

Empowering Voters.
Protecting Democracy.

Newsletter for March 2024

REACHING LWVCM

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Primary Election Day 2024 Is Here

**VOTE —
& MAKE SURE
YOUR VOTE
COUNTS!**



➤➤➤ Go to VOTE411.org to check your registration, find your polling place, see your sample ballot, & more!

➤➤➤ A photo ID is now required in order to vote. Find a list of acceptable photo IDs at ncsb.gov

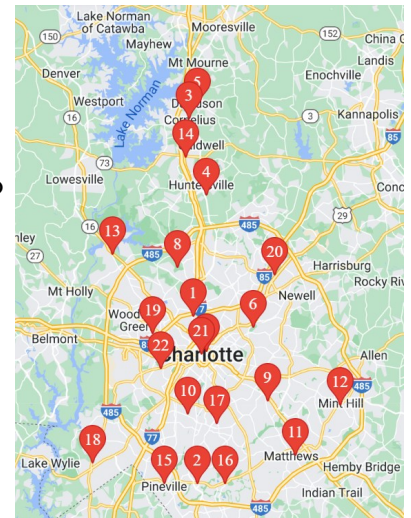
Tuesday, March 5 is just days away! Early voting runs through Saturday, March 2 at 3pm at 22 polling sites across the county. If you have not yet voted, remember to take your acceptable photo ID with you. Same-day registration is available during Early Voting, but not on Election Day. If you choose to vote on Election Day, use your assigned polling place.

Our VOTE411.org “one-stop shop” non-partisan online voter guide can help voters find candidate information, in-person [Early Voting Sites](#) and hours for the March 5 elections, Election Day assigned precinct, sample ballots, and a whole lot more. The guide also provides information about new [photo ID requirements](#).

At close of polls on Feb. 29, there were 39,407 votes cast in the primary, representing nearly 5% of eligible voters in the county. There are three dates remaining to vote in the primary. Grab your friends! Grab your family! Grab your colleagues! Grab your neighbors! And get to the polls for early voting March 1 or 2, or on Election Day on Tuesday, March 5.

We want to take the opportunity to honor all our election workers, both staff and volunteers. Thank you to our Election Heroes, some of which are members of the League! According the Annual League Survey for 2023, 108 League members in North Carolina worked at the polls during early voting and on election day.

Our members are also participating in the Board of Elections Monitoring program, covering Mecklenburg and the surrounding counties. Members will monitor meetings through [Canvass](#). If you are part of the Voter Service Team and would like to participate in the BOE Monitoring program for the General Election, contact [Regan Aduddell](#).



Map of Mecklenburg Co. EV sites.

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Find updates for League action and activities at goleaguego.org



Happy Women’s History Month & International Women’s Day!

