



The League of Women Voters of Washington County

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www.lwvarwc.org

P.O. Box 4, Fayetteville, AR 72702

LWVWC Calendar of Events

- Sunday, June 3, 4:00 to 5:30 pm – CFC Convention planning for delegates, Home of Joyce Hale, 285 W. Cleburn St., Fayetteville
Friday, June 8-10, CFC Convention – Four Points by Sheraton, Little Rock Midtown

A Comment from the LWVWC President – Joyce Hale



Activities for the LWVWC have shifted from public programs and activities to internal development and preparing a new board to take over on July 1. Delegates will soon be attending Citizens First Congress and LWVUS Conventions.

The new board was officially approved by the membership at the Annual Meeting on May 17. Board positions are in alternating years so that some are elected in even years and some in odd years. Positions filled for 2018-2020 during this election are:

OFFICERS

- Sarah Gheen – President
Beth Barham – Vice President
Michelle Wolchok – Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS

- Laura Kellams Laura Winburn
Angela Danovi Fei Rubinelli

I want to thank all new board members for strengthening the LWVWC by agreeing to serve. Additional one-year appointed board positions will be named when the new board is seated. Committee chairs who are not board members are needed to help the board. Dividing up the work for next year will require more member participation than just the elected board. If you are serious about wanting to help the LWVWC in ways that will expand our effectiveness, please volunteer for one of these important support areas. Do you have an interest in newsletter writing, hospitality/refreshments, fundraising, data management, publicity, photography and video recording, preparing for the 2020 LWV 100th Anniversary celebration, and other areas. Volunteers are essential to supplement the board’s responsibilities. Contact me or any of the names above if you are willing to help strengthen the LWVWC in one of these areas.

Are You Receiving Your Tax Credit for Donating to a Political Campaign?

Arkansas is one of only four states to offer a tax credit for state (not Federal) political campaign contributions. You can be reimbursed for up to \$50.00 on an individual state income tax filing or \$100.00 for a joint filing. The other states with this incentive for small grassroots contributors are Ohio, Oregon, and Virginia.

Newcomers to the area may not know this credit is available. Spread the word and help progressive candidates.

## **Citizens' Redistricting Commission Petition – To Be or Not To Be... That is the Question!**

The fate of the Citizens Redistricting Commission Petition is dependent on securing a great amount of funding, hiring canvassers in a very short time and collecting the required number of verified signatures. After three rejections by Attorney General Leslie Rutledge to certify the initiative's Popular Name and Ballot Title, those expected to provide the financial resources moved on to other projects. Suddenly under threat of legal action four measures were certified. Ballot initiatives are difficult at best to accomplish. The added financial, organizational, and time constraints facing this measure now look insurmountable.

Having moved past certification the measure finds itself at the bottom of a steep hill to climb. The following are requirements before it can be included on the November ballot:

1. Approximately \$400,000 is needed to conduct a petition drive requiring organizers and canvassers to collect signatures in the short time available.
2. Petitions and other required documentation must be printed and distributed.
3. 84,859 qualified signatures must be collected in required quantities in at least fifteen counties showing distribution throughout the state and not just easy to reach population centers.
4. The petition must be published in a newspaper with statewide circulation by June 6.
5. Canvassers must be trained and meet the minimum number of signatures and distribution requirements. They must be turned in to the Secretary of State for verification by July 6.
6. If the number of signatures is insufficient after verification, canvassing to make up the deficiency may continue for 30 days.
7. After the measure qualifies for the ballot, sponsors must reimburse the Secretary of State for publishing costs.

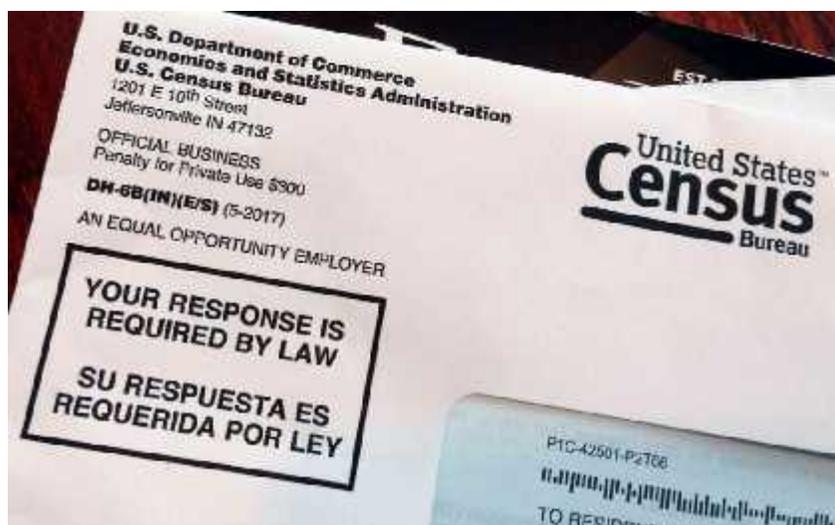
The idea of a Citizens' Redistricting Commission doesn't have to die here. Other states are working toward action in 2020 with the hope of being ready for the 2020 Census returns in 2021. Much of the success will depend on public education and a bipartisan acceptance that the system needs change. With this education comes a better understanding of what criteria should be used when drawing district lines. Pennsylvania has formed an organization, *Draw the Lines*, to engage individuals, schools and colleges in a game of drawing districts. This should make the process much clearer and shine the light of an informed public on the process even if citizen-led independent commissions are not successfully established.

