



SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Check out
Redistrict-
ing Update,
p. 4

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League Day at the Capitol: Feb. 7

By **CINDY HEINE** and
MARY JO RODGERS
Thursday, Feb. 7,
2019, is our annual “League
Day at the Capitol.” We
hope you will join us.

We plan to get to-
gether in the morning, from
9:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., to
register and provide an
overview of bills and issues
of interest. This meeting
will be the Capitol Building,
Room 160, which is part of
the Secretary of State’s of-
fice. Note: This differs from
our usual gathering in the
Annex.

After this meeting, you
can attend committee
meetings, observe the 2
p.m. session of the House
or Senate and visit your
own legislators.

It is important to set up
appointments **before** com-
ing to Frankfort to meet
with legislators. Call (502)
564-8100, and the operator
will connect you with legis-
lator offices. The League is
not the only group meeting
with legislators this day so
schedule well ahead of time.

You will need a pass to
observe the 2 p.m. House
or Senate session. We can
help with that at registra-
tion.

We suggest you car-
pool as much as possible.



Parking is available in the
lot and garage on the left
side (river side) of the
Capitol and Annex. If
that fails, try behind the
Annex or on
the street in front of the
Capitol.

Meet in the [Capitol](#),
700 Capitol Ave, Room
160 at 9:15. If you miss
us there, look for us in
the Annex Cafeteria.

Thurs. standing com-
mittee schedule—in the
Annex:

Senate

9 a.m. Vets/Mil Affairs/
Public Protection: Room
169

10 a.m. Judiciary: Room
154

11:30 a.m. Education:
Room 149

On Adjournment A&R:
Room 149

House

8 a.m. Econ Dev & Work-
force Invest: Room 129

8 a.m. Nat Res & Energy,
Room 131

10 a.m. Small Bus & Info
Tech: Room 169

10 a.m. Tourism/Outdoor
Rec: Room 171

10 a.m. Budget Review
(BR) Sub/Post Sec Ed:
Room 131

10 a.m. BR Sub/Personnel,
Pub Ret/irement/Finance:
Room 129

Noon Health & Fam Ser-
vices: Room 169

Noon State Govt: Room
171

Wear comfortable
shoes and keep your
coat with you. Join us
for lunch in the Annex
Cafeteria. Wear your
League buttons!

President's Message

By **BONNIE LYNCH**



President Wanda
"Bonnie" Lynch

I hope everyone is ready for the new year. All committees have begun work for 2019. The committee working on restoring felon's voting rights released polling data showing a majority of Kentuckians support automatic restoration of voting rights. (See pg. 5.) They also released an updated report January 29. Hats off to Judy Johnson and the committee on felony disenfranchisement for their leadership and persistence on this issue.

Redistricting is also an issue we care about. Susan Weston and Cindy Heine have led the charge on this work. With the 2020 Census approaching, we hope this work will assist lawmakers improve the process and make it transparent.

Education in Kentucky is a "hot" topic this session. Terry Nayden and her committee are busy contacting stakeholders and scheduling meetings.

Cindy and Mary Jo Rodgers, our legislative

liaisons, will monitor what happens in Frankfort. Although it's a short session, many bills have been filed. [Our legislative day is Feb. 7.](#)

The state League's convention will be in Hopkinsville on April 12 and 13. It's election time, so if you're asked to serve.....just say yes!

Our State Board meeting will be Feb. 2 at the Hardin County Public Library. We will begin at 10 a.m. EST.

Thank you all for what you do. And stay warm!

League Continues Fight to Restore Voting Rights

By **JUDY JOHNSON**

Kentucky is rapidly becoming the last state to permanently disenfranchise individuals with felony convictions. In Nov., 2018, Florida passed Amendment 4, a ballot initiative calling for automatic restoration of voting rights when individuals complete their sentences, with the exception of cases of murder or sexual offenses. In effect, it restored voting rights for 1.4 million people.

