

**NHVoter, the newsletter of LWVNH**

**September 2019**

### **The League and the fight against gerrymandering:**

If this logo and headline look familiar, it's because our May 2019 NHVoter alerted you to the Independent Redistricting Commission bill right here in New Hampshire that League has been working hard to get passed.

Well, it did pass with bi-partisan support in the House and Senate, but then Governor Sununu vetoed it. We are hoping we can get enough votes in the House and Senate to over-ride his veto.

**Here's where you, as constituents, come in.** Please call or email or start a chat with your state reps and senator and urge them to vote to over-ride the veto on Sept. 18 & 19.

#### **Some talking points:**

**If they supported HB 706 last spring**, thank them. But now we have to **ask for their vote for the override**, and ask for them to please make public statements of support for the override. Legislators are more likely to commit if they know there are others taking the same position. You might say,

"I'm here as a voter, and I think the Governor made a mistake when he vetoed the HB 706 bi-partisan independent redistricting bill. We're hoping you can correct that mistake on September 18th."

**If they didn't vote for HB 706**, try to find out why not. Here are the facts that might get them to change their minds:

- HB 706 is a bipartisan bill, crafted in New Hampshire for New Hampshire
- HB 706 passed unanimously in a voice vote in the Senate
- HB 706 is constitutional. The legislature picks 10 of the 15 commissioners, assures all is done in public, debates the proposed maps, and votes on the plan.
- The NH Constitution, Part 2, Article 9 requires that NH elections shall be "founded on the principles of equality." You can't have voting equality with unfair voting districts.
- HB 706 keeps the party in power from gaming the voting districts to benefit incumbents and packing for one party or the other -- particularly important in a "purple state" like ours.
- It should end gerrymandering in NH, ensuring fair districts for all voters
- If the Governor should lose the 2020 election, this prevents Democrats from gerrymandering the voting districts against Republicans.
- The override should be a vote of conscience, since most voters --60% of Republicans and 65% of Democrats-- are against gerrymandering and are for an independent redistricting committee.
- *See the last page of this newsletter for more about the issue and answers to some Frequently Asked Questions:*



## **How many Presidential candidates have you seen in person?**

Not sure we want this to be a contest, but one of our members is keeping a tally that's hitting the double digits! Reminder that on **Nov. 3** many of the candidates will be at the **No Labels convention in Manchester**, which is free and open to the public. NoLabels' purpose is to encourage non-partisan ways of working at the federal level. Reserve your place online soon: [NoLabels.org/NH/](http://NoLabels.org/NH/)

We encourage members to check our [Candidate Forums](#) webpage where we post live and televised debates. We do not, however, post appearances by individual candidates, but we do have links on our webpage to sites that list these around the state.

## Which bring us to the question—**What does it mean for the League of Women Voters to be a NON-PARTISAN organization?**

*Here is how League member Janet Ward explains it:*

When I joined the League of Women Voters of NH, I was given information welcoming me to the League and explaining its mission to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government, to increase the understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. All of this work is to be done in a nonpartisan manner. Although members are encouraged to support the political party of their choice, the League “never supports or opposes candidates or political parties.”

To further protect the non-partisanship of the League, publicly visible board members should not work actively in their parties while serving on the League's board or steering committee. From a commonsense perspective, it would be difficult for the public to have confidence in the non-partisanship of the League if a Board member were clearly and widely recognized as advocating for a particular party or candidate.

However, membership in the League does not preclude active participation in the political process. League members can and should share nonpartisan, factual information regarding policies being advocated by parties or candidates as well as information regarding voting.

The need for members to protect the nonpartisan nature of the League simply means more focused attention to what is crucial to all US citizens: educated, informed participation in our democracy.

Additional advice from LWVNH board members to maintain our non-partisan reputation—social media entries are powerful tools. While members' individual support for specific candidates is encouraged, please don't combine your candidate endorsements or criticisms with League posts, which could imply League positions to the casual viewer. Thank you for helping to maintain the integrity of League as non-partisan by separating your League role from your own interests.

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**Upcoming events:** Local Leagues and units hold meetings open to all members and in some cases to the public as well. Check our [Calendar page on LWVNH.org](#) to get details and updates. Your local League should also be contacting you by email with notice of events.

For those who use Facebook, do look for us there. Our pages are public. But if you wish you can join the [League of Women Voters NH Members Forum](#). Ask to join, and we'll approve you after checking our member lists. It is a “members only” site.

***Some League event highlights in the next month:***

**September 12: Centennial planning meeting.** League members who wish to help plan events for the centennial of women's right to vote becoming law and for the centennial of the League's founding in 2020 are welcome at this meeting. At the League office in Concord, 10 am. The group has started making some plans, can always use new ideas! All League members are welcome.

