contribution to:
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LWVDC General Fund (non-deductible) \$ _____

Please write separate checks for each.

Send membership form and check(s) to:
LWVDC, 1100 Fifteenth Street NW, 11th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Affiliation with the national League is included in your LWVDC dues. You become part of important work throughout the United States. Keep up with the work you support and news of LWV US at www.lwv.org

You also become part of a regional network with Leagues throughout Maryland and Virginia LWV-NCA (National Capitol Area) www.lwvnca.org



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Annual Meeting Highlights

The 2011 Annual Meeting was convened at Clyde's of Gallery Place on Saturday April 16 by President Billie Day. The slate of new officers was presented by the Nominating Committee and unanimously elected. (See listing at right.)

The Annual meeting's featured speaker was Dr. Toni-Michelle Travis, Associate Professor of Government at George Mason University.

Dr. Travis, a graduate of D.C. Public Schools, has published extensively in scholarly sources and has served as a political analyst on C-span, CNN, NPR, and Kojo Nnamdi's Politics Hour. From 1998-2002 she produced and hosted Capital Region Roundtable, a cable television show. As an active member of the American Political Science Association she has served as president of the National Capital Area Chapter and of the Women's Caucus.

Her latest book, *Democratic Destiny and the District of Columbia*, which she edited and co-authored with the late Professor emeritus Ronald Walters, assesses District mayors from a historical perspective and analyzes public policy issues that faced each new mayor.

Dr. Travis shared her thoughts on the status of DC and the views that outsiders hold of our city. She observed that "Washington, D.C. is the place where we talk about democracy, but don't practice it. Hypocrisy flourishes here. This is the city where we craft policies of nation building applying democratic principles to countries we feel are not operating on principles of 'real democracy.' Yet, the residents of Washington still don't have true Home Rule." Presciently, Dr. Travis maintained that ethics will always be an important issue in DC politics.

Immediate Past President Billie Day, Ph.D., a long-time educator with the DC Public School system, was thanked for her tenure as League president.

Under her leadership she coordinated the relocation of the offices to the new space on 15th Street, and generally got us organized. With a grant from LWVUS, she spearheaded the visit of Diana C. Perez, a Legislative Fellow from Colombia. During her tenure, the highly successful March on the White House to honor the 90th Anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment was held. The League used this opportunity to call attention to D.C.'s lack of voting rights. In another initiative, Billie created the New Leaders initiative to encourage talented new members to become active in the organization. The Board honored Billie with a contribution in her honor to the Global Classrooms program of the United Nations Association. Billie's presidency set a high standard for commitment and excellence.

League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia Officers and Directors 2011-1012

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President - Kathryn Ray
1st Vice President - John (Jack) Mathison
2nd Vice President - Geraldine Whitley
3rd Vice President - Goody Braun
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Jean Hall
Barbara Luchs
Leona Rumsey
Constance (Connie) Tate
Jonathan Talbot
Melody Webb

Nominating Committee

Joan Domike, Chair
Jane Varner Malhotra
Linda Softli

Membership Initiative for the District of Columbia

By Alexandra Dickson

In March, the League of Women Voters launched a regional outreach program in the Northeast and MidAtlantic to develop leadership skills and expand membership in local and state chapters.

This project, funded by the League of Women Voters of the United States Education Fund, Inc. and the Ruth S. Shur Foundation, creates a network of League leaders dedicated to energizing the League in communities across the United States.

At a three-day conference in Providence, regional **leaders assembled to review the national League's Membership and Leadership Development Program—a blueprint for the League's future growth.** Two delegates from the District of Columbia participated— **Alexandra Dickson** and **Linda Softli**. These League members, along with **Patricia Hallman** and **Melody Webb**, will be the leadership point-persons for the program in our city.

The Membership Development and Leadership Growth Program is a partnership between the LWVUS and local leagues to bring effective and easy-to-incorporate best practices to grow the League to our local league. At the training session, we learned best practices that are currently being used in 21 states across the country. There has been an overall increase in membership and

renewed energy in many participating leagues.

