



The VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM
<http://www.lwvgb.org>

AUGUST 2016

VOTER SERVICES

Nancy Sales, LWVGB Director

We are about to enter the “high season” of voter registration and education. Therefore we’re looking for new help as well as that of our experienced crew members. The first two events come quickly!

Saturday, August 13th

Elyton Village, Birmingham

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Community & Family Enrichment Day- a kick off for CEASE FIRE BIRMINGHAM, a multi-disciplinary initiative to “strengthen and educate communities to reduce violence.”

The League will have a table (and canopy) to register and educate voters about state photo ID requirements, voting rights restoration, etc. It’s best if we can have 2 volunteers each for 10:00 am - Noon and Noon – 2:00 pm.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

Mark your calendar. See this issue or [LWVGB Online Calendar](#) for event details.

- August 8:** Last day to register to vote in municipal election*
- August 13:** LWVGB Voter Registration & Education at Elyton Village with Ceasefire
- August 18:** Last day to request absentee ballot by mail for August 23 municipal election*
- August 19:** LWVAL & LWVGB Voter Registration & Education at AL Institute for Deaf and Blind
- August 22:** Last day absentee ballot can be hand-delivered to City Clerk*
- August 23:** Municipal Election Day
- August 23:** LWVGB Board Meeting
- September 5:** Labor Day
- September 11:** Patriot Day
- September 17:** Constitution Day
- September 20:** RSVP deadline for LWVGB Cocktail Reception @ Summit Club
- September 21:** UN International Day of Peace
- September 22:** LWVGB Cocktail Reception
- September 27:** National Voter Registration Day

*Does not include Birmingham or Bessemer

See [LWVGB Online Calendar](#) for event details



LWVGB Cocktail Reception “Meet & Greet”

Date: Thursday, 9/22/16

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Venue: The Summit Club

Friday, August 19th

AL Institute for the Deaf & Blind

3rd Ave. So. @ 34th St.

1:00 – 3:00 pm

A workshop on why voting is important and getting public officials’ attention to influence public policy for 20 – 40 deaf clients with the assistance of an American sign language interpreter.

Anne Permaloff, LWVAL President, will lead the workshop. We, Birmingham league members, will highlight **Why Vote?** and assist persons with their registrations. Nancy Sales hopes to have 2 or 3 to assist her and Anne at this event.

Contact Nancy Sales, magoriannancy@yahoo.com or cell 613-6569 to sign up for or ask about these two events.

Also on the calendar is a Sigma Kappa Sorority education and registration invitation on the UAB campus on Sunday, October 2nd and National Voter Registration Day events, Tuesday, September 27th.

To **help us plan** for fall voter services activities, be in touch with Nancy (see contact information above) or Maggie Howard at nat728@bellsouth.net or 994-4328.



**League of Women Voters
of Greater Birmingham**

Dedicated to making democracy work!

Save the Date

September 22, 2016

You don't want to miss this!



**Invite your friends to join you for the
LWVGB Cocktail Reception Meet and Greet
at The Summit Club
Thurs. Sept. 22, 5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.**

Don't Forget Your Business Cards!

PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

Jean Johnson

An election year offers many opportunities and challenges for the League of Women Voters. We are excited to meet them! Your LWVGB Board of Directors is dedicated to growing, empowering and protecting the vote in our community. We hope to actively engage the league membership. We encourage league members to be involved whether by participating in a voter service project or advocacy campaign or by seeking league educational opportunities.

In June the board met to plan the league year at the Smyer Lake home of Joyce Lanning. Thank you for hosting us, Joyce! And thank you, LWVAL President Anne Permaloff, for giving us a firm foundation for our work by leading us in orientation. Anne prepared us to advocate for our league

positions, build our democracy, and develop our League into a strong and vibrant voice in the Greater Birmingham community.

And so your board is pumped to accomplish great things for the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham and for our community! Here are the priorities we've set and the dedicated board members (and others) who have stepped up to accomplish our mission. With your help we can make it happen!

1. **Voter Services and Citizen Education**, co-chaired by Director Nancy Sales and Director Margaret "Maggie" Howard

This is a strong priority in this election year. We are working to grow, empower, and protect the vote and educate citizens about complex public issues. Here's how.

- Continuing our Youth Voter Registration Project to register young and first time voters in high schools and community colleges. LWVGB registered 341 high school voters in six high schools in Spring 2016. We will continue in the fall.
- Offering voter registration at many locations and to many demographics - food banks, shelters, community fairs, and more.
- Educating ex-felons about the process and procedures to reinstate their voting rights.
- Educating members and the public about complex issues. For example, this Fall there will be excellent, unbiased information shared with members and the public about payday loan businesses in Alabama prior to member consensus taking.