Coming Events

Coming Up in March, April, and May

- **March:** *Women's History Month/[UNCC Gender Studies Program Events](#)*
- **Mar. 2, 10am:** [Mass Poor People's & Low Wage Worker's Moral March to the Polls](#) (Raleigh)
- **Mar. 2, 3pm:** In-person early voting ends
- **Mar. 5:** **Primary Election Day**
- **Mar. 5, 4pm:** [Transformation: Are You Ready to Move the League Forward?](#) (LWVUS Webinar)
- **Mar. 5, 7:30pm:** Absentee ballot return deadline
- **Mar. 6, 10am:** Education Action Team Meeting (LWVCM Office)
- **Mar., Weds.:** [2024 Civics 101 Program](#)
- **Mar. 7, 3pm:** [The Impact of Absentee Ballots and Drop Boxes](#) (LWVUS Webinar)
- **Mar. 7, 9pm:** State of the Union Address
- **Mar. 8:** *International Women's Day*
- **Mar. 9:** [Voter Girl Program](#) (Movement School, 2701 Freedom Drive)
- **Mar. 12, 6:30pm:** Board Meeting (Virtual)
- **Mar. 21, 3pm:** [Redistricting Part II: Looking Ahead to 2030](#) (LWVUS Webinar)
- **Mar. 22, 1pm:** [Environment + Sustainability Team Meeting](#) (Virtual)
- **Mar. 26, 7pm:** [LWVCM Book Club](#) / *I Swear: Politics Is Messier Than My Minivan* by Katie Porter
- **Mar. 31:** *International Transgender Day of Visibility*
- **April:** *National Volunteer Month; Arab American Heritage Month*
- **Apr. 2, 6:30pm:** Board Meeting (Virtual)
- **Apr. 3, 10am:** Education Action Team Meeting (LWVCM Office)
- **Apr. 4, 3pm:** [Executive and Regulatory Advocacy](#) (LWVUS Webinar)
- **Apr. 18:** [Carolinas Climate Summit](#) hosted by WFAE (The Dubois Center at UNC Charlotte)
- **Apr. 22:** *Earth Day*
- **Apr. 27, 10am:** LWVNC Western Regional Meeting (Hickory)
- **May:** *Asian American Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Jewish American Heritage Month*
- **May:** *Mental Health Awareness Month*
- **May 1, 10am:** Education Action Team Meeting (LWVCM Office)
- **May 7, 6:30pm:** Board Meeting (Virtual)
- **May 12:** *Mother's Day*
- **May 20:** *31st Anniversary of the National Voter Registration Act*
- **May 20-21:** LWVNC Council (Virtual)
- **May 27:** *Memorial Day*



League Action & Happenings

Candidate Forums Conclude

Our League chapter partnered with Friendship Missionary Baptist Church’s Social Justice Ministry to put on nonpartisan candidate forums ahead of the March 5 Primary. Our own Suzanne Elsberry, President of LWV Charlotte Mecklenburg moderated the first forum on February 20 which will included candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and Superintendent of Public Instruction.



Candidates for Supt. of Public Instruction Mo Green and Kenon Crumble appear on the forum dais on Feb. 20. Katie Eddings, Catherine Truitt (incumbent) and Michele Morrow did not attend.

Two other forums took place on Feb. 22 (US Congress, NC Senate and House, and Meck. BOCC) and Feb. 27 (NC Supreme Court, NC Court of Appeals, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, and Commissioners of Agriculture, Insurance and Labor). League members volunteered for various roles in support.



Judge Carla Archie, retired Judge Yvonne Mims, LWVCM Secretary Cate Stadelman, LWVCM 1st VP Linda Traum, LWVCM President Suzanne Elsberry (and moderator), LWVCM Membership Engagement Chair Mary Condon and Rosemary Lawrence

LWVCM Members and Partners Travel to Raleigh

On February 22, Education Action Team members joined coalition partners led by Every Child NC for a Day of Action to coincide with the day the North Carolina Supreme Court heard [oral arguments on the Leandro school funding case](#).

Bishop William J. Barber III spoke to an eager crowd of protesters at the kick-off rally. Jeanne Smith, who serves as co-chair to the League’s state and local Education



Jeanne Smith

Bishop Barber

Teams delivered a strong message at the day’s press conference which you may view on the [LWVCM YouTube page](#). The rally garnered significant media attention from [NC Newline](#), [WFAE](#), [WUNC](#), [EdNC](#), the [News & Observer](#), [WITN](#), [abc11](#) and other news outlets.

President Suzanne Elsberry was among the travelers to Raleigh. She had this to say about the experience:

*Our chapter provided a bus to transport members from LWVCM; Public School Strong; National Domestic Workers Alliance; and Red, Wine & Blue to attend the **Leandro Day of Action** for educational rights rally sponsored by Every Child NC. After 30 years, North Carolina legislators still refuse full funding for the Comprehensive Remedial Plan. Full funding would provide districts with more teachers, nurses, counselors, psychologists, social workers and teaching assistants.*

Our trip began in the cold dark morning hours as we boarded the bus to Raleigh in the parking lot of the Myers Park Baptist Church. The rally kicked off at the Edenton Street Courthouse in downtown Raleigh where we listened to speakers, chanted and sang. Following this inspiring session, we marched to the Legislative Building carrying signs and demanding funding for all NC students. An exciting moment occurred during our march as we were greeted and cheered on by school children who were on a fieldtrip to the Capital! Our day concluded at the historic Edenton Methodist Church where we were provided lunch while attending a Black History Teach-In.

