



THE WEST VIRGINIA VOTER

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PRESIDENTS' REPORT

By Julie Archer and Effie Kallas, Co-Presidents

We are assuming leadership of the state League at a perilous time for our democracy. The freedom to vote is under attack, as opponents of free and fair elections continue to use the unproven and destructive allegations that the 2020 election was stolen to undermine the most basic principle underlying every American's right to participate in our democracy. These same interests want to make it harder to vote, but also harder for voters to protect their rights in court, all the while politicizing election administration and certification to change the rules of democracy to enable legislators or partisan election officials to overturn the election outcomes.

Voting is a sacred right and we are proud to be part of an organization that has fought for more than 100 years to protect the rights of eligible voters, and that continues to be at the forefront in fighting voter suppression and expanding access for those who've been left out of our democratic process. For months, the League and our state and national partners in the Declaration for American Democracy coalition have been calling on the Senate to pass the *For the People Act*, which would set national standards to protect our freedom to vote, ensure fair representation, and get big money out of politics.

Although the *For the People Act* was declared dead by some after Senator Joe Manchin announced his opposition to the bill in June, the pressure brought to bear by League members and grassroots activists kept Senator Manchin at the negotiating table and working with his colleagues on a compromise. The *Freedom to Vote Act* was introduced upon the Senate's return from their August recess, keeping hope alive for passing much needed legislation that will protect and expand the right to vote, decrease the influence of money in politics and curb partisan gerrymandering. See Judy Ball's article on page 4 to learn more about this transformative voting rights bill and do your part to ensure passage by contacting Senators Manchin and Capito today and telling them to vote 'YES' on the *Freedom to Vote Act*.

In addition to efforts in support of federal democracy reform legislation, the ongoing redistricting process has been another major focus for the League in recent months. One of our goals as co-presidents is to expand the educational programs and activities hosted by the state League, and compliment the offerings our local Leagues make available to their communities. In keeping with that goal, in June, we hosted a Redistricting For the People! Teach In in coordination with our Fair Maps Committee and LWVUS on how the redistricting process was going

to work this year, how the *For the People Act* would impact it in the future, and how individuals could get involved. This was a great follow up to Dr. Kenneth Martis' presentation at our biennial convention, and recordings of both events as well as other information and resources can be found at <https://lwvww.org/redistricting-information-resources/>

The Legislature's Joint Committee on Redistricting just wrapped up a series of public hearings to allow West Virginians to weigh in on the process of redrawing the boundaries of legislative and congressional districts. But there's still time to let legislators know that when it comes to our districts, we want a transparent process we can trust, where communities remain whole and where voters have an equal voice. See Nyoka Baker Chapman's report on page 2 for more details.

While fair districting and protecting the freedom to vote have been in the limelight, rest assured the League remains actively involved in a number of pressing federal and state issues, which is reflected in our ongoing participation in the WV Climate Alliance and the WV Health Care for All campaign, among the many other endeavors too numerous to mention in this article, but you'll find more details inside, so please keep reading!

That brings us to yet another goal we hope to accomplish during our tenure, which is to increase member participation on our committees and in our portfolio (issue) work. So if you see something in this edition of the VOTER that peaks your interest please reach out to one of our directors to find out how you can get involved supporting the mission, vision and values of the League, improving our elections, protecting our democracy, advancing solutions to the climate crisis, making health care more affordable and accessible, and much more.

Our past President, Jonathan Rosenbaum, has left big shoes to fill. We commend Jonathan for his dedication and service to the League. We're grateful he has agreed to continue to serve on the board and to mentor us as we embark on this adventure of serving as your co-presidents, and we are looking forward to working with League members and the new board to see what we can accomplish together.

In League,

Julie Archer & Effie Kallas
Co-Presidents

Redistricting West Virginia

LWVWV Fair Maps Committee Report

By Nyoka Baker Chapman

On June 7, 2021 Senate President Craig Blair and Speaker of the House Roger Hanshaw issued statements following the Senate's adoption of a resolution and the House's adoption of a Motion that created the Select Committees on Redistricting. The actions provided for each body to appoint members to a Joint Committee on Redistricting to be approved by motion; to be led by Senator Charles Trump and Delegate Gary Howell.

