

Empowering Voters.  
Protecting Democracy.

Newsletter for December 2024/January 2025

## REACHING LWVCM

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## Happy Holidays from the League!

As the year draws to a close, the League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg wishes our members and supporters a joyful holiday season filled with rest and renewal. Your dedication and hard work throughout the year have been nothing short of inspiring, and we hope you take this time to relax and recharge.

As we look ahead to the new year, the work of empowering democracy in Charlotte Mecklenburg remains as vital as ever. Even after the election, challenges persist—expanding voting rights, reducing the influence of money in politics, and supporting good governance are ongoing efforts that require our collective strength.

This holiday season, consider supporting the League's mission with a tax-exempt contribution to help sustain and grow our nonpartisan efforts. Whether through a check or an online donation, your generosity will ensure we continue to stand as a pillar of fair and just governance.

To donate, visit our [Winter 2024 Fundraiser](#) or mail your contribution to:

### League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg

1900 Queens Road, Suite A, Charlotte, NC 28207

Thank you all for your unwavering commitment to democracy and the League. Wishing you peace, joy, and hope this holiday season.

Warmly,

Linda Traum and Suzanne Elsberry, Co-Presidents  
League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg

### The League Adopts a Tree

The League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg is excited to be a participating organization in the [2024 Community Adopt-a-Tree](#) event at Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden! Our tree, adorned with suffrage-colored garlands and wooden ornaments featuring empowering quotes from trailblazing women like Shirley Chisholm and Susan B. Anthony, celebrates equality, democracy, and the enduring fight for voting rights. Visit this festive exhibit in Belmont, running through December 28, and be inspired by the creativity and spirit of our community.



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Find updates for League action and activities at [goleaguego.org](http://goleaguego.org)



## Coming Events: January, February & March

- **1/3/2025:** 119th United States Congress to be sworn in for the next two-year term.
- **1/4, 10am:** LWVCM Education Action Team Meeting (LWVCM Office)
- **1/9:** Carrie Chapman Catt's (LWV Founder) Birthday
- **1/13:** Korean American Day
- **1/14, 6:30pm:** LWVCM Board Meeting (LWVCM Office)
- **1/16, 10am:** [Spring Gardens with landscape designer Daniel Jacobvits](#) (Hybrid)
- **1/18, 9:30am:** [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Parade](#) (Uptown Charlotte)
- **1/20:** Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday/Inauguration Day
- **1/21:** 15th anniversary of Citizens United decision
- **1/22:** 52nd anniversary of Roe v. Wade decision
- **1/23, 6pm:** [What Next on Your League Membership Journey?](#) (TBD)
- **1/27:** International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust
- **1/29, 6:30pm:** [Member Social](#) + LWVUS Renewal Portal Demo (Dilworth)
- **1/30, 7pm:** [Redistricting Team Huddle: Where Do We Go from Here?](#) (Zoom)
- FEBRUARY:** Black History Month
- **2/3, 10am:** [Member Social](#) + LWVUS Renewal Portal Demo (Innovation Barn)
- **2/11, 6:30pm:** LWVCM Board Meeting (LWVCM Office)
- **2/12, 6:30pm:** [Member Social](#) + LWVUS Renewal Portal Demo (Ballantyne)
- **2/14** LWV turns 105! 
- **2/17:** President's Day
- **2/19, 6pm:** [2025 Civics 101 Program: Board of Elections](#) (Hybrid)
- **2/20, 10am:** "Food-Climate Change Nexus" with Environmentalist Ted Volskay (Hybrid)
- **2/25, 1pm:** [Member Social](#) + LWVUS Renewal Portal Demo (LWVCM Office)
- **2/26, 6pm:** [2025 Civics 101 Program: City of Charlotte](#) (Hybrid)
- **2/27:** Anniversary of SCOTUS upholding 19th Amendment
- **MARCH:** Women's History Month
- **3/5, 6pm:** [2025 Civics 101 Program: Mecklenburg County](#) (Hybrid)
- **3/7:** Anniversary of Bloody Sunday
- **3/8:** International Women's Day
- **3/12, 6pm:** [2025 Civics 101 Program: County Courts](#) (Hybrid)
- **3/19, 6pm:** [2025 Civics 101 Program: Board of Education/CMS](#) (Hybrid)
- **3/26:** Anniversary of SCOTUS [Rucho](#) arguments
- **3/26, 6pm:** **NEW!!** [2025 Civics 101 Program: NC State Government](#) (Hybrid)
- **3/29, 10am:** **DATE CHANGED** [LWVNC Western Regional Meeting](#) (Hickory)
- **3/31:** International Transgender Day of Visibility

