

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF THE HUNTINGTON AREA

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Voting is my super power!

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The Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy at 15

Patricia Proctor, Esquire, Founding Director



I am delighted to be invited to write about the Center for this newsletter. The timing is propitious: the Simon Perry Center will celebrate its 15th anniversary this year, 2026.

Marshall University established the Center in 2011 to honor the legacy of the late Dr. Simon D. Perry, the beloved, respected, and longest-serving faculty member in the history of the university at the time he retired in 2010. He began teaching at Marshall in 1962, and over the decades inspired thousands of students to pursue careers in fields including law, politics, policy, education, and many forms of public service. Dr. Perry believed that civic education strengthens our country at its roots – the people – and spent his life providing it; the Center strives to carry on his mission.

Civic literacy education is critical to achieve an informed electorate, to fight the spread and influence of disinformation and misinformation, and to provide knowledge of our shared history and our constitutional traditions. As Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1818, in a democracy, such education is necessary “[t]o give to every citizen the information he needs . . . to understand his duties to his neighbors and country . . . [and] to know his rights.”

The Simon Perry Center’s work is multi-faceted. In the academic realm, the Center oversees an interdisciplinary minor in Constitutional Democracy with courses in history, political science, philosophy, sociology, and English; the minor expands upon a program Dr. Perry created, and includes courses he developed while still teaching, ensuring that this part of his legacy continues.

The Center also houses a dynamic university-wide pre-law program to assist students and alumni in achieving their goals of attending law school. In 2025, Marshall’s students were admitted to law schools including Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, Georgetown, Cornell, William & Mary, West Virginia University, and several others.

The Center also engages in various forms of community outreach, most notably its signature initiative, the Amicus Curiae Lecture Series on Constitutional Democracy. Over the years, the Amicus Curiae Lecture Series has featured more than 60 lecturers to discuss a broad range of constitutionally relevant topics. The lectures have featured leading scholars, authors, and legal practitioners, including federal judges, former U.S. Supreme Court law clerks, the former dean of Yale Law and the current dean of Penn Law, a diverse range of authors including Richard Brookhiser, Wil Haygood, Phil Shenon, and Richard Bell, and prominent scholars and public commentators including Heather Cox Richardson, Nadine Strossen, Kermit Roosevelt III and Elisabeth Griffith, to name a few. The lectures are free and open to the public and otherwise quite accessible: they are livestreamed as they occur, recorded, and preserved on the Center’s website, and made into a program that airs on West Virginia Public Television.

The Center’s work is complementary to the work of the League of Women Voters. For example, the Center was involved, with the Drinko Academy and the League, in programming for the 100th Anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 2020 and since then, ongoing programming to observe Women’s Equality Day each year. For the last three years, the Amicus Curiae Lecture Series has opened with a lecture honoring Women’s Equality Day. Since its inception, the Lecture Series has included many lectures on topics related to voting, including the history of the right to vote in America, gerrymandering, the electoral college, the impact of the Supreme Court decisions in *Citizens United* and *Shelby County v. Holder*, changes to election law after 2020, political polarization, and gender dynamics in today’s politics.

The Simon Perry Center also works with the Drinko Academy to organize and co-sponsor the Court on Campus Program, which features oral arguments in real cases before real judges on Marshall’s campus. In recent years, we have hosted oral argument sessions by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit as well as the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia.

These are just some of the efforts that the Simon Perry Center undertakes to ensure that robust civic literacy education is available on Marshall's campus and for the public. You can learn more about the Simon Perry Center by visiting www.marshall.edu/spc . We welcome the opportunity to work with the League of Women Voters to further civic literacy education and, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, to ensure that our fellow citizens have the tools they need to "understand [their] duties to their neighbors and [their] country and to know [their] rights."



Voter Suppression

Betty Barrett



We have been reading and are aware of the importance of the 2026 midterm elections. While the Senate is unlikely to change much, due to the few open seats, the House of Representatives is so close now that most experts predict a close election, with the possibility it may change from Republican to Democratic majority.

There have been many changes in legislation since the 2024 election that are likely to suppress voting. Districts have been gerrymandered, which we can see recently in Texas, California, and more, increasing the probability that parties change dominance. In Georgia there are new laws that create penalties for providing water and snacks to voters waiting in line. The number of polling places have been reduced in some areas so voters will have longer waits to vote or make it more difficult to vote early. This has been true in minority and poor areas. Absentee or mail-in votes have been restricted. The postal system has reduced prompt post marks. I notice this with some of my Christmas mailings. Because post marks are important on ballots with strict deadline, this can mean some ballots will not arrive within deadlines. In Latin and black areas, fewer people can take time off from work to vote.

Several states have already changed times or requirements on voter identification. Requiring a government issued picture id has a financial cost, making it harder in low-income areas to obtain such id. A study in 2025 found that 25% of voting age black people do not have government issued picture identification. In rural areas, especially those that are poor, obtaining picture id is too expensive and long travel times are costly. In some area, purging voter rolls too aggressively has suppressed voting. Weakening of various voting rights acts, especially in 2013, especially for poor, minority, young or old voters. Voter registration has been weakened by legislatures and the Supreme Court in recent years. It is important to pass the John Lewis Act and restore the 1965 Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Geographic isolation of Native Americans results in too few polling places easy to reach. In 2020, a study found that 18% of disabled voters reported they had problems voting in person, despite efforts to prevent this.

Many states believe there is much more voter fraud than is found with careful study. Non-citizens cannot vote by law. States are careful to regulate who can vote.