On 6/09, a memorandum naming the members of the newly formed WV Joint Committee on Redistricting was released on the WV Legislature Redistricting webpage where all further information has continued to be announced. <https://www.wvlegislature.gov/redistricting.cfm>

On 6/17, the LWVWV in partnership with LWVUS and DFAD (Declaration for American Democracy) sponsored a virtual event **Redistricting for the People! Teach-In** with guest panelists who accepted an invitation to participate: Delegate Evan Hansen, Delegate Barbara Fleischauer and Senator Charles Trump. Effie Kallas, LWVWV co-president moderated the event. Both delegates in attendance had previously sponsored bills in support of an independent commission.

On 7/08, public hearing dates set by the WV Joint Committee on Redistricting were added to the Legislative website.

On 7/10 The LWVWV Fair Maps Committee provided a compiled list of educational resources, WV constitutional information on redistricting and a history of the most recent redistricting litigation in WV that allowed a new webpage to be added to our LWVWV website which has since been widely circulated as a redistricting resource. <http://lwwvv.org/redistricting-information-resources/>

On 7/22 The LWVWV Fair Maps Committee held an open meeting on **Preparing for Public Hearings on Redistricting**. Thornton Cooper was present at this meeting and shared his experience in attending all of the prior public hearings across the state during the last redistricting cycle. WV constitutional requirements were discussed and what a fair map should look like without gerrymandering and comparisons were made to several current WV district maps that do not appear to meet fair criteria.

Beginning on 7/27 **12 public hearings** were held across the state, ending on 9/16. Those providing testimony resounded the lawful principles of the WV Constitution with regard to **adhering to county lines, keeping districts compact and seeing contiguous district lines. Voices remarked on the importance of honoring communities of interest and ending all forms of gerrymandering as**

well as seeing the maps before they are finalized. Citizens and organizations continue to submit written statements and mapping recommendations to the WV legislature website. E-mail: joint.redistricting@wvlegislature.gov

On 8/27, virtual hearings dates of 9/20, 9/21 and 9/22 were announced by the joint committee for respective regions. Note was made of the 2018 law that moves WV to 100 individual delegate districts, that as census data was delayed, proposed maps had not been presented during the public hearings, and that once the WV Joint Committee on Redistricting completes its initial plans, the House and Senate would create the necessary reports and maps to draft redistricting bills and that those materials would be made public.

On 8/30 the LWVWV Fair Maps Committee held an open meeting on the topic of **Advocacy for Ethical Redistricting**. Dr. Kenneth Martis, professor emeritus of geography, West Virginia University, who is a leading expert in the field of redistricting, and professional transportation planner Jing Zhang (AIPC, PTP, LEED, AP, ND) discussed the concept maps they had prepared for the LWVWV as examples of what new delegate maps could look like. The maps were based on WV constitutional law, being equal in number within acceptable margins, compact, respectful of communities and drawn without partisan or racial gerrymandering. There was consensus that the maps submitted represented what pure baseline maps could look like when they are ready for public input and final modifications. The drafted delegate maps were updated to the WV Monongalia County House of Delegates Redistricting Recommendation. <http://fairmaps-mon.lwwvv.org/>

On 9/01 the referenced maps along with their attached explanation were submitted from our nonpartisan organization to the WV Joint Committee on Redistricting along with an invitation to participate in a meeting with us on 9/08 at 6pm to discuss how the maps were drawn. Unfortunately, we were informed that there was another meeting being held at the same time and they could not take the meeting.

There was an agreement by the LWVWV Fair Maps Committee on 9/08 that a follow up communication to the WV Joint Committee on Redistricting was appropriate. Committee member Nancy Ulrich drafted and submitted additional comments to the Joint Committee on 9/20, making clear the importance of seeing

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HEALTH CARE REPORT

By Betty Barrett

West Virginia is being hit hard with the Covid 19 virus, with cases and hospitalizations and deaths increasing as I write this. To date, there are no mask mandates, for or against, or vaccination mandates, for or against. For whatever reason, many of our citizens are resisting vaccination, for themselves or their eligible children. Meanwhile, adults and children are becoming ill or dying from a preventable disease. Some school districts are mandating masks for teachers and children, and there may be some employers mandating vaccinations. Perhaps soon, children ages 5-12 may begin vaccinations, which will help if parents provide it for their children.