2. **League Development**

Membership, co-chaired by Secretary Starr Culpepper and Director Mikesha Harvill

Fundraising, chaired by Vice President Arlene Godwin

We are a grassroots organization that operates and governs by the membership. Nothing happens without YOU, our members. We need your membership, your volunteer help, and your financial support. We are committed to recruiting new members and increasing membership involvement and communication. Here's how.

- Reinstating **The Voter**, this LWVGB newsletter, to keep our members informed about league happenings and raise visibility in the community. It will be published monthly. Former LWVGB President Yvonne Brakefield has volunteered to serve as Editor. Thank you, Yvonne!



LWVGB Board Planning Mtg: Seated L-R: Maggie Howard, Nancy Sales, Jean Johnson, Anne Permaloff, Mikesha Harvill, Rev. Albert Hyche.

- Offering regular LWVGB member meetings. For some meetings we will look for well-informed expert speakers to share their expertise. Some meetings will be special and planned far in advance like our Membership Cocktail Reception on September 22nd and our annual Holiday Luncheon on December 3rd. Others will be casual and spontaneous. Stay tuned! (Hint: In October we could be breaking burritos and enjoying a brew in an after-work Article/Film Discussion Club meet-up, or we might just gather to discuss issues. Stay tuned!)

3. Advocacy, co-chaired by former President Ida Tyree-Hyche and Secretary Starr Culpepper.

We will speak out and advocate for our issue positions and principles. Here's how.

- The president will speak through direct communication with elected officials, letters to the editor, etc.. This can occur when local commissions, boards, councils, and their leaders make decisions and set policies that relate to our issue positions and league principles.
- You may be called upon to take action on the issue by contacting your elected officials and speaking out in your own name (not in the name of the League). Ida Tyree-Hyche and all the Advocacy Team will keep an eye on local events that call for our League action. Please answer the call if you are asked to take action.
- LWVAL and LWWUS will also occasionally issue calls to action on state and national issues, respectively. For example, LWVGB members, through consensus discussion, will help determine the LWVAL position on payday loan businesses. You may then be called upon to contact our legislators during the Alabama legislative session regarding this issue. Again, watch the LWVAL Legislative Report during the legislative session, and please answer the call if asked to take action.

Where will you volunteer? Every one of these committees needs volunteers. Don't hesitate to contact a committee leader and join. The amount of time you offer is up to you. Let your committee chair know what your time requirements/restrictions are. They WILL be honored. Some tasks will be involved and some very small. Please join in. Together, let's make this a great league year!

p.s. We can't wait for the Annual Cocktail Reception at City Club Birmingham (a.k.a. The Summit Club) on September 22! Who will you invite? We look forward to seeing you there and meeting your friends!



2016-17 LWVGB Board of Directors. L-R: Treasurer Rev. Albert Hyche, Director Nancy Sales, President Jean Johnson, Secretary Starr Culpepper, Director Margaret "Maggie" Howard, Director Mikesha Harvill. Not pictured, Vice President Arlene Godwin.

How Will Medicaid Cuts Affect Healthcare in Birmingham and Across the State? Connie Arnwine

As you know, Governor Bentley has just announced a special session of the Alabama Legislature to allow a vote on a state lottery "to help fund essential state services for our children, our elderly, those with mental illness and those who are in the most need, as well as the men and women in law enforcement." Bentley has announced that he is calling for the special session to begin on August 15th. The Legislature must approve a statewide lottery bill by August 24th in order for the amendment proposal to be on the ballot for the general election November 8th. The governor estimates that the lottery will generate \$225 million, money that he wants to be used for the medical care of Alabama's most "helpless and vulnerable people."

Even if the lottery referendum passes, it may be too late for many Medicaid recipients and providers across the state as the Medicaid Agency is beginning to implement cuts to programs and services. One of the first cuts takes place August 1st. Medicaid will be reducing the reimbursement to primary care physicians, including pediatric and family medicine physicians, by thirty percent. Medicaid says this will be a savings of \$14.7 million. Other proposed cuts include elimination of prescription drug coverage for adults, adult eyeglasses, outpatient dialysis, prosthetics and orthotics, and home health and physician case management fees. Needless to say, these cuts will be devastating to a fragile adult population.