## League Action & Happenings

### Environment Team Meetings in the New Year

Join members of the LWVCM Environment committee whose thoughts will have moved from the election and holidays to [Spring Gardens](#) and new beginnings for 2025. With those thoughts in mind, the team will be meeting on January 16 at 10am (hybrid) to learn about gardening with plants native to North Carolina or what he calls Eco-logical Gardening.

Daniel Jakobovits, a consultant and landscape designer for Eco Backyards, LLC, a habitat construction, ecological landscape design and install company from Matthews will address the group. Daniel has made his passion for the environment into a vocation. He has worked to improve our planet for 27 years with everyone that would listen. He is a member of HAWK, the Matthews chapter of NC Wildlife Federation, and a volunteer with TreesCharlotte and Creek Releaf. Daniel holds a B.S. in Environmental Science from UNCW, is an Accredited Organic Landscaper and Certified Habitat Steward.

Then on February 20 at 10am (hybrid) members will be introduced to a new way of thinking about the food we eat and its impact on the climate in a talk called the [Food-Climate Nexus](#) by Ted Volsky.

Ted currently hails from Greenville, SC and is a US Navy veteran. Professionally, Ted has been involved with environmental consulting for more than 30 years especially in the areas of water contamination clean-up at several Air Force bases, remediation of soil and groundwater contaminated by PFAS (forever chemicals), and legal compliance with various federal/state environmental acts. He holds degrees in chemistry (U. of South FL 1981), environmental systems engineering (Clemson University 1988) as well as anticipating graduating in sustainable water management (U. of S. FL, May 2025). Ted was been a member of the Greenville, SC LWV for 29 years and is currently a member of the LWV of Henderson, NC.

Both meetings will take place at the LWVCM Office AND on Zoom. A Zoom link will be forwarded to those who request it closer to the time of the meetings.



### Redistricting Team Huddle

Join Harry Taylor, Redistricting Chair for the League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg (LWVCM), for an engaging discussion on redistricting in North Carolina. Together, we'll explore the challenges of gerrymandering, its impact on our democracy, and the ongoing fight for fair maps. Harry will also share updates from the League of Women Voters of North Carolina's work on [Citizen Initiative](#), a potential tool to give more power back to voters. Let's talk about how we can restore fairness and create a more representative future—your voice matters in this conversation! Join us by registering for this [Redistricting Huddle: Where Do We Go from Here?](#) which will take place on Thursday, January 30 at 7pm via Zoom.

### LWVNC Convention 2025 Planning Underway

[The League of Women Voters of North Carolina](#) 2025 Convention planning is in full swing. Members will receive more details just after the new year to help in planning for participation.

The three-day event will take place from May 2 through 4 in Durham at the Durham Marriot City Center.

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF NORTH CAROLINA

**39th  
BIENNIAL  
CONVENTION**

**MAY 2-4, 2025  
DURHAM**



Those wishing to serve as delegates to Convention should contact your local President(s). Those interested in participating with any of the committees ahead of Convention should reach out to LWVNC Board Secretary Sandra Mowell ([mowell@lwvnc.org](mailto:mowell@lwvnc.org)).



## League Action &amp; Happenings

**Empowering Democracy with Civics 101**

The League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg is proud to announce the return of our signature Civics 101 program, beginning February 19, 2025. This series continues to be an invaluable resource for educating Mecklenburg County residents about the inner workings of local government.

This year marks an exciting expansion of the program, which has grown from six weeks to seven to include a dedicated session on North Carolina state government. With critical decisions and policies emerging from Raleigh, program planners deem it essential for participants to gain a deeper understanding of the state's role in shaping local governance.