Some good news elsewhere – our League joined with other organizations to see the 2020 Legislature approve adding dental care for adults to Medicaid. The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy released an excellent report this summer on the effect of that legislation. They estimate that one in five West Virginia adults received dental care, 18,500 members in the first five months. It is well-known that Medicaid is the only health insurance for many of our citizens. Dental care has a significant impact on overall health and well-being.

Current legislation action in Congress, the approved American Rescue Plan and the proposed Build Back Better Recovery Plan, include several health benefits. We will be watching to see what happens with that huge bill.

As this is written, the wide-ranging health-related programs are under attack from several members of Congress, and we cannot say exactly which will be retained in the final bill. These programs include:

- adding dental and vision care, and hearing aids to Medicare
- Allowing negotiation of drug prices under Medicare
- Capping individual out of pocket drug costs under Medicare
- Extending Medicaid expansion to states who did not include it
- Improving subsidies to Obamacare for eligible recipients
- Long term care in homes rather than nursing facilities
- Permanent funding for Children's Health Insurance Program, which now must be approved periodically.

Since we cannot tell what the final bill will look like, we must watch for and actively support the programs and others. All of the above programs would fit into the LWVUS priorities under our health care issues we have studied. The statement from LWVUS "believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all US residents." All of the above list is included in the full description of our position.

Redistricting West Virginia

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By Nyoka Baker Chapman

the new district maps down to street levels in the same manner as those submitted for the delegate districts of Monongalia County (also drawn in Maptitude), that they would be available as well for analysis.

On 9/23 at 3 pm with a late start, the WV Senate Redistricting Committee convened for a meeting. Motions were made and seconded that set required guidelines for how amendments to the drafted WV

district maps could be made. Per this meeting, the new maps will be available on an accessible online portal for public view and comments.

The next virtual LWVWV Fair Maps Committee Meeting will be held in conjunction with the availability of the online portal to the maps drafted by the WV Joint Committee on Redistricting when we will get our first view of what our WV House, Senate and Congressional maps could look like for the next 10 years.

What's Happening in Election Law?

By Judy K. Ball

Board member Judy Ball, representing LWVWV, published an op-ed [Why We Need Expanded Voting Rights](#) in the *Charleston Gazette-Mail* on August 21, 2021. A reprint of the same op-ed appeared as [Why We Need to Expand Voting Rights for All](#) in Morgantown's *Dominion Post* on September 5, 2021.

Then, on September 14, Sens. Manchin (WV), Klobuchar (MN), Kaine (VA), King (ME), Merkley (OR), Padilla (CA), Tester (MT), and Warnock (GA) released the new [Freedom to Vote Act](#). The *Freedom to Vote Act* (summary below) is a revision of the *For the People Act*. It was designed to expand the base of support among Senators, Sen. Manchin included. Once the bill was released, Sen. Manchin was tasked with finding enough Republican votes to overcome an expected filibuster in the Senate. Failing that, it is likely that filibuster reform is on the table. In the meantime, proving the necessity for Federal intervention, state legislative efforts toward voter suppression have continued. In one of the most visible states, Texas has passed its third such bill this year.

Following release of the *Freedom to Vote Act*, WV Secretary of State Mac Warner published a letter to Sen. Manchin on September 15. The letter demands that Sen. Manchin vote against the very bill that he helped craft and is co-sponsoring. Accompanying the letter, SOS Warner included a resolution signed by 54 of WV's 55 county clerks expressing their opposition to the bill. Only Monongalia County Clerk Carye Blaney did not sign the resolution.

Despite what you may have heard and SOS Warner asserts, the *Freedom to Vote Act* is not a "Federal takeover" of State and local elections. It is simply Congress exercising its Constitutional authority to regulate Federal elections across all states. Minimum standards for voting across the states are completely in line with the principle of one-person-one-vote. And that is the purpose of the *Freedom to Vote Act*: ensuring that voters in West Virginia and Texas and North Carolina and Montana and California and Oregon and Georgia, etc. are all treated essentially the same and that no voter faces unreasonable barriers in Federal elections.

We urge all members of the League to contact Sen. Manchin to express our gratitude for his support of voting rights, as expressed in the *Freedom to Vote Act*.

LWV-US and LWV-WV also urge everyone to press Senators Manchin and Capito to take whatever actions are necessary in the Senate to ensure that voting rights are secured.

