

**From your president's desk:** It may not be all cupcakes and roses at the State House this year, but the mood is certainly more positive than in recent sessions. Many bills are coming out of their committees with bi-partisan support, even on items such as election law that in other years would have been split right down party lines.

One of those bills is HB706, the bill to create an **independent redistricting commission**. Our Legislative Alert emailed to you on Feb. 22 highlighted that unanimous recommendation by the House Election Law for Ought To Pass. We asked those of you who could to call or email your reps and urge them to vote YES on HB706. It worked! Thank you. The bill passed 218-123 !

According to the NH Constitution, the Legislature must vote on all redistricting maps, and the Governor must sign them. A Governor's veto of the House map in 2001 led to the NH Supreme Court hiring a company to do the maps, which were so bad they had to be redone for 2004. Don't get me started! The 2011 map making was done in secret in the House, creating an embarrassed Legislature and frustrated citizens. I personally attended two of the public hearings where legislators assigned to present the plan had nothing to show and nothing to say except "I don't know."

An independent redistricting commission would create the maps without partisan bias and with public input, according to criteria determined by law, and present those maps to the Legislature. Yes, the Legislature could vote them down, but they'd better have a good reason because the state needs its decennial districting done. Voters don't like gerrymandering or grandstanding. The independent commission can go a long way toward overcoming those issues.

Just to be clear: HB706 passed in the House, but it still has hurdles. Bills with fiscal notes go to the Finance Committee for a hearing, and then for another vote by the full House. If it passes there, the bill goes to the Senate for the same process. But this is the first time since League started advocating for an independent redistricting commission that it stands a good chance! We'll keep you updated.

To see our state League position on independent redistricting commissions, adopted 2005, visit the Positions page of our website and scroll thru the Government section until you find it. <http://lwvnh.org/Positions.html>

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### **State League Study of Public Education – state funding bills in the Legislature**

Another case of the Legislature working across party lines -- to find a solution for the school funding crisis. The state is required by our constitution to "cherish" public education by funding "the opportunity for an adequate education." Never mind that the legislature has grappled with the "adequate" wording for decades. This year they are working to level the playing field, reduce the

property tax burden in the most stressed towns, provide funding to school districts with a large number of low-income students and limited fiscal resources—not an easy problem. We've lost count of the various education funding bills that have been proposed just this year. But what we do see is a bi-partisan attempt by the Education Committees in each body to present legislation that will get enough votes in the full House and Senate and also go quite some way to helping the school districts. They are combining some bills, amending others...a huge task!

If you have not yet been to one of the Education Funding 101 presentations by Andry Volinsky and John Tobin, try to go to one near you. It is eye-opening. You can also get information on public education issues, funding and otherwise, at the website of Advancing New Hampshire Public Education, <https://anhpe.org/>

### **Upcoming meetings and events:**

***Here's the big one—we hope every unit will send several representatives--***

**All League members are invited to the New England League Leadership Conference on Sat. & Sun., April 6 and 7**, in Wells Maine. Details and registration can be found in last month's NHVoter, and at this link: [http://lwvnh.org/files/lwv\\_leadership\\_conf\\_2019.pdf](http://lwvnh.org/files/lwv_leadership_conf_2019.pdf)

Our theme this year is: **"Advancing Civility in a Diverse New England."** Sue Smith, Chair of the LWVUS Nominating Committee, will be joining us to represent the national League. Our plenary sessions will be at the York County Community College, 112 College Drive in Wells, ME, less than a mile from our hotel accommodations at the Hampton Inn, 900 Post Road, Wells, ME.

Saturday morning keynote speaker is Nancy Thomas, Director of Institute for Democracy and Higher Education, Tufts University. She will address the question of which populations did not vote in the 2016 elections. Who are they? Why didn't they vote? What would motivate them to vote? What are the tangible and psychological barriers to voting? What was different in 2018? Followed by questions & answers.

In the afternoon workshop titled Communicating Across the Divide: Challenges and Tools, Susan Clark, author of "Slow Democracy: Rediscovering Community, Bringing Decision Making Back Home" will inspire the panel discussion to follow on what does diversity look like in New England? What does it mean for the League's work?

