



# THE AKRON VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Akron Area

February, 2018

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**LWVAA**

**Upcoming**

**Events**

**March 1, 2018**

**LWVAA Board  
Meeting**

1250 W. Exchange  
St., Akron, Ohio  
6:30-8:00 p.m.

## A Message From the President

February is Black History Month and dozens of events are held at the local, state and national levels to commemorate and honor African Americans who hold a place in American history.

Organizations, schools and government often focus on slavery and post-slavery days to highlight heroes, who always should be given homage for their landmark achievements.

Today we live in an environment where people of color are still prominent targets for discrimination by some segments of the population. Anti-immigrant sentiment and instances of apparent police brutality against African Americans regularly leap to the headlines.

The white nationalist rally in Charlottesville last

Board Members only

**March 21, 2018**

**Public Forum on  
Gerrymandering**

**Akron-Summit  
County Public  
Library**

60 S High Street,  
Akron, Ohio  
6:00 p.m.



**Featured speakers:**

Author David Daley  
Catherine Turcer

**Moderator:**

Bruce Wings, Editor  
Akron Beacon Journal

Open to the public,  
free of charge

Co-sponsored by The  
Ray C Bliss Institute  
of Applied Politics

Thank you to League  
of Women Voters of  
Greater Cleveland for  
the support

summer shined a beacon on those in America who are now comfortable with overtly displaying their heretofore closeted belief that non-whites are inferior. The president did little to contest that attitude.

As I explored internet sites about Black History Month, I came across an open letter to African American women by Kamala Harris, who rose in the political ranks in California to be only the second African American woman and first woman of South Asian descent to be a United States Senator.

The theme of her letter is for African American women to ignore the naysayers who discourage them from attempting to reach great heights in politics, sports, art, business and other endeavors. In fact, all women can take her words to heart. Women, individually and collectively, are a powerful force as we work to reach our individual and collective potential.

Some of us feel we have little power to fight discrimination and unfairness that affects peoples' daily lives. But for almost 100 years, the League of Women Voters has been and is working every day through carrying out its mission, which strives for fairness in the democratic process and in other areas of public policy.

Through voter registration, education and advocacy, little by little we move toward that goal. Most recently, League members and others who signed and collected signatures for the Fair Districts Constitutional Amendment now are commended for

**April 5, 2018**

**LWVAA Board Meeting**

1250 W. Exchange St., Akron, Ohio  
6:30-8:00 p.m.

Board Members only

**May 3, 2018**

**LWVAA Board Meeting**

1250 W. Exchange St., Akron, Ohio  
6:30-8:00 p.m.

Board Members only

**June 7, 2018**

**2018 Annual Meeting**

Location Announced Soon  
6:00-8:00 p.m.

Members and their guests welcome

**August 23, 2018**

**2018 LWVAA Picnic**

their efforts. Without those efforts, negotiating an acceptable solution for congressional redistricting with the State would not be possible.

Barbara Hunsicker  
LWVAA President

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## **Save the Date: March 21 Public Forum on Gerrymandering Featuring David Daley**

We are very excited to be hosting David Daley, national political writer, senior fellow of FairVote and author of "Ratf\*\*ked: The Secret Plan to Steal America's Democracy" in a free public forum at 6pm March 21 at the Akron-Summit Public Library in downtown Akron.

The forum will also feature Catherine Turcer, co-leader for the Fair Districts coalition and will be moderated by Akron Beacon Journal editor Bruce Winges.

The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics will co-sponsor, with support from the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland.

The forum will examine the redistricting issue from a national and local perspective, and is free and open to the public. Don't miss it!

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## **Interested in Volunteering? SignUp Genius!**

We have adopted the easy to use online tool

Location Announced  
Soon  
5:30-8:00 p.m.

Members and their  
guests welcome

SignUpGenius to field volunteers as opportunities arise.  
Look for periodic outreach via email for your chance to  
sign up.

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## **VOTE411 Planning Underway**

Submitted by Jackie Darrow, LWVAA President Elect and  
Voter Services Chair

Members of the Hudson and Akron Leagues met to begin  
planning our online voter guide, VOTE411.org for the  
May 8 primary.