The program is designed to be a custom overlay of best practices for outreach and visibility onto existing or planned activities and events. LWVUS President, **Ellisabeth MacNamara**, attended the conference and **said “This initiative is a combination of basic marketing techniques and communication strategies designed to maximize the organization's most precious resource—our members' time.”**

This fall, coaches from LWVUS will hold a conference and training session in the District of Columbia specifically for members of our league. Anyone interested in attending the training session or in more information about the Membership Development and Leadership Growth Program should contact **Alex Dickson** at dickson.alexandra@gmail.com or 202-276-2589

Whether your interest is voter registration, open government, environmental protection, or social policy, you can make a difference. The League always welcomes new members—women and men of all ages, from all political persuasions—who care about making democracy work for our citizens and our communities. To join the League, please visit us online at www.lwvdc.org or fill out and return the membership form located on page 2 of this newsletter.

LWVDC.ORG Updated!

Checkout our updated website. Please log on to www.lwvdc.org to see the current calendar of events. Members, Officers and Committee Chairs: Please confirm the dates of your programs. Email the League if you have additions or corrections: LWVDC@aol.com

Safe Drinking Water Topic of March Green Bag Lunch

by Geraldine Whitley, 2nd Vice President & Environment Committee Chair

Mr. **Roy Allen Simon**, Associate Branch Chief for the Prevention Branch of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), delivered an intriguing presentation on EPA's work to keep the nation's drinking water safe. In doing so, Mr. Simon discussed briefly the history of the safe drinking water act.

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) of 1974 is the principal federal law in the United States intended to ensure safe drinking water for the public. SDWA sets standards for 160,000 public water systems providing water to almost all Americans. The Act does not cover bottled water or private wells. Mr. Simon told the group that he does not drink bottled water because the public water is safe and is under more strict scrutiny than bottled water.

The 1974 Act was issued in reaction to the discovery of organic contamination in public drinking water. The lack of enforceable national Standards persuaded Congress to take action.

Important 1996 amendments emphasized sound

science and risk-based standard setting; small water supply systems flexibility and technical assistance, community-empowered source water assessment and protection; public right-to-know; water system infrastructure assistance through a multi-billion state revolving loan fund and a greater protection for microbial contaminants, including cryptosporidium, while strengthening control over the byproducts of chemical disinfection. President Bill Clinton signed the amendments into law on August 6, 1996. All states are currently implementing EPA-approved operator certification programs.

Mr. Simon further stated that EPA has approved the **tap water flowing into our homes from the city's water supply system as Safe Drinking Water**. EPA monitors the water supply constantly to keep it safe for drinking.

The next Green Bag presentation will be in October 2011. We will announce the speaker and topic ASAP.

Committee Against Gun Violence Takes Active Role

Under the able leadership of First VP **Jack Mathison**, the LWVDC continues to be in the forefront of this critical issue. Jack reports that recent data show that the U.S. suffers far more gun violence than any other democratic country. In a recent action, the LWV-NCA (the Inter-League Organization of National Capital Area Leagues) voted to support the movement to reduce gun violence. **Looking to call attention to and close the "gun shop loophole", Jack participated in the ongoing demonstration in front of Realco gun shop in**

Maryland where far too many guns are sold without adequate background checks. Demonstrations in front of Realco Gun Shop in Maryland, organized by the **interfaith movement addressing gun violence "Heeding God's Call," will take place from 5:00 to 6:00 PM every Monday through the month of September**. Anyone interested in joining please contact Jack Mathison.

News from the Health Committee

by Goody Braun, 3rd Vice President

Save the Date!

LWVDC IS planning a **program about HIV/AIDS** to be held September 27 - in the evening from approximately 6:30 to 9:30 pm.

The purpose is to educate more people in the city about the extent of the HIV/AIDS epidemic here, what steps have been taken so far to treat and especially prevent it and, most important, what steps must be taken now and as quickly as possible, especially for prevention.

In addition to general education, the goal is to stimulate individuals to become active in their communities and encourage other organizations to join the effort.

A principal speaker will be **Dr. Gregory Pappas, Sr.** Deputy Director, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Diseases Administration of Washington, DC .

Other major players will join him on a panel.

Look for more details in the next issue of *The Voter*. Meanwhile, hold that date - September 27.

*The Health Committee can use assistance in making final arrangements. If you can help, please call **Goody Braun**, LWVDC Health Committee Chair and 3rd Vice President, at 202-723-2477.*

League of Women Voters 2011 Council Held in June

Melody Webb (New Leader & LWVDC Board member), **Kathryn Ray** (LWVDC president) and **Elinor Hart** (LWV-NCA president) attended LWVUS Council in Leesburg, VA. Council is the business meeting held biennially. This year in addition to conducting the routine functions required by all organizations, such as adopting the budget, LWVUS engaged attendees in a planning exercise designed to help each state League plan a program around the 2012 election.