*Note: if you are making a room reservation, be aware that a glitch in the reservations system may have someone tell you there are no rooms left and none reserved for League of Women Voters. Not true; insist there is a block of rooms for League (being held only until March 31) and ask to be transferred directly to the desk at the Hampton Inn in Wells, Maine. They'll be able to make your reservation (\$99 plus tax, same price whether room is for one or two.) If you want to share a room, I'll keep a list of folks looking for a roommate and get back to you.*

*The number to call for a room is 207-641-8419. With luck the desk at the hotel itself will answer and no problems. Stay on the line for a live person, if you can. But if you have to go thru a menu (press 1 for new reservation, etc.) follow directions above. To make staying overnight even more enticing, LWVNH members can request a room cost rebate up to \$50, thanks to a grant from the LWVNH Education Fund.*

### **More events...**

*(and please forgive my error last month listing a documentary in Nashua, that was held on Feb. 4, and we had given the date as Feb. 24. I think 2/4 became 2/24 in my head. Liz.)*

**LWV Kearsarge/Sunapee** will be hosting **candidate forums**: March 4 in Sunapee, March 6 in Newbury, March 7 in New London. Each forum will feature the local candidates for selectboard. Following the selectboard forum in Sunapee, a moderated discussion of the warrant articles will take place.

For all forums, the doors open at 6:30, forum begins at 7 pm. Locations: Sunapee in the lower level of the Methodist Church, Newbury at the town offices, New London at Whipple Hall.

Tuesday, March 5, 7 pm at Wheeler Hall in the Ware Center, Colby-Sawyer College in New London. Documentary, free and open to the public: "It's Criminal: A Tale of Prison and Privilege" shares the life-changing journeys of incarcerated women (at Sullivan county House of Corrections) and Dartmouth College students working together to write and perform an original play about the lives of the imprisoned women. The 2017 award-winning documentary has been shown at local high schools and universities, as well as dozens of other locations from California to Maine. A question-and-answer session and discussion with subjects from the film will follow the screening. *Note from Liz T: I've seen this film, and along with others from League have visited the Sullivan HOC. Well worth your time to learn more about the issues experienced by women incarcerated in NH. Stay for the discussion too. See you there.*

Tuesday, March 12, 9:30-10:30 am, **Coffee and Conversation with LWV Kearsarge/Sunapee** members, at Fenwood Commons in New London. All members welcome for this one-hour informal event.

Tuesday, March 19, 6:30 at Kimball Public Library, Academy Ave. in Atkinson, the **LWVNH Southern Rockingham County Unit** will host a **public information session** on the Southern New Hampshire Regional Water Pipeline. Free and open to the public.

Guest speakers will be Erin Holmes of DES, Drinking Water Groundwater Trust Fund Administrator in the MtBE Remediation Bureau; Steve Roy of DES; Mike Unger of DES, Engineering Architect; Senator Chuck Morse, Chair, Drinking Water Groundwater Commission; Harold Morse, President, Hampstead Area Water Company; and Charlie Lanza, General Manager, Hampstead Area Water Company. Agenda includes background, the plan, funding, and time for Q&A.

Wednesday, March 20, **LWVNH Peterborough Plus** will meet 7 pm, at Jaffrey Public Library. Public invited to this special meeting, to **Meet Your Elected Representatives**. This is the second in a series of such meetings. The following NH Representatives will be invited: John Hunt, John O'Day, Richard Ames, Doug Ley and Craig Thompson To discuss current state and local issues.

Thursday, March 21, 7 pm, at Nashua Library, lower level. **Monthly meeting** for members and potential members in the **LWVNH Greater Nashua Area**. *Note that there will be a special election for the vacant alderman seat on March 5. Usual poll hours.*

Tuesday, April 2. **League Day at the Legislature**. League members and their invited guests are welcome to join League board members past and present for a morning of seeing the

legislative process in action at committee hearings, with lunch in the state house cafeteria and debriefing, followed by a short tour of the state house after lunch for those who are interested, or you can go to more hearings or head home. Great opportunity to learn first hand how legislators and activists interact. LWVNH will email details in late March. Registration will be required, as we will cancel the event if it turns out nothing of interest is happening that day. **Save the date** if you're interested.