Now the Republican governor of Iowa is calling for a similar constitutional amendment. If that

process is successful, Kentucky will stand alone. However, a federal suit has been filed to declare the restoration process allowed by Section 145 of the Kentucky State Constitution in conflict with the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Counsels for the plaintiffs are attorneys from the Fair Election Center and the Kentucky Equal Justice Center. The state League has provided counsel with background information and data from our research. More details on the case are provided in the arti-

[cle here.](#)

Also at this time the updated LWV report on Kentucky disenfranchisement has been released. (See related article on next page.)

Our thanks to Nicole Porter of the Sentencing Project who provided national data and shepherded the document through editing. This publication contains findings and recommendations that will be helpful as we continue to work on voter disenfranchisement. It also presents the League's recommendations for action that will guide our work.

Cont'd on p. 3

Voting Rights

(cont'd from p. 2)

The state League continues to monitor the numbers of applications for felony restoration of rights sent to the governor's office and the number he approves. The percentage that are approved by Governor Matt Bevin does not seem to vary—a little more than 50%. Since Bevin only issues these executive orders twice a year, it is not difficult to keep track of the data. Our requests for reasons for approval or denial have been met with the consistent disclaimer, “no responsive documents.”

Another option to applying for restoration of rights is applying for expungement. This is a court process that can be initiated for a specific list of Class D felonies. Currently, the cost of expungement is \$540 and the waiting period is five years without another felony conviction.

[SB 57](#) filed by Sen. Jimmy Higdon (R) seems to indicate new positives and negatives. [HB 155](#) filed by Rep. George Brown (D) expands felonies open to expungement and reduces the cost. Both bills merit discussion.

As we continue to work on voting rights restoration, we are supported and encouraged by the national League office and other advocacy groups including the Fair Elections Center, the Sentencing Project and the Campaign Legal Center. Together, we will make a difference in Kentucky!

Updated Report on Felony Disenfranchisement in Kentucky Released

The LWVKY has just released the updated *Felony Disenfranchisement in the Commonwealth of Kentucky: A Report of the League of Women Voters of Kentucky, January 2019*. It is available on the website at lwvky.org/about/publications.

According to this report Kentucky ranks third in rate of disenfranchisement and first in disenfranchisement of African Americans. The information in this report provides a framework for understanding our plight.

The document also presents the League's recommendations to address the harm done by making voting rights so difficult to regain. The primary recommendation is to work for a constitutional amendment to automatically restore rights to felons who have completed their sentences and parole/probation. This may be a long term project but, in the meantime, we are guided by other recommendations as we work to educate the public and assist eligible offenders to work through the difficult restoration process.

HRI Provides Voter Protection

From Chris Carson, President, LWV US

HRI, introduced in Congress on Jan. 4, comprises a bold, transformative set of reforms to strengthen our democracy and return political power to the people. The LWVUS has worked to influence the language of this bill to ensure that voting rights are strengthened by this important legislation.

Join the national League for a webinar briefing on HRI, the For the People Act. National League staff will provide an overview of the legislation, detail what provisions the League is fighting for, and talk about grassroots engagement with Congress as well as opportunities to engage at state and local levels.

To participate on **Tuesday, Feb. 5, at 4 p.m. EST**, E-mail KentuckyLWV@gmail.com and ask for a link to register.

FELONY DISENFRANCHISEMENT IN
THE COMMONWEALTH OF
KENTUCKY

A REPORT OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS OF KENTUCKY

January 2019



STUDENT MEMBER FEE: CHANGE IN NATIONAL POLICY—

Understanding the need to encourage young people's active participation in citizenship, LWVUS has announced a two-year waiver of membership fees for student members, age 16-25 who are enrolled full or part time in school. **This experimental waiver will expire January 31, 2021.**

The board of LWVKY voted to reduce state student membership PMP to \$10, an amount that would indicate a personal investment but not prohibit joining. Local Leagues will determine their student fees.

Redistricting News

Redistricting state, congressional and judicial districts will occur after the 2020 census. We anticipate data will be available in 2021 with redistricting likely in 2022. We continue working with legislators to improve the process and ensure transparency. There is no bill at this time, but our conversations with legislators are promising.