Civics 101 offers participants an in-depth exploration of local governance through engaging presentations, Q&A sessions, and interactive elements like polls and quizzes. This year's lineup covers key topics, including the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections, City and County Government, NC Courts, CMS Board of Education, State Government, and the role of local media. Each session features experts from these fields, providing attendees with firsthand insights and actionable knowledge.

The program's impact is undeniable. Many participants have gone on to take active roles in government and civic life, from serving on boards to holding elected office. Their journeys began with the foundational understanding gained from this program, demonstrating its power to inspire informed and engaged citizens.

Civics 101 offers both in-person and virtual options, expanding accessibility and participation. However, the League strongly encourages attendees to join us in person to fully benefit from networking opportunities with peers and guest speakers.

Many thanks to the dedicated League members whose efforts in planning, organizing, and presenting Civics 101 make this program possible. The team's commitment ensures the League lives its mission of empowering informed and active citizens. This flagship program aims to not just educating the community—but inspire the next generation of civic leaders.

For more about the program, visit the [Civics 101 page](#) on the League's website. Registration will open in early January. In the meantime, those interested in participating may [join the waitlist here](#).

**DEMOCRACY  
IS NOT A  
SPECTATOR SPORT**

**A Bad Moon Arsing Over Raleigh**

On December 9, 2025, a Moral Monday march drew a passionate crowd of activists, faith leaders, and concerned citizens to Raleigh. The march, led by the indomitable Bishop William J. Barber II, Reverend Rodney Sadler, and other prominent voices for justice, served as a rallying cry against systemic inequities and a call for accountability within state government.

The timing of the march was significant, as it came just before the North Carolina General Assembly was set to vote on overriding Governor Roy Cooper's veto of [Senate Bill 382](#). The bill has sparked widespread condemnation for essentially undermining the voices and votes of North Carolinians. Bishop Barber and others have called it a power grab masquerading as a hurricane relief bill.

The march began in the early evening when protesters gathered before the legislative building, their chants protest songs ringing out. Signs demanding equitable redistricting, voting rights protections, and transparency in governance lined the streets, painting a vivid picture of civic engagement. Bishop Barber addressed the crowd with his signature blend of fiery rhetoric and moral clarity, reminding attendees of the power of collective action. "We stand here

united against the forces that seek to divide us," Barber proclaimed. "Together, we will rise, resist, and rebuild a democracy that works for all." Reverend Sadler emphasized the importance of persistence in the face of adversity. "This march is not the end," he said. "It is a beginning. Each step we take tonight is a step toward justice, equity, and a future where every voice is heard."

Harry Taylor, reflecting on the event, captured the gravity of the moment with a metaphor. "There's a bad moon arising over our state," he said, "but perhaps, together, we can shoot it down." These words from a man who has campaigned for decades against gerrymandering and other threats to democratic principles.

The Moral Monday movement continues to serve as a beacon of hope and a testament to the enduring power of grassroots activism. With leaders like Bishop Barber, Reverend Sadler, and committed citizens like Harry Taylor and the Charlotte protest crew, the fight for justice in North Carolina remains unyielding.



Harry Taylor, LWVCM Redistricting Team Chair bearing his larger-than-life Gerry Mander character.

## LWVCM Presidents' Perspective



After months of arduous work dedicated to preparing, the general election is finally behind us. As we move forward into the holiday season and a new year, we would like to take a moment to express sincere appreciation to our amazing volunteers for their dedication and hard work in ensuring our citizens were registered and encouraged to vote, educated about the new voting laws and candidates' stances.

Our focus and efforts were targeted on the election and understandably many of our other efforts were curtailed. In the months ahead, we plan to return to a normal pace, dividing our efforts among our many worthwhile programs. For example, many of you have heard of the 50-year "Moonshot" project in which LWVUS plans to work towards the elimination of the Electoral College which virtually eliminates the voice of millions of our citizens living in the most populous states by awarding Electoral votes on an unfair basis. The few battleground states receive all the attention from candidates and statistics show that these states are also favored with financial legislation. Winners of the NPV would instead be determined by millions of real votes versus the paltry few currently cast.