**September 18:** At the New London Historical Society. **Membership Potluck Supper**, the annual event of the LWV Kearsarge/Sunapee Area. Exciting guest speaker is Robert DiClerico, a well-respected presenter for AIL, author, and former Distinguished Professor of Political Science at West Virginia University. The title of his talk is "The Way We Pick Our Presidents: Too Little Democracy Or Too Much?" Organized by League of Women Voters Kearsarge/Sunapee Area. Open to all League members and their guests and prospective members. Bring a dish to share and \$5 to cover expenses.

**September 19: NH Education Funding public forum.** Presentation by Andru Volinsky and John Tobin. Sponsored by LWVNH--Greater Nashua unit. At the Hunt Community Great Room, 10 Allds St., Nashua 03060

Free and open to the public. Come learn about school funding disparity in NH and what we could do about it! For additional such presentations around the state, check the ANHPE.org website for dates & places.

**September 26: Monthly meeting of the LWVNH—Greater Nashua Unit.** At Nashua Public Library, downstairs. All League members and their guests and prospective members are welcome. With the Nashua municipal election coming up in November, there's lots to discuss!

**October 9:** Learn about the important **2020 census**. Getting an accurate count is important for many reasons, and it takes the efforts of many people. Presenter Nicole McKenzie is the Partnership Specialist with the US Census Bureau. Hosted by LWVNH--Southern Rockingham Unit. Free and open to the public. 6:30 pm at the Plaistow Public Library.

**Later in October: Town Hall with elected officials from the Atkinson/Plaistow area.** Details to be announced, check the Calendar webpage. Hosted by LWVNH – Southern Rockingham unit.

**Votes for Women: A History of the Suffrage Movement (in one hour)** will be presented at various venues over the next several months, some League sponsored and some co-sponsored by the host organization and the NH Humanities To Go program. All are free and open to the public. Additional presentations will be posted on the [LWVNH.org Calendar page](http://LWVNH.org) and on the suffrage centennial website, [NHWomenVote100.org](http://NHWomenVote100.org).

**Sept. 9,** Moutonborough Library, 7 pm

**Sept. 10,** Grantham Town Hall, 7 pm

**Sept. 20,** Fratello's Restaurant in Manchester, 8 pm

**Sept. 25,** Peterborough Library, 7 pm

**Oct. 29,** Conway Library, 6 pm

The campaign for women's right to vote was a long one, from the 1848 Women's Rights Convention to ratification of the 19th amendment in 1920. Who were key players? What were the main issues and obstacles? Why did states rights issues hinder the movement? How did suffragists benefit from World War I in the final push for passage of the women's suffrage amendment? What made a young legislator in Tennessee cast the deciding vote for ratification?

Using historic photos in a powerpoint presentation, Liz Tentarelli is the guide on this journey. Liz is president of the League of Women Voters New Hampshire, a non-partisan organization also celebrating its centennial in 2020 as the direct descendant of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

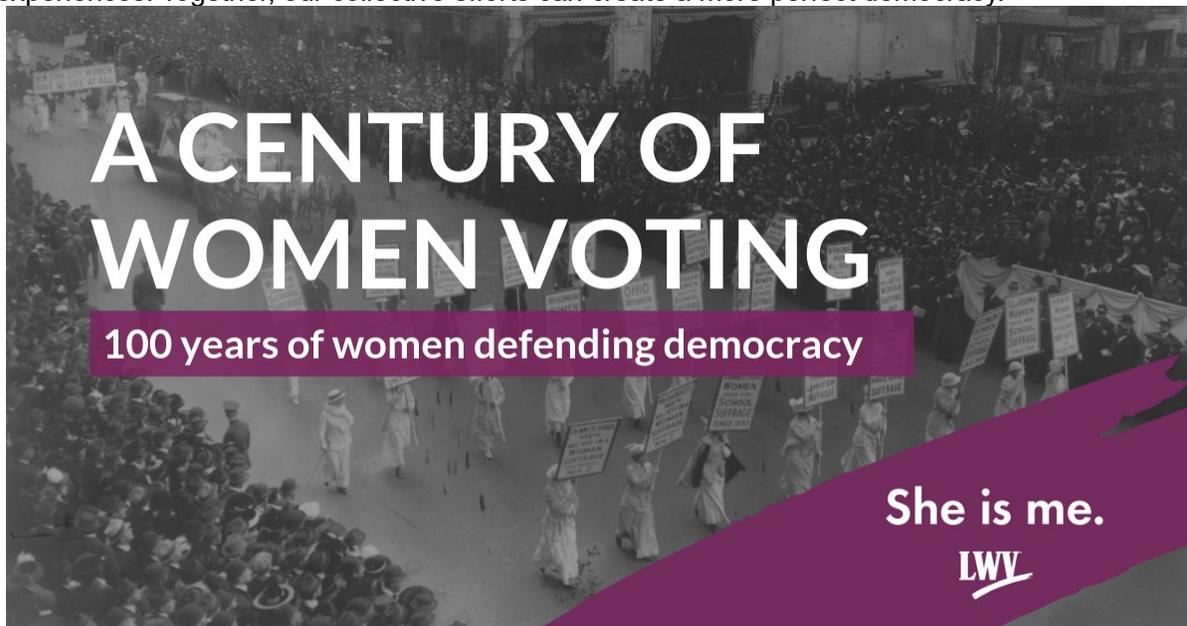
Additional programs around the state related to women's suffrage are listed on the [NHWomenVote100.org](http://NHWomenVote100.org) website, including several NH Humanities to Go programs about suffrage, a Lucy Stone suffragist presenter and a musical history of the Hutchinson Family singers highlighting suffrage and abolition songs.