North Carolina is 49th in Public Education investment and 46th in starting pay for teachers. With a state budget of \$30 billion (2021-22) it has been estimated public education is underfunded by at least \$785 million—we can and should do better! Many thanks for our First Vice President Linda Traum, for organizing this successful trip.



Leaguers and partners arrive in Raleigh.

League Action & Happenings

Black Maternal Healthcare Webinar Available

Back in January, the Reimagining America Project (RAP)—supported by [Health Care Justice NC](#), Coalition for Truth & Reconciliation and the LWV of Charlotte Mecklenburg—hosted a two-part series on “Caring with Strength and Unity: Improving Maternal Health for Black Women.” Many League members were unable to join the events in person due to conflict on our calendar. However, we’ve had multiple requests for the video recording so members can engage with the information provided. Those who missed the opportunity to engage live may now view the sessions on the LWVCM YouTube Page using the links below:

Session 1: “[Improving the Maternal Continuum of Care](#)” featured a forum on current effort to resolve the disparities in the care of Black women across pregnancy and postpartum care.

Session 2: “[Public Policy, Legislation, and Advocacy](#)” covered the disparate Black maternal health outcomes problem.



League Members Offer Thanks to Teachers

Public school teachers in North Carolina are facing many challenges daily including teacher shortages, limited classroom materials, and an overall lack of respect. LWVCM members and allied advocacy groups showed their appreciation for CMS teachers in by writing thank-you notes. Jeanne Smith, the Education Team Co-chair initiated and coordinated the LWVCM effort, and she has encouraged other groups in the community to participate.

Jeanne created an easy process: 1. Identify a Title 1 school that lacks a PTA/PTO; 2. Contact the principal and ask for a list of teachers; 3. Be creative by printing cards; using blank cards you have collected or using handmade cards. You may also want to have a card party; 4. Add a handwritten note that recognizes the school’s achievements; 5. Take photos of your cards, share them on social media, and share your results with your League.

When the principal of a Title I elementary school was asked if she would like her school to participate, she exclaimed “I LOVE this! Thank you!” If you would like to participate in this effort, please contact [Jeanne Smith](#).



LWVCM Education Team pens thank-you notes to CMS teachers.

LWVCM March Book Club to Read “I Swear”

March is Women’s History Month and also the month when North Carolinians head to the polls to vote in the March 5 Primary Election. In light of these factors, we will read an account of one woman’s experiences serving in the US House of Representatives. Please [join us](#) March 26 to discuss the *New York Times* bestseller *I Swear: Politics Is Messier Than My Minivan* by Katie Porter.



Goodreads: *An honest, inspiring, and laugh-out-loud funny memoir about re-energizing our politics and standing up to corporate America—while carting three kids around in a minivan.*

Never having run for office before, Katie Porter charted a new path in 2018 when she was elected to Congress as a Democrat in historically conservative Orange County, California. Underestimated as a single mom and chided for her progressive values, Katie defied expectations. Then, using her signature whiteboard, she began to take CEOs and corrupt government officials to task in Congressional hearings. The videos went viral, introducing Americans to her no-bullshit style, and making her a coveted guest on cable news and late-night television. ([Read more here.](#))

LWV to Host “Voter Girl” Event for Girl Scouts

The League of Women Voters is happy to announce our inaugural Voter Girl program with the Hornets Nest Girl Scout Council on Saturday, March 9. This is a program developed by the Kent, Ohio Chapter of the LWV and we are bringing it to Charlotte. Wake LWV hosted a “Voter Girl” initiative last April and it was a fun and engaging program for the Girl Scouts.