Senator Manchin - 304-342-5855 or 202-224-3954

Senator Capito - 304-347-5372 or 202-224-6472

[Take Action: Tell the Senate to Support the Freedom to Vote Act!](#)

The Freedom to Vote Act. What's in it?

Three parts, here is a summary.

By Judy K. Ball

I. Voter Access and Election Administration

Provisions to advance voter access by implementing reliable state best practices for voter registration and election administration to ensure all Americans can easily exercise their freedom to vote regardless of where they live.

- Automatic Voter Registration and Online Voter Registration
- Election Day Holiday
- Uniform Early Voting
- Same Day Voter Registration
- Federal Minimum Standards on Vote by Mail and Drop Boxes
- Strengthens Voter List Maintenance Standards
- Counting of Provisional Ballots
- Standards for Voter Identification in States that Require Voter ID
- Voting Rights Restoration for Returning Citizens
- Expanded Voting Access Protections for the Disabled, Native Americans, Military, Overseas Voters, and Underserved Communities

II. Election Integrity

Measures to promote confidence in elections, stop partisan election subversion, and protect against election interference, both foreign and domestic.

- Preventing State Election Subversion
- Protection of Election Records, Election Infrastructure, and Ballot Tabulation
- Voter-Verified Paper Ballots, Reliable Audits, and Voting System Upgrades
- Non-Partisan Election Official Recruitment and Training
- Comprehensive Voting System Security Protections

III. Civic Participation and Empowerment

Provisions to prevent partisan manipulation of the redistricting process, establishes uniform disclosure standards for money in politics, and empowers states to make critical investments in their election systems.

- Non-Partisan Redistricting Reform and Banning Partisan Gerrymandering
- Combatting Secret Money and Election Interference (*DISCLOSE Act* and *Honest Ads Act*)
- State Election Assistance and Innovation Fund
- Nonpartisan Oversight of Federal Election Law
- Stopping Illicit Super PAC Coordination

Fighting for Climate Justice

By: Nyoka Baker Chapman

The LWVWV continues in coalition and support of the **WV Climate Alliance**. The organization continues to grow in its efforts to provide science-based education on climate change to West Virginia citizens and policymakers. The WV Climate Alliance seeks to advance climate solutions that focus on three pillars of reform:

- 1) Climate justice for communities that have suffered the brunt of our current fossil-fuel economy
- 2) A true transition for coal miners and other fossil fuel workers likely to be impacted by the transition to a low-carbon economy
- 3) A significant reduction in greenhouse gases in accordance with the findings of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Two brief but powerful videos created by the WV Climate Alliance, **The Three Pillars of Climate Justice** and **In Pursuit of Climate Justice**, explain what environmental justice means, particularly in WV where injustice abounds. <https://www.wvclimatealliance.org/>

On June 15, guest speaker Dr. Robert Pollin, lead author of the recent report, <https://reimagineappalachia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Pollin-et-al-WV-Reimagine-Appalachia-Clean-Energy-Study-2-23-21.pdf> was joined by panelists Jeff Young, Managing Editor of the Ohio Valley Resource, and Ted Boettner, Senior Researcher at the Ohio River Valley Institute for an excellent program, Putting Together the Pieces of a Fair Energy Transition - Leaving No One Behind. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-JpNrsBh-0>

WV Climate Alliance member West Virginia Center on Climate Change held a webinar on August 10, at 7 pm. A "Fair Transition" with Colorado State Senator Chris Hansen who is involved in establishing Colorado's Office of Just Transition, the first just transition office in the country. Dr. Hansen was joined by panelists Ann Eisenberg and WV Delegate Evan Hansen. The Climate Alliance was a sponsor of this webinar. You can see the replay here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GImuACCnDXc>

The webinar explained how just transition will need to work, not just for workers but also for utility companies and how that can be accomplished. The economics of fossil fuels and renewables like solar and wind were compared and Colorado's plan to meet decarbonization goals were identified. Securitization was discussed. Public utility commissions would oversee securitization plans and work with the Office of Just Transition. "This is math," Dr. Hansen said, "nothing partisan about it." Colorado and WV share parallel concerns due to the impact of fossil fuels in their states.