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**From the League of Women Voters national president, Chris Carson, this message:**

As we kick off the centennial year of women winning the right to vote, [we mustn't romanticize the story of the 19th Amendment](#). The truth is, progress towards a more perfect democracy is often messy, and the 19th Amendment did not break down voting barriers for all women—and even today, there is more work to be done.

We at the League are honoring Women's Equality Day [August 26] by bridging the gap between our legacy and our destiny with [She Is Me](#), a League-wide celebration of voting reformers from various backgrounds and experiences. Together, our collective efforts can create a more perfect democracy.



So, as we celebrate the great achievement of the 19th Amendment, we should do so with the recognition that women's suffrage was not perfect. Let us use the lessons of our history to inform our present and our future. Let us seek out ways to ensure all eligible voters have their voices heard and their votes counted.

As we mark this historic anniversary, keep in mind how valuable our right to vote remains. Today we're reminded of how far we have come and how far we still must travel for true equality.

The national League's website is [LWV.org](http://LWV.org)

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**Some League business matters and a call for your help:**

Our current website host will cease operations by next summer. We own our domain name but need a **new website platform**. If that is something you do professionally or have someone to recommend, please contact us. Either reply to this email or send an email via our [Contact Us page](#) to "President."

We're also looking for a few members with **investing knowledge** to serve on our 501(c)3 LWVNH Education Fund board. Just a few meetings per year, but your

experience could help us manage our resources better. Either reply to this email or send an email via our [Contact Us page](#) to “President” and we’ll set up a time to talk further.

**Dues notices** will be mailed in late September. Your prompt response is appreciated. We hope to be set up for PayPal payment by then, as an option for those who think paper checks should go the way of hoop skirts. Details will be in the dues notices.

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**New Hampshire’s redistricting bill HB706: answers to some Frequently Asked Questions: Constitutionality?**

The independent redistricting commission established by HB706 is advisory in nature and does not mandate the legislature to do anything. The legislature can choose to turn the advisory commission’s plans into formal bills, subject to debate and amendment like any other bill. Because this commission is advisory only, it ensures that HB706 is constitutional because legislators ultimately retain the power to decide which maps to adopt.

**Supreme Court Involvement?**

HB706 states that if no redistricting plan is adopted by the state legislature, then the NH Supreme Court **may** create a plan, if it determines no redistricting plan would be validly enacted in time for the upcoming election. This is no different from the current process, which happened following the 2000 census, when the governor vetoed the legislature’s redistricting plans and the legislature was not able to override the veto, nor was it able to create an alternative plan. In that case, the NH Supreme Court intervened and drew the maps used for following elections. HB706 does nothing to change what happens when there is no redistricting plan in place immediately prior to an election; the NH Supreme Court has this power with or without HB706.

**Commission Selection?**

Democratic leadership will select a full slate of 10 applicants and Republican leadership will select a full slate of 10 applicants. Each party will then strike 5 applicants from the other party's selection pool of 10. Then these 10 commissioners (5 Democrats and 5 Republicans) will select 5 unaffiliated applicants. To ensure true unaffiliated individuals, the commission will know which state primary ballots the unaffiliated applicants pulled if the applicant has voted in a state primary election or presidential primary election in New Hampshire in the preceding 6 years.

The members of the advisory commission would be chosen by elected legislative leaders, either directly or indirectly; 10 of the 15 commission members would be chosen directly by state House and state Senate leaders, with each party having equal representation. Those 10 members would then choose 5 additional members who are members of neither of the two major parties.

**Efficiency Gap?**

HB706 directs the advisory independent redistricting commission to issue evaluations of its redistricting plans with respect to how those plans comply with the US and New Hampshire Constitutions and applicable state laws. HB706 also allows the advisory commission to evaluate its plans with respect to other criteria, as the commission deems appropriate. One of these criteria the advisory commission may consider is an analysis of a plan’s “efficiency gap,” (a mathematical concept, not without its critics, that defies a simple explanation here), but importantly the efficiency gap analysis is merely a suggestion and not required.