Melody, Kathryn and Elinor selected a project of particular interest to Melody: The registration and civic education of those (particularly women) who have served their prison terms and

are now re-entering society. Many of the returning citizens are immediately eligible to vote up completion of their sentence. Providing voter information is a special challenge for DC, because with the closure of Lorton Reformatory, our prisoners are sent to facilities across the country. In many of those states, ex-felons are not eligible to vote and our returning citizens may never be informed of their rights in DC.

LWV-NCA is in search of committee member for the Transportation Committee. If you are interested, please email JKLawler8@gmail.com

Brown Bag Lunch on Financial Implications of Statehood

by Julia Cuniberti

This first event of the new program year was held in the LWVDC conference room on May 10 with a big attendance of members and representatives from **many other civic groups, including DC's shadow representatives.**

The meeting was opened by our new President, **Kathryn Ray, who gave a brief history of the LWVDC's** 90 years since the granting of votes to women. Program co-organizer **Janet Brown** then spoke of the questions surrounding the viability of the District of Columbia as a state, and introduced **Ed Lazere**, Director of the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, a watchdog for the DC Budget and how it is spent. He stated that DC suffered from a structural budget imbalance: not enough revenue due to recession. He reviewed the proposed cuts in many social services, but pointed out that many states have the same problem, and **that in fact DC's business revenue was one of the strongest in the country, due in part to Federal presence, as well as to a high overall level of residents' income, although a third of our population is on welfare. DC is deprived of a major source of income for many states, a Commuter tax.** Co-organizer

Elinor Hart then reviewed some of the provisions of the 1997 Revitalization Act, which transferred some costs of some services typically provided by states from D.C. to the federal government. The law transferred responsibility to the federal government of the unfunded pension liability (which was created by Congress) for police, teachers, firefighters and judges. Various justice functions (parole board, courts, etc.) were also transferred to the federal government. Also the federal government agreed to fund Medicaid at a higher level.

Johnny Barnes, Executive Director of ACLU-NCA, with long experience in budget matters as a Congressional staffer, then pointed out that the wording of the Constitution does not bar statehood for DC. He stressed the inability of DC to tax income at its source and to tax commuters (unlike every other state) deprives it of a **main source of revenue. Also the problem of DC's budget being tied to the federal budget creates costly delays.** Many questions followed, and Janet Brown referred inquirers to the excellent Appleseed Report for 2010 that compared **situation in other nations' capitals and reimbursement for services.**

League Offers Testimony at Public Hearing on Ward Redistricting

(Wednesday, April 27, 2011) Re-drawing the ward boundaries is required following each decennial census to ensure that each ward has approximately the same number of residents, giving each voter equal representation. The 2010 census revealed that Wards 7 & 8 lost population, mandating that the Council re-draw the ward boundaries to ensure equality of representation.

In his opening remarks, Councilmember Phil Mendelson reminded the audience that change rarely makes anyone happy. He stated that the Council must redraw the boundaries, so he implored us

not to ask him to leave the boundaries the same.

The Council is to be commended for holding open hearings and being fair in its approach to this sensitive and difficult process. Jurisdictions throughout the United States are plagued with hyper-partisan politics that Councilmember Mendelson reminded us that does **not characterize DC's process.**

In August 2009, The League issued a *Statement of Essential Principles on Redistricting*:

1. An accurate and complete count in Census 2010 is an essential building block for all redistricting efforts.

Continued on Page 9

Eulogy for Madeleine Furth

Jack Mathison, 1st VP and retired pastor, offered **the League's tribute to Madeleine. Remembered as the "League's conscience" when it came to the** issues of poverty and child welfare, for over 50 years Madeleine worked tirelessly to make the world a better place. From minimum wage laws to food stamps to service delivery to those in need, Madeleine was always a civil rights advocate and friend to all. She was a model Leaguer who will be greatly missed.

LWVDC Remembered in Will

A much-appreciated bequest was received from the estate of the late **Jean Fleming**. All long-time Leaguers remember Jean for her many contributions to LWVDC. **All of us are thankful for Jean's forethought in remembering the League in her will.** She is greatly missed.