We will be working with scouts from Daisy (K-3rd grade) through Junior (4th-8th grade). The Daisy scouts’ program will be in the morning and the Junior scouts’ program will be in the afternoon. This is a nonpartisan program designed to help the Girl Scouts learn about voting, civic engagement and why folks run for office. We will have female elected officials come to talk to the girls, and the Board of Elections will run a mock election. Our candidates are Ms. Thin Mint and Ms. Trefoil!

LWVCM President's Perspective



On February 14, 1920, suffragists founded the League of Women Voters. This year we celebrate 104 years of empowering voters and defending democracy. We persist in carrying out the dream of our founders as we work to assure that citizens are registered and empowered to play a critical role in shaping our democracy. The DNA of today's League members reflects that of our founders with our identical determination to create a more perfect democracy. We proudly celebrate the women who have striven over the years to bring about the crucial values of inclusion, equality and equity. Happy Birthday LWV and many more...

Chapter members had a productive and very busy month as we partnered with many other non-profit and nonpartisan groups in the following activities:

*LWVCM cosponsored three **Nonpartisan Candidate Forums** for candidates in races for the March 5 Primary Election. Representing our chapter, I moderated the first forum with questions to candidates for Governor, Lt. Governor, Atty. General and Supt. of Public Instruction. Many thanks to our volunteers who helped at the event held at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

*Our chapter provided a bus to transport members from LWVCM and our partner organizations to attend the **Leandro Day of Action** for educational rights rally sponsored by Every Child NC.

*I'm delighted to report the formation and successful continuation of the **BKDs (Be, Know, Dos)**—the brainchild of our Membership Engagement Chair, Mary Condon. I hope every member who is 60+ years will join us on this journey of learning and enjoyment.

*Our popular **Civics 101 Program** began on February 21 and continue each Wednesday through March 27. The League extends sincere thanks to Second Vice President, Jane Hoffmann for her superb leadership and organizing of one of our most integral program offerings. We also appreciate and thank the many volunteers and attendees who have made this program so successful.

*After many years devoted to its creation, LWVCM member and Redistricting activist, Harry Taylor opened his musical narrative journey during Black History Month—**Trouble So Hard: Songs and Stories of Slavery, Freedom, and Civil Rights**. I highly recommend it to everyone as the performances continue.

*Our LWVCM Board completed the fifth of five LWVUS **DEI Training** sessions in February. Plans to extend the training to our membership are being developed.

*On March 2 from LWVCM will observe **Women's History Month** at the Dubois Center at UNC Charlotte Center City by participating in the Levine Museum's free family day event: **HERstory**. Our Voter Services volunteers will provide a historic display table and, in costume as a Suffragist, I will read "Marching with Aunt Susan" for Storytime. The charming book, authored by Claire Rudolf Murphy, is based on actual events as related by Bessie Keith Pond, a young girl from Berkeley, CA who, during the 1896 Suffrage campaign met Susan B. Anthony and other suffragists.

Have you made your voting plan for the March 5 Primary Election? The League of Women Voters encourages you to do just that. It is so important for your voice to be heard in this, and all, elections so please cast your vote for the candidates of your choice. A League leader recently reminded us of a quote by Marion Wright Engelman saying: "Democracy is not a spectator sport," adding that voting is a civic duty. Please share with everyone you meet that [VOTE411](#) is provided by the League of Women Voters (in Spanish and English) to make it convenient for North Carolina voters to obtain all the information they need to cast their ballot in whatever method they choose – by mail, during the early voting/same day registration period or on Election Day-March 5.

Assuring an inclusive and informed electorate is one of the League's basic goals and this online tool is a convenient and time-saving way to obtain needed voting information. By providing your address on a laptop, smartphone or tablet, you can access a printable sample ballot to take to the polls along with your approved voter photo ID. So please make your plan and VOTE!