The failure to have a ballot question on a Citizen's Redistricting Commission is not the only way to safeguard against gerrymandering. If people who are concerned stay engaged, the public can still have an impact. If organized, a group might educate by creating its own redistricting game to serve as watch dogs if politicians continue to have control. The League of Women Voters of Arizona sponsored a redistricting game that involved citizens, schools and colleges and explained the criteria needed to draw district lines. It is still possible that with proper time and funding an Arkansas ballot initiative for a citizens' commission could be proposed for the 2020 ballot.



**<https://drawthelinespa.org/>**

## Census Citizenship Question Will Result in Inaccurate Count



The League of Women Voters president, **Chris Carson**, issued the following statement in response to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross' decision to include a question pertaining to citizenship in the 2020 Census:

"Including a question about citizenship in the 2020 Census will damage the chances for an accurate count of our country's population. This unprecedented change to the way we count the number of people living in the United States is a betrayal of the idea that in America, every person counts.

"Make no mistake: this decision isn't about improving demographic data on citizenship. It's designed to frighten immigrants—citizens and noncitizens alike—so they won't participate in the Census. It's a blatant political maneuver meant to disenfranchise these groups and deny them equal representation. So Secretary Ross' claim that this question helps enforce the Voting Rights Act is preposterous. Indeed, including this question on the Census undermines the rights of eligible voters and threatens a process vital to our democracy.

"For more than 200 years, the Census has collected information about the geographic distribution of our population so we can provide representation and invest in our communities equitably. A fair and accurate Census is essential to the way the federal government allocates resources for infrastructure, education, and transportation. Census data is critical when determining resources for fire, water and trash collection. Without a complete count of our nation's people, businesses will not have the tools to make sound investment decisions that keep our communities thriving.

"Adding this question to the Census now is not only unnecessary and jeopardizes the accuracy of the report, but it comes at a huge financial expense. Taxpayers should not be held responsible for the time and cost of changing the forms and making the report less accurate.

"The United States Constitution mandates an accurate count of all people living in the United States – not all citizens. Non-citizens are an integral part of our economy and need to be included in the 2020 Census to paint a complete picture of our great country. The clock is ticking toward 2020. We call on Congress to take action and correct this issue before it is too late."

## Lisa Corrigan, Author and Associate Professor, Tells It Like It Is



Lisa Corrigan's extensive research for her book, *Prison Power*, on black history and prisons provided insight to the origins of many of today's political and social problems. Those attending the LWVWC Annual Meeting at Butterfield Trail Lodge, May 17, were given background to the country's ongoing racial conflicts.

The ties between prisons and the black community have much to say about two of the LWV primary interests: public policy and voting. Lisa tied the long standing practices of minority exclusion and separation to the education, economic, housing, prison, voting rights and representation problems of today. Money as the motivation for white privilege laws has created and perpetuated an underclass. Lisa urged the League to be informed about the state's budget and how our tax dollars are perpetuating discriminatory policies. Individuals who are blamed for poor choices are generally left without sufficient social services and no choices but survival at the margins. Her message was basically, "If you want to increase voter participation you are going to have to start with diversity and equality first."

For members unable to attend this informative program, a video is being edited to share. Please email [joycehale43@gmail.com](mailto:joycehale43@gmail.com) if you wish to see Lisa's speech.

## The Search for a LWVWC Treasurer Begins

Since 2009, Susan Rausch has faithfully maintained the financial records and updated our membership rosters with the national LWV. This has provided stability and consistent reporting while other officers came and went. As health issues have made volunteering difficult, Susan will be leaving her post beginning July 1.

Treasurer is an important foundational position, but unlike other offices, it can be managed on one's own time. If you or someone you know enjoys record keeping or perhaps retired from an accounting or business background, this would be a great way to contribute to this organization. Please let the board know if you know someone to suggest for this position.

I hope that everyone who knows Susan will extend a warm "Thank You" for these nine years of service!