The problem of inability to register to vote is more serious than fraudulent registration. Many states have Automatic Voter Registration (AVR), which allows potential voters in more than 16 states and the District of Columbia to register with their Driver's License Registration. The League of Women Voters was active working to allow voters to opt in to voter registration automatically.

There was the effort to require proof of US citizenship with official papers when voting. This was blocked by the ACLU in 2018, on the grounds that most voters would not have access to such paperwork. In 2025 several states changed voting district lines, which are usually changed only after the census every 10 years.

It is unfortunate and worse that restrictions such as these on voting results in the inability of too many Americans to use their vital method to make our voices heard – our vote. The League of Women Voters works to remove these restrictions. We can all remain vigilant about identifying them



What's So Scary about Voting?

Marcia Daoust

On October 27, 2025, the League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area held a public forum in the Hampton Room at the Woodlands Retirement Community titled "What's So Scary about Voting?" The forum hosted WV House of Delegates Patrick Lucas (R) and Sean Hornbuckle (D).

The barriers to voting in WV as well as other election issues were discussed. The sizable audience consisted of League members, Woodlands' residents and the community at large.

Issues covered were:

- Absentee voting
- Early voting
- Negative campaign rhetoric
- Ways that might increase voter turnout

What's Scary About Voting?

A Conversation With WV Legislators

Sean Hornbuckle
Delegate, Cabell 25th District

Patrick Lucas
Delegate, Cabell 24th District



Delegates Hornbuckle and Lucas voiced personal support of voting. The audience made it clear that they did not want any more barriers to voting, but instead wanted free, fair elections with easy access to the ballot box.

Public forums, such as this one, are important activities of the local LWV and provide a person-to-person opportunity for the community to raise concerns and meet their elected officials.

Please attend our future events and volunteer, if possible, to make them happen. With the upcoming mid-term elections, we need you!



Health Care

Janice Gossett, RN

We can expect the following discussions/ possible bills impacting healthcare during the 2026 Legislative session:

PEIA: Continued efforts to stabilize the PEIA system financially by addressing spousal cost, overall affordability for state employees and retirees.

Gender affirming care: Potential additional restrictions or modifications to care for transgender individuals

Student health: Implement the presidential fitness test for students.

Infertility treatment: Bills may occur to cover infertility treatment as a treatable disease.

Medicaid adjustments: Federal mandates from the “One Big Beautiful Bill” prompting issues due to funding gaps for healthcare coverage. This is impacting thousands of WV residents this year and 55,000 in the next decade. Our residents will not be able to access preventative/routine care resulting in an increase in emergency room visits.

Inconsistent health care is responsible for increase in co morbidities, poor health outcomes and disabilities.

Rural healthcare transformation fund: Morrissey states that West Virginia has secured \$199 million through the Trump administration. Law makers will address solutions such as distance between patients and providers, preventing adverse health outcomes through nutrition, lifestyle change.

Reproductive health: Unfortunately, the access to reproductive health is a challenge in WV. This not only includes birth control, abortion care, oral abortifacients, STD screening and care but also routine screening for cervical and breast cancer for uninsured residents in our state. West Virginia Free continues to work diligently to provide access for these services.

Vaccines: Currently there is no plan for exceptions, but certainly it will be an issue during this session. In the past years, our state has ranked in the top 5 in vaccine compliance.

WVLWV will continue LLAW monitoring women and children, environmental, equal rights and democracy legislation.

Please respond to our legislators when you receive “Make some noise from “LWV.



Make Some Noise!

YOU can “*Make Some Noise*”

On Saturday, January 24, at 10 am, please join us for a one hour Zoom meeting to discuss major League issues in the 2026 session of the WV Legislature.

Our guest speaker for this event will be Judy Ball, Co-President of the LWV of WV and chair of the League’s Legislative Action Workgroup (LLAW). With the Legislature already in session at this time, she will bring us up to date on which legislation the League Workgroup LLAW supports and opposes. Plus, Judy will explain how to effectively advocate for our concerns using “*Make Some Noise, WV*” and other online tools.

Keep an eye on your email for a link to this important Zoom meeting. Feel free to invite specific friends by forwarding this email.



Join Us for **HERstory**

On January 31, 2026, at 2 pm, the LWV of the Huntington Area and Huntington NOW will host a meeting to honor Betty Barrett at the Woodlands Retirement Community in the Hampton Room.

Please place this event on your calendars to enjoy learning how Betty has made such an impact on the Huntington community. Her experiences will provide hope and ideas for how we can all make a difference.



MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Email: _____ Phone Number: _____
Address: _____
Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Understanding the demographics of LWV's membership base helps us progress in our value of being a fully inclusive organization. **Please fill out as much of the following info as you are comfortable with:**

Gender: _____ Pronouns: _____ Race/Ethnicity: _____ Birth Year: _____

DUES AMOUNT

Please select the dues amount you wish to pay. **The recommended rate is \$75.00**, but you may choose an amount below that, down to a minimum of \$20.00. Higher dues payments help to allow some members to pay below the recommended amount but do not grant additional benefits. *Attach a check payable to the League of Women Voters of the United States.*

\$75.00/year \$150.00/year \$250.00/year \$500.00/year

Choose your own amount (minimum \$20.00): _____

The amount you choose to pay in dues will be split between your local, state, and national League. Would you like to make an additional donation exclusively to your local League?

Yes No Amount: _____

If yes, please attach a separate check payable to your local League.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Select volunteer opportunities of interest:

Voter Education Communications Advocacy Operations

Do you prefer in person, virtual, or hybrid meetings? _____

What is your availability (e.g., weekdays, weekends, evenings)? _____

Do you have any accessibility needs for attending meetings/events? _____