Warmest regards,

President, League of Women Voters
of Charlotte Mecklenburg

League News

Welcome to New League Members

New Members in February

Ashley Roehrig	Shannon Reichley
Elizabeth Wells	Sharyn Schulze
Carla Murray	Kurt Schulze
Julie Tuggle	



LWV of Charlotte Mecklenburg Archives Update

If you think of the LWVCM in terms of local history, this organization is a treasure trove for future historians. The information received to date is being catalogued and organized to be deposited in the Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library. Contact Margaret Howe-Soper at mhowesoper2014@gmail.com if you have League-related materials that belong (or might belong) in the Archives.



LWVCM Environment + Sustainability Team is Back!

The League’s Environment Team is being revived in March. The team had taken a pause to focus on registering and engaging with voters. While the coming elections are still of immediate tremendous importance, environmental issues will be with us long after November 2024.

An organizing meeting is scheduled for March 22 at 1 pm via Zoom. Join us in shaping the future direction of the team. Past activities included advocating for SEAP goals with the City of Charlotte, hosting speakers, street and stream clean ups, organizing a booth for Charlotte Earth Day, attending environmental open houses, and a whole lot more. [Click here to register](#) for the meeting.

Those interested in hearing more may contact Margaret Howe-Soper at mhowesoper2014@gmail.com.

Opinion: Get Informed

Many of us forget that the term democracy means more than “one person, one vote.” For democracy to succeed, it requires informed voters. Those who lie and misrepresent are rotting our democracy. Voters must seek out reliable sources of truth, not just websites with the word “truth” in them, nor hollow claims of “fair and balanced.” Russia and China are safely spreading false propaganda that confounds U.S. voters. Find and use a fact checker or lose our informed democracy.

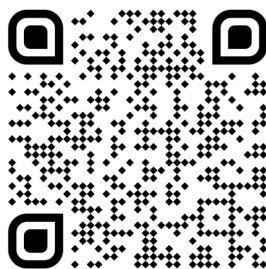
Tom E. Bowers, Charlotte
Reprinted with permission from *The Charlotte Observer*

The LWVCM Seeks Future Leaders

Interested in serving on the LWVCM Board of Directors? The nominating committee seeks to identify future League leaders to be elected at the Annual Meeting in June. Members of the League’s board are committed to promoting its mission of empowering voters and defending democracy by participating in board governance, planning and decision-making. **The League is a great place to get involved and make a difference in your community.** If you’d like to work together with other dedicated volunteers to further the growth and development of our League or know someone who fits this description, please contact [Linda Levy](#), 2024 LWVCM Nominating Committee Chair.

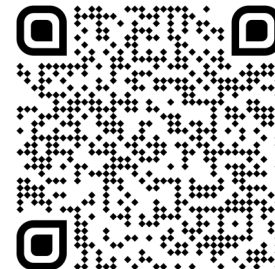
League In Action (LIA) Is Here

LIA relational organizing tool is being used by our League to spread our message and provide opportunities large and small for getting involved and supporting the League’s mission. The free app can be downloaded wherever people get their apps and one need not be a League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg member to download and follow us on League In Action. Join our local and national league circles. Encourage your networks to join today!



LIA for Apple

Join LWVUS and LWVCM League in Action today!



LIA for Google

League Action & Happenings

Cooper Sets Goals for NC Forests and Wetlands

On Feb 12, Governor Cooper signed [Executive Order 305](#), setting new goals to protect and restore millions of acres of North Carolina’s forests and wetlands by 2040.

These are the most ambitious environmental conservation and restoration targets in the state’s history.

NC’s public and private partners are directed to work together to select and conserve existing forests and wetlands and restore new tracts. One million new urban trees must be planted; a native plant policy will be established; and wetlands will be protected against new projects. Federal funding will be sought for flood resiliency and water quality. Conservation and climate resiliency within tribal communities, and climate conditions and NC’s biodiversity research will be prioritized.