As a first step to address this inequity, and one that does not require a constitutional amendment, the League supports the enactment of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPV). The NPV will become law with sufficient states signing on to equal 270 Electoral Votes. Each state will cast all their electoral votes for the winner of the popular vote resulting in the election of the President and Vice President with the **most votes** nationally. Currently, 17 states have committed to the NPV equaling 209 electoral votes. The League will continue to advocate and pressure for the remaining votes to make this the law of the land. Surveys reveal that Americans favor the NPV or, one person one vote, by about 2 to 1.

If you are interested in volunteering with Leaguers on our national committee working towards this vital reform, and to bringing it to life in NC, please contact Suzanne Elsberry at [dessuz@bellsouth.net](mailto:dessuz@bellsouth.net).

Happy Holidays everyone!

Suzanne Elsberry

Linda Traum

**Co-Presidents, League of Women Voters  
of Charlotte Mecklenburg**

## League News

### *Welcome to New League Members*

#### New in November and early December

Kathryn Fincher  
Valerie Vickers  
Melissa Mohlere  
Lorna Smith

Lisa Foil  
Natalie Lents  
Mary Kukowski

#### What's Next on Your League Journey?

Want to explore what's next for your Charlotte Mecklenburg League journey? Please join us for cocktails and conversation around this topic on January 23 at 7pm. Meet Team Leaders and Members from around League to learn more about opportunities to engage in 2025. We will have opportunities ranging from one hour to monthly commitments. [Sign up here.](#) Logistical details to follow the first week of January.

#### Join Our Team as Treasurer!

Are you a numbers enthusiast with a knack for organization and an eye for detail? The League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg is on the hunt for a Treasurer to keep our finances as sharp as our advocacy.

The role involves managing the League's finances, overseeing QuickBooks, handling taxes, and working with our Executive Committee and Board of Directors to keep everything running smoothly.

This flexible, part-time volunteer role is perfect for someone with bookkeeping or accounting skills who wants to make a difference. Ready to balance the books and make an impact? Contact Co-President Suzanne Elsberry ([dessuz@bellsouth.net](mailto:dessuz@bellsouth.net)) today!

#### Nominating Committee's Work Is Underway

The LWVCM Nominating Committee, coordinated by Jane Hoffmann, has begun its process to identify candidates for the 2025-2027 slate for the Board of Directors for our chapter. Members interested in serving on the Board or participating with the next cycle's Nominating Committee should contact Jane, or any member of the current committee:

**Jane Hoffmann:** [JaneHoffmann74@gmail.com](mailto:JaneHoffmann74@gmail.com)

**Debora Arnold:** [darnold59@icloud.com](mailto:darnold59@icloud.com)

**Stacey Jenkins:** [stacey.jenkins@gmail.com](mailto:stacey.jenkins@gmail.com)

**Donna Armbrister:** [darmbrister44@gmail.com](mailto:darmbrister44@gmail.com)

**Margaret Fritze:** [margaretfritze@gmail.com](mailto:margaretfritze@gmail.com)

#### LWV Membership Updates: What You Need to Know

The LWVUS is transitioning to a nationwide member portal that will handle all join and renew functions. The date all Leagues will transition is 2/1/2025. No action is needed now, but here is what to expect:

- **Renewals:** Continue renewing as usual this year. Starting January 2025, you'll receive an email to access the new portal, where you can login and update your contact information. The LWV Charlotte Mecklenburg will add a join/renew button on our website that will take you to the new portal. Membership will last one year from your most recent renewal date, and you'll have the option to set up annual auto-renewal.
- **Dues:** Dues will transition to a pay-what-you-can model, with a minimum of \$20 and a recommended amount of \$75. This approach supports inclusivity while sustaining League activities. **Note that contributions above your \$75 renewal fee will primarily be sent to the National and State treasuries,** not exclusively your local League. We humbly suggest you make any donations SEPARATE from your dues to your local League. (To note: Our League is one of very few chapters nationwide for which this change in dues structure will put a strain on our programming budget. Please consider easing this transition with a donation in any amount to our [Winter Fund-raiser.](#))
- **Renewal Reminders:** Email reminders will guide you through the process, and for those not using the internet, renewing by check will remain an option.

This change is designed to simplify membership management for individuals while growing our national membership base, enhancing our ability to empower voters and defend democracy. We'll keep you updated as new information becomes available.