We need your help. Members of the Redistricting Subcommittee want to speak to your League, civic, church and community groups. Let us know if you would like to arrange something in your community this year.

Letters to the editor and op-eds are encouraged. For speakers or sample op-eds and letters, contact us at KentuckyLWV@gmail.com.

Let Us Speak with One Voice

It's important that we publicly speak with one voice regarding league policies and positions. While we encourage local leagues and individual members to be active in supporting state league adopted principles and action items, our by-laws require that all public statements regarding state government/legislation be approved by the LWVKY Board of Directors. With today's technology this can be done in a time efficient way and will insure that "the left hand knows what the right hand is doing."

To receive LWVKY approval for statements/letters please submit them for consideration at a state board meeting (the next one is scheduled for February 2) or email Bonnie Lynch,

LWVKY President, who will make sure that the board of directors reviews and approves your statement in a timely way. Bonnie's e-mail is: wandabonnie@bellsouth.net.

Individual members of course can express their own opinions whenever and however they wish as long as they don't identify themselves as a league member or spokesperson. Certain board members, such as league presidents, who are widely associated with the league, need to take special care about expressing their personal opinions to public officials and the media. And, of course, we never endorse candidates or political parties.

Sign a Petition on the For the People Act

FROM Chris Carson, President, LWV US

The League of Women Voters of the United States has joined with a coalition of groups collecting signatures on a new petition that will be delivered to Congress supporting HRI, the For the People Act. Add your name to the petition and help us build support for this comprehensive piece of democracy reform legislation. By adding your name, you agree to receive occasional emails on this and related campaigns from other participating organizations.

HRI improves access to voting through such reforms as Same Day Registration and Automatic Registration. The bill provides for independent redistricting commissions and restores the Voting Rights Act. The bill also provides for better transparency in campaign-finance and government ethics enforcement.

You can reach the [petition here](#).

Majority of Kentuckians Favor Automatic Restoration of Voting Rights

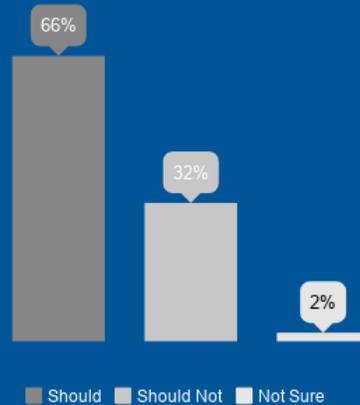
The infographic below, designed by LWV Lexington member Marlena Sanchez, represents responses to a question posed by the League of Women Voters of Kentucky in a December, 2018, Mason Dixon telephone poll of 625 registered Kentucky voters: "When a person in Kentucky is convicted of a felony they automatically lose the right to vote. Do you think a person who has completed all terms of their felony sentence, including probation or parole, should or should not have their right to vote restored automatically?"

Majority of Kentucky Voters Support Automatic Restoration of Voting Rights

A majority of Kentuckians, across political affiliation, gender and all ages, support the automatic restoration of voting rights for persons who complete their felony sentence.

Overall support is 2-1 with 66% in favor and 32% opposed.

Overall State Results



Results by Party Registration

Democrat



Should (76%) Should Not (22%) Not Sure (2%)

Republican



Should (53%) Should Not (46%) Not Sure (1%)

Independent



Should (68%) Should Not (30%) Not Sure (2%)

Source: Mason-Dixon Kentucky Poll, December 2018

Voters were asked:

When a person in Kentucky is convicted of a felony they automatically lose the right to vote. Do you think a person who has completed all terms of their felony sentence, including probation or parole, should or should not have their right to vote restored automatically?



League of Women Voters of Kentucky

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Calendar

Saturday, Feb. 2, 10 a.m.: League of Women Voters of Kentucky Board meeting, Hardin County Public Library

Thursday, Feb. 7, 9:15 .m.: League Day at the Capitol, Frankfort

Friday, April 12, to Saturday, April 13: League of Women Voters of Kentucky State Convention