Remember that the Alabama Legislature funding for FY 2017 left Medicaid with an expected \$85 million shortfall? The [American Academy of Pediatrics Alabama Chapter](#), the [Alabama Academy of Family Physicians](#) and the [Alabama Medical Association](#) issued a joint statement on July 7th regarding the proposed cuts and called on the governor to find a permanent revenue source for Medicaid. These professional associations are predicting that the reduction in fees for primary care providers will force some physicians to lay off staff while others may stop taking Medicaid altogether, and they predict a ripple effect across the state as physicians, nursing homes, and hospitals will all be impacted by the proposed cuts. In their statement, they point out that more than half of the births in Alabama and 47 percent of children are covered by Medicaid. Health care in Alabama generates \$11.2 billion in economic activity and is supported by 83,095 jobs which will be impacted by the cuts. (For more information visit the web pages of the above listed professional medical associations).

Locally, hospitals and clinics in our area are very concerned about the impact these cuts will have on their bottom line. Both University Hospital and Children's of Alabama in Birmingham serve a large number of Medicaid recipients and Medicaid revenue is a very important to their bottom line. Children's averages a 57% Medicaid in-patient occupancy rate and approximately 60 percent of their total patient population (inpatient and outpatient) is Medicaid eligible (source Mike Warren and Mitch Cohen, MD, Guest Voices [al.com](#) July 21st). The overriding concern is that rural hospitals and physician practices will close and hospital emergency rooms locally will become over burdened as physicians limit the number of Medicaid patients they see. This will reverse the gains that the Medicaid Agency made in reducing expensive ER visits through the Health Home Program.

These are some of the reasons that physicians, hospitals, mental health providers and concerned citizens are calling on the Governor and the Legislature to find a long-term solution for funding the Alabama Medicaid Agency. Many people do not understand the Medicaid program or have a negative opinion. If you wish to have more information about the current Medicaid budget and the population served, a very good resource in addition to the professional sites already mentioned is [iamedicaid.com](#).

YOUTH VOTER REGISTRATION PROJECT

Nancy Sales, LWVGB Director

This is the project for which LWVGB received a grant to reach potential youth voters. The success is due to tremendous work on the part of our Voter Services Co-chair, Maggie Howard, with amazing support from Jean Johnson and a crew of 14 other volunteers.

Six high schools were visited, (many more contacted), 540 students received voter information with 341 voter registration applications collected and submitted to county registrars. In the process of this education and registration work 1458 pieces of informational material were handed out and plenty of questions asked and answered.



Woodlawn High School 3/16/16

The high schools included Birmingham’s Woodlawn, Fairfield, Jefferson County, Minor, St. Clair County Ragland, Bibb County High and West Blocton. That meant many miles driven as well as an estimated 35.5 hours spent at the schools. The interest and courtesy on the part of students, faculty and staff made it well worth the effort. The remainder of grant funds received will be used for the very important follow-up with these newly registered voters.



Fairfield Preparatory High School 4/6/18



Woodlawn High School 3/16/16

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

We love our new members of the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham! Please welcome them at your first opportunity!



Christine (“Chris”) Underwood

Chris is a graduate of the University of North Carolina. She has worked in insurance, Regions Bank for 20 years in National Accounts and in Trust. She has served as a driver in the state's Dept. of Blind and Low Vision. She now enjoys Garden Club and volunteering at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. She says, “I think the League's voter registration drives are a vital civic service.” Chris's issue interests are Poverty, Housing, and Women's Education and Well Being. Chris has already been very active in our Youth Voter Registration project!



Alexis Steele-Thomas

Alexis holds a BS in Marketing from the University of Alabama in Birmingham and an MBA from Columbia Southern University. She expects to receive her Juris Doctor from Birmingham School of Law in August 2016. Alexis is a wife and mother. She says she is “blessed to receive everything that the Lord has given me.” Alexis's issue interests include Civil Rights and Women's Issues.

Welcome to the League, ladies! We look forward to working together with you to make our democracy work even better in the Greater Birmingham community.

Board of Directors, 2016-18

Jean Johnson	President (2017)
Arlene Godwin	1st Vice President (2017)
Starr Culpepper	Secretary (2017)
Rev, Albert Hyche	Treasurer (2018)
Mikesha Harvill	Director (2018)
Margaret Howard	Director (2018)
Nancy Sales	Director (2017)

Nominating Committee (2017)

Ida Tyree-Hyche, Chair
Starr Culpepper

Off Board

Yvonne Brakefield Knowles VOTER Editor

Ida Tyree-Hyche, Chair Advocacy Committee
Haley Colson Lewis

QUOTABLE QUOTES

There is nothing more deceptive than
an obvious fact.

~ *Sherlock Holmes*

The Bascombe Valley Mystery

All things are difficult before they are
easy.

~ *Thomas Fuller*

Let's grow the LWVGB Social Network!

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