Governor Cooper’s executive order was met with approval by US Fish & Wildlife Service, and many environmental organizations. “The governor’s action today recognizes how vital wetlands are to North Carolina’s people and wildlife, fisheries and flood protection,” said Mary Maclean Asbill, of the Southern Environmental Law Center. Some are concerned that the order did not go far enough. Danna Smith, executive director of Dogwood Alliance, said, “It is great to see the governor recognize the importance of protecting wetlands. For over a decade, our wetland forests have been logged by the wood pellet industry. Unfortunately, the governor’s executive order does not call out this threat.”

State agencies will implement the governor’s order through the rest of 2024. However, executive orders require legislative authority to accomplish, and the NC General Assembly does not have a history of supporting Governor Cooper’s clean energy initiatives or climate health policies. Citizens who support the conservation goals must pressure their representatives.



McAlpine Creek Park

—Margaret Fritze

Board of County Commissioners Update

In what was described as the “best joint meeting ever” of the Board of County Commissioners and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education, most members seemed to finally agree that the school system is on an “upward trajectory” with respect to student achievement.

School representatives summarized results of the 2022-23 proficiency tests and found that an average of students met or exceeded expectations in every content level. It was reported that reading levels by all groups, except for students with disabilities, had recovered to pre-pandemic levels compared to students across the state.

CMS Superintendent Dr. Crystal Hill described the district’s plans to reassign hundreds of staff members hired with the ESSER federal funds which are ending in September. CMS Chief Financial Officer Kelly Klutz outlined some \$55 million in urgent capital needs at 30 sites (in addition to the 30 projects covered by the bonds) stemming from deferred maintenance, along with other needs such as buying new student computers and adding five percent to the local pay supplement. Supt. Hill emphasized that they were not making an ask for more funds at this time because the school budget is still being prepared.

County Manager Dena Diorio summarized the county’s revenue projections, noting that last year’s county revenue forecast was \$90 million over the previous year’s budget while the FY2025 revenue projection is only \$36.2 million over the FY2024 budget. The low growth primarily is in anticipation of lower sales tax collections. That revenue is the pot of money usually used to fund non-recurring items.

You can watch the meeting [here](#).

—Lucille Howard

Redistricting Team Update

I’ve recently joined a state League working group called the Citizen Initiative Study led by Jennifer Bremer and Ellen Reckhow of ODC—that is studying the citizen initiative process for the time when we have a democracy-friendly legislature in place.

You may know that Michigan now has a citizen’s redistricting process that shuts political parties out from gerrymandering election maps to favor their own power. The process was voted into existence in 2018—by Michigan voters, NOT the state legislature—after an extraordinary petition effort by 28-year-old Katie Fahey. A great win for democracy; I’m often asked why we can’t do the same here at home. Michigan is among 26 states with a citizens initiative process—it’s written into the state constitution—through which citizens can force their legislatures to place a referendum on their ballots.

In North Carolina, as in nearly all southern states (a vestige of post-Civil War reconstruction), only the state legislature can amend the state constitution. Which, in truth, means only the party that controls the legislature can do that. Ours is now a single-party-controlled state, one under total domination by the two white men who rule the legislature.

—Harry Taylor, Redistricting Team Co-Chair



Katie Fahey



This month will see the anniversary of Bloody Sunday (March 7, 1965), the day when a group of civil rights activists were brutally attacked by members of law enforcement as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. The activists, led by the late John Lewis and Hosea Williams (above left), were engaged in a peaceful march from Selma to Montgomery to protest the suppression of Black votes. In many southern states, Black citizens were effectively disenfranchised through a combination of poll taxes, literacy tests, residency requirements, and more. The activists attempted to push back against these discriminatory requirements with voting rights marches. What is lesser known is that many women were among those who risked their lives (above right) for the freedom to vote.

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG

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Dated Material

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