LWVUS established VOTE411.org as a non-partisan  
online resource providing national, state, county and local  
election information specific to the candidates and races  
for which you are eligible to vote.

While we will be publishing the online guide alone for the  
primary, we will be publishing a printed version in addition  
for the November 8 general election.

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# Redistricting Reform Compromise Passes in the Legislature with Significant Input from Fair Districts

We strongly support the compromise but will continue to collect signatures

Submitted by Jackie Darrow, LWVAA President Elect and Voter Services Chair

On February 6 the State House passed Substitute SJR5 a proposed amendment to the Ohio Constitution that meets the standards the Fair Districts = Fair Elections coalition of which LWVO is a lead sponsor.

The proposed amendment creates a bipartisan process that strongly encourages both major parties to cooperate and agree on a congressional map that better represents the views of Ohioans.

It also reduces the number of times communities can be split and provides guardrails that will make it harder to draw a map that favors or disfavors one political party. These elements were key demands in our negotiations with the Senate.

Here's how it works *[from the Fair Districts Blog]*:

Stage One: Passage of a map requires a three-fifths vote of both the House and Senate and must include at least 50 percent support of minority party members. If that doesn't work...

Stage Two: Ohio's existing seven-person bipartisan redistricting commission will be empowered to draw districts and must approve a map with at least two minority party votes. If that doesn't work...

Stage Three: The legislature gets another chance to pass either (1) a 10-year map with one-third of the minority party's support or (2) a four-year map without minority party support. If the process gets to the last stage not requiring minority party support, stricter rules protecting against unfair manipulation would apply.



Substitute SJR5 is a compromise - we didn't get everything we wanted and neither did the legislature.

The resulting proposed constitutional amendment should bring fairer districts to Ohio. Achieving an agreement with the legislature has always been an aim.

Without legislative support we would have faced an expensive media battle to confuse the public and risked a no vote from the citizens. The status quo is not acceptable.

**LWVO representatives have made very clear that while the Fair Districts coalition is strongly supporting the legislature's Substitute SJR5, Fair Districts volunteers will continue to collect signatures in case the measure fails in May.**

We are firmly resolved to change Ohio's current approach to U.S. Congressional district map-making and we want to make sure we have a measure on the ballot in November if the legislature's amendment fails in May.

Your efforts have made all the difference. The legislature would not have compromised on their initial proposal had they not seen the passion and results of the 2700+ volunteers like you who to date have collected more than 200,000 signatures.

The Fair Districts all volunteer signature collection effort is unprecedented in citizen led initiatives. It's been an amazing journey and we won't be done until we see real reform pass.

If you belong to a group that may be interested in a presentation or if you are interested in being trained to circulate petitions, contact [Jackie Darrow](#).

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## Observing is Fun!

Submitted by Jodie M DeLamatre

The Observer is one of the fundamentals of League activities. The primary reason for the Observer Corps is for local governments to know that the League is there watching. We know from experience that elected officials take notice when a League member shows up to observe the proceedings. Sometimes the meetings are confusing and a lot of the business gets done in committee. Don't let that deter you. Being there is very important. In time, you will learn the machinations of the proceedings.

There are a few more openings if you feel like jumping in. Most Observers take one meeting a month:

Summit County Council : 2 & 4th Monday, 4:30  
County Council Committee: 1 or 3 Monday, 4:30

Akron City Council meets every Monday at 7 p.m. OR  
City Council Committee meetings, Each Monday at 2 p.m.

Akron School Board: 2&4 Mondays, usually around 4:30

There are 3 things to remember if you decide to attend public meetings as a member of the Observer Corps:

1. Wear a League button identifying you as a League member. (ask me to get you one if you don't own one)

2. Do not offer comments of any sort since you are representing the League
3. If you are so inclined, submit a BRIEF synopsis, preferably by email, to me (jmgd3@neo.rr.com) of proceedings but this is secondary to attending the public meeting. This is NOT required.



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nonpartisan political action, and voter  
rights in your community.**

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[Website](#)

[The Ohio Voter](#)

\*\* LWV Ohio has moved! The new address is 100 E. Broad St. Suite 1310, Columbus,  
OH 43215

Please update your records accordingly and stop by if you're in the area!\*\*

**Stay up-to-date with LWVUS**

[Website](#)

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