#### LWVCM Communications Team Seeks Volunteers

**WEB:** Do you love keeping websites engaging and informative? Are you a team player who thrives in a collaborative environment? The Communications Team is seeking a passionate Co-Webmaster to join our team!

In this role, you'll be responsible for the **public-facing aspects** of our website, ensuring our online presence is up-to-date, informative, and engaging for our members and the public. Email [communications@goleaguego.org](mailto:communications@goleaguego.org) to RSVP for a Co-Webmaster Interest Meeting (Sundays at 4pm until filled).

**NEWS:** Be part of the transformation of the style and format of the newsletter (converting to Mailchimp in the new year)! Interested? Contact [Baysinger@lwwnc.org](mailto:Baysinger@lwwnc.org).



## League Action & Happenings

### Voter Service Team Hosts Ice Cream Social

On November 13, the Voter Service Team held a Volunteer Appreciation party at the Myers Park Baptist Church Library for the legion volunteers who worked tirelessly for the many months leading up to and through the 2024 Primary and General Elections.



Volunteers were treated to ice cream with all the fixings served up by Co-President Suzanne Elsberry. Voter Service Chair and Co-President Linda Traum recounted the team's impressive statistics on the numbers of voters reached

through postcarding, distributing door hangers, text banking, and of course through the League's many voter registration and engagement opportunities all over the county.

League member and former mayor Jennifer Roberts was among those in attendance and noted the League's impactful partnership with the NC Trusted Elections Tour that helped engage voters across the state providing essential information about voting laws and procedures.



### LWVCM Education Team Update

As part of the Education Team's goal of educating the public about the importance of public schools, Jeanne Smith and Carol Gray Adler presented at the recent Women in Business Conference sponsored by the Cabarrus County Chamber of Commerce. The conference was attended by close to 200 women leaders. Many participants were interested in learning more about the importance of public schools on the economy of Cabarrus county. Some were unaware of the low level of state funding for public schools and its impact on student achievement and on filling the more than 3,000 teacher vacancies across the state this fall.

In addition to advocating for increased funding for public schools, the Education Action Team has consistently opposed the expansion of the Opportunity Scholarship Program, the program that provides vouchers to parents who want to send their children to private schools. Earlier this fall, the General Assembly (NCGA) agreed to fund a big expansion of the program to ensure that all of the parents who applied—no matter what the level of family income—would receive a voucher. This expansion which was part of [HB 10](#) was vetoed by Governor Roy Cooper. The Education Team anticipated that the NCGA might vote to override Governor Cooper's veto when they returned to meet after the General Election. The Education Team prepared a detailed Action Alert that was adopted by the state LWV. All LWVNC members were urged to communicate with targeted representatives whose rural districts will lose funding for their public schools and whose constituents are unlikely to benefit from the vouchers as there are few private schools in the districts.

In spite of our efforts, the veto was overridden and an additional \$463 million dollars was allocated for the program's expansion. This funded the applicants on the waitlist, which contained more than 70% of families that were ineligible under previous income caps (earning above \$115,000/year for a family of 4). It will cost ~\$5 billion for the next 10 years to fund applicants from these wealthier families.

This is money needed for the chronically underfunded public schools. The Education Team will continue to monitor the impact of the Opportunity Scholarship Program on state funding of public schools in order to inform our advocacy and our efforts to build support for public schools.

### BOCC 2025 Legislative Priorities and Calendar

On December 10, during the Budget Policy Workshop, the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners voted to adopt the [2025 Mecklenburg County Proposed Legislative Agenda](#). Priorities include Educational Attainment, Environmental Stewardship, Health Access, Housing Insecurity, Workforce Development, Justice and Public Safety, Tax & Finance, and Transportation. Follow meetings via livestream or in person using the [2025 BOCC Meeting Schedule](#).





On December 7, League members gathered at the beautiful home of Susan and Brian Harden for our Holiday Potluck. With delicious dishes, wonderful company, and the presence of current and former elected officials Becky Carney, Mary Belk, Carolyn Logan, Martha Alexander, (and Susan herself) it was a celebration of community and connection! Thanks to all who joined, and contributed, but especially to Susan, Shamaie Haynes and Debora Arnold for their coordination of a festive evening to remember!