Thank You to Our Generous Recent Donors

Ruth Allen	Sally Greenberg	Abigail Nichols & Carl Nelson
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Goody Braun	Audrey Hatry	William O'Field
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Naomi Glass	Jeanette Miller	Margaret Warren
Virginia Gorman	Vivianne Mozon	Geraldine Whitley

Please contact the League office if there has been an oversight)

LWVDC Board Retreat

Newly elected and returning board members gathered on at Ingleside of Rock Creek for a day-long planning retreat. Creatively conceived by immediate past president **Billie Day** and ably conducted by LWVUS staffers **Cheryl Graeve** and **Kelly McFarland Stratmon**, the day was filled with energy and enthusiasm. Very special thanks are due to **Joan Wilson** and **Ruth Allen** for coordinating the room and luncheon with Ingleside.

LWVDC Testimony, continued from Page 7

2. The process used for redistricting must be transparent to the public.
3. The redistricting process, at all levels of government, must provide data, tools and opportunities for the public to have direct input into the specific plans under consideration by the redistricting body.
4. In order to achieve representative democracy, redistricting plans must be drawn in a manner that allows elected bodies to reflect the diversity of the populace, especially racial and ethnic diversity.

In addition to these essentials, based on “Where we Stand” the D.C. League encouraged the Council to respect neighborhoods, and, to the extent possible, have consistent boundaries among Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, voting precincts, wards and census tracts.

At the conclusion of the hearing, Councilmember Barry publicly commended the League for its many years of service to the city, particularly in the fight for voting rights. He also thanked us for **the League’s commitment to diversity.**

DC 41, continued from Page 1

My friends have said I should compile a list of “what to do if you might be arrested?” Along with things like “eat a good breakfast” and “make sure you are hydrated”, “have a cell phone to use when you are released early in the morning” Here are my top 5: 1) Make sure you have official government ID with you; you cannot be released without it. 2) Have a sizable amount of cash for collateral 3) Wear shoes without laces 4) If possible, practice getting in and out of a van with your hands tied behind you in case you fall, as I did, while entering the police van. (and if you are injured and go to hospital, the responsibility for the bill is yours); 5) You might be photographed, dress appropriately!

But let’s be serious, this is not something to joke about or take lightly. It cannot be dismissed as a “stunt”, or a distraction by our politicians. We, citizens of this city, need to continue to make it clear that we are not going to take it anymore.

That’s what the women and men of the DC 41 did when they stood up (by sitting down) for democracy. I continue to wear the symbol of the DC 41 arrest as a reminder that there is still work to be done. And I am particularly glad to wear the number 19 which reminds me that when the nineteenth Amendment meant that across the country American women could vote, that was still not true for women, and men, in the District of Columbia.

I believe it is important that each and everyone of us find our way to speak out and stand up for the democratic rights enjoyed by all other citizens of the United States. One way is to continually remind our friends, relatives and fellow Leaguers who have Congressional representation to speak out on our behalf. We must continue to let the rest of the nation know not only that we lack full autonomy and representation, but that we care and will speak out against that injustice. Please keep informed by following bills submitted in Congress and actions by DC Vote.

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Get the latest news about LWVDC by joining
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Our page is "League of Women Voters of
Washington DC"

Hope that you will "like" us on Facebook.com

Not sure exactly what this means? If you
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book.com and sign up.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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*Get the latest updates at our page:
League of Women Voters of Washington DC*

CALENDAR

Save the Date: September 10, 2011

Fall Focus on Education with featured speaker,
Schools Chancellor **Kaya Henderson**

**Plan to attend and bring your friends to the League's Annual Fall Brunch featuring Schools
Chancellor Kaya Henderson.** The opening event for the program year will be held Satur-
day, **September 10, 2011 at Clyde's of Gallery Place.** Watch the *September DC Voter* for a
reservation form and details, or visit the website www.lwvdc.org. Ms. Henderson's talk will
be the kick off for the League's National study of The Federal Role in Education.

Coming This Fall:

September 27, 2011

HIV/AIDS program

October, 2011

Green Bag Lunch

*Details will be published in the next issue of the VOTER—or check the
online calendar at www.lwvdc.org for updates.*

The DC VOTER is a publication of the League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia, a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.