**More events---details to be confirmed and sent in April.**

**April 23** (Tentative) Annual meeting, election of steering committee and guest speakers for Mt. Washington Valley Unit.

**May 28** (Tentative) Meet Your Legislators evening, with Carroll county districts 1, 2, 3, & 7 state legislators to be invited (Mt. Washington Valley unit.)

**Sometime in May or June, LWVNH biennial convention.** All members welcome. Details will be sent in April.

Check our [Calendar page](#) for other events coming up. Updated frequently. Also check our [Candidate Forums webpage](#) for information of all candidate events we learn about. If your town is having a forum, whether organized by League or not, please send us details to be posted.

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As of this NH Voter going to press, four updated **Know Your Elected Officials brochures for 2019-2020** are on the Publications page of our website. Soon to come is a brochure from our newest unit in the southern Rockingham area. The Nashua brochure will be updated again following the special election March 5.

On the LWVNH.org website now are current brochures for Kearsarge/Sunapee, Nashua, greater Peterborough area and Mt Washington Valley. Print copies are being distributed locally at libraries and town offices. Pick up your own copy. Thank you to local League members for compiling the information and formatting the brochures.

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*Another installment in the notable NH women series as we head toward the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the League and the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment*

**Armenia S. White, NH's own women's suffrage leader (1817-1916)**

*ARMENIA S. WHITE, first president, now honorary president, of the New Hampshire Woman's Suffrage Association, is well known for her many years of efficient co-operation with her husband, the late Nathaniel White, of Concord, N.H., in works of philanthropy and reform. She was born in Mendon, Mass., November 1, 1817, daughter of John and Harriet (Smith) Aldrich....*



*Armenia S. White*

Thus begins the biography of this New Hampshire suffragist, written in 1904 in Representative Women of New England.

On her mother's side Armenia White traced her ancestry to the Pilgrims. When she was 19, she was married to Nathaniel White, *then a rising young business man of Concord who became a part owner in the stage route between Concord and Hanover, later buying the line between Concord and Lowell. He was a young man of more than ordinary ability, upright and honorable, and using neither intoxicants nor tobacco in any form.* With his wife's support, he was involved in a number of charitable affairs. Both were also active in the anti-slavery movement.

The 1904 article cites a book called New Hampshire Women, in which the work of Mrs. Armenia White is described thus: *The charitable and benevolent associations of the State have ever been the object of her fostering care. She was the first president of the New Hampshire W.C.T.U. [Women's Christian Temperance Union], and has been president of the New Hampshire Woman's Suffrage Association since its organization. Largely through her efforts, coupled with her husband's, was secured the legislation enabling the New Hampshire women to vote and hold office in connection with school affairs. Mrs. White is a member of the board of trustees of the New Hampshire Centennial Home for the Aged, of the Orphans' Home in Franklin, and the Mercy Home in Manchester. She was active in their establishment, and has been a liberal supporter of each. The Universalist church in Concord and at large, and manifold charities, local and general, have ever commanded her earnest sympathy and generous aid.*

A plaque on N. Main St. in downtown Concord, a block or so south of the Capitol, tells a bit of Armenia White's story. She and her husband had a farm in Concord on Clinton St. which is now owned by the state, known as White Farm, with hiking trails open to the public. It is the site for government surplus sales. The Whites' land on Centre St., near UNH Law School, was donated to the city in 1884 by Mrs. White and is called White Park, with trails, a pond, pool and playground. The Whites also had a home on Lake Sunapee, near a number of other Concord residents' summer getaways. One of the steamships that ferried people around the lake at the turn of the last century was named the Armenia White.

Like many of the other suffrage leaders, Mrs. White did not live to see voting rights of women made part of the US Constitution. But she was a powerful force in the fight for the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment.

Does anyone have a family story to share of someone active in the women's suffrage movement? If so, send it to [LWVNewHampshire@gmail.com](mailto:LWVNewHampshire@gmail.com) and we can include it in the coming year.