A public forum on **Climate, Jobs and Justice** was held on Aug. 24, 2021, with speakers that included Collin O'Mara, President of the National Wildlife Federation, and many others. Over 100 people were online for the entire one hour-and-a-half webinar. The LWVWV was a co-sponsor of this event. youtu.be/m54X7PVsC0

The WV Climate Alliance has continued to voice strong support for the **Clean Electricity Performance Plan (CEPP)**. This has recently been a primary focus for the organization. You can see the full text of the program here: https://energycommerce.house.gov/sites/democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/files/documents/Subtitle%20D_Energy.pdf

With the American Jobs Plan still on the table until the reconciliation bill is resolved, the legislation for climate change initiatives continue to remain disputed. WV Senator Joe Manchin appears to oppose the Clean Electricity Performance Program which could transform the power sector to 80% clean energy by 2030.

The CEPP would create 8 million jobs and drive an affordable, cost-effective clean energy transition as well as building on what is already working *and* demand more from utilities without affecting grid reliability. The Clean Electricity Performance Program is essential to meeting climate change goals and could deliver clean air and health benefits of 100 billion to 184 billion dollars per year. Failure to pass the reconciliation bill as currently written would be a dramatic setback to US compliance with IPCC goals. The 150-billion-dollars allocated in the bill to meet clean energy goals could potentially be introduced as separate legislation.

Earlier this summer Senator Manchin was quoted as opposing the climate change provisions in the reconciliation bill. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/14/politics/joe-manchin-reconciliation-climate-change/index.html> Also, Senator Manchin's op-ed in the Wall Street Journal on Sept 2, explained why he won't support spending another \$3.5 trillion. Yes, the looming debt ceiling *is* on the horizon with the prior administration having increased the national debt by \$7.8 trillion. Attempting to correct previous policies that made no provisions to meet climate change goals is a fight that must continue. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/manchin-pelosi-biden-3-5-trillion-reconciliation-government-spending-debt-deficit-inflation-11630605657>

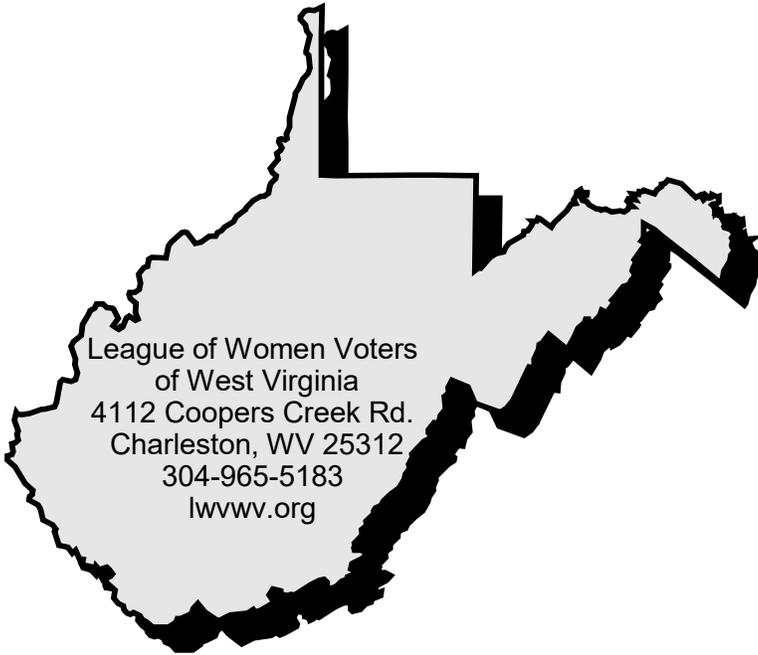
On a brighter note, on 9/16 Senators Joe Manchin and Shelly Moore Capito announced 14 awards totaling \$12,356,197 to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) program for organizations across WV. See their newsletters or visit their websites for more details.

Calendar

Oct. 16, 2021	LWVWV Board Meeting
Dec. 11, 2021	LWVWV Board Meeting
Jan. 8, 2022	LWVWV Board Meeting
Feb. 19, 2022	LWVWV Board Meeting

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Teresa Koon
 Editor

JOIN THE LEAGUE! The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. **If you live in Cabell, Jefferson, Monongalia, or Wood County, please contact the local League in those counties.** To join at the state level, send a check or money order payable to LWVWV to: Teresa Koon, Treasurer, LWVWV, 4112 Coopers Creek Rd., Charleston WV 25312. Dues are \$40 for individuals, \$60 for a household, and \$20 for students. Because we are a lobbying organization, membership dues are not tax-deductible.

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