



League of Women Voters of Greenville County

Newsletter
Issue: Third Quarter 2017
Editor: Jean Wood

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8/3/17 Board Meeting
1PM – 2:30PM
23 Cleveland Street

8/24/17 General Mtg.
6PM – 7:30PM
Augusta Rd. Baptist
Church
(Membership)

9/7/17 Board Meeting
1PM – 2:30PM
Westminster Church

10/5/17 Board Meeting
1PM – 2:30PM
Westminster Church

10/26/17 General Mtg.
12PM – 1:30PM
Westminster Church
(Education)

11/2/17 Board Meeting
1PM – 2:30PM
Westminster Church

Board Mtgs. Are Open
To All Members.

Notes from the President – Jean Wood

I could not have been more pleased with our Annual Meeting on May 20th. We had almost 40 members and guests attend. City Range restaurant provided a very nice meeting room, a great lunch, and Audrie Earl dressed each table with a small vase of flowers from her yard. Speaker Bakari Sellers gave us a very inspiring talk on many issues dear to our hearts and was well received by all. Kathleen Kempe, representing the League, presented thank you gifts to Audrie Earl, Linda Hardman, and Susan Bell for all their hard work registering “New Citizens” at the Naturalization Ceremonies. The new Board members were introduced at the meeting; they are Leslee O’Kelly – Membership Director, Dorothy Dowe – At-Large Director, Victoria Welborn – At-Large Director, and Lawson Wetli – At-Large Director.

On a sad note, Mary Elizabeth Baker “Betsy Baker” passed away recently. She was a League member for more than 50 years and a regular contributor to the Greenville league. She was instrumental in seeing that we held twice yearly voter registration drives at the Cascades (her residence). She was adamant that all the new residents were registered to vote in Greenville County.

Kathleen Kempe has resigned from her position of Co-President and as a member of the Board. She will be exploring new opportunities where she can make a difference in the issues important to her. We all wish her well and thank her for her many years of service.

On a happier note, the League wishes to send Happy Birthday wishes to Annamarie Burts who recently turned 100 years old. Annamarie is a life member of the League (meaning she has been a member for more than 50 years) and was one of the founding members of the Greenville league. Happy Birthday Annamarie!

As a last note, I want to remind everyone that our fiscal year runs from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018, so that means League dues are due. Many people have already sent in their checks made out to LWVGC. If you newly joined in 2017, your dues will be prorated for this coming year. Contact Don Earl for dues questions. 864-294-6687 or dearlgreenville@aol.com.



In case you missed our speaker, Bakari Sellers, at the Annual Meeting in May, here is his bio:

Bakari Sellers made history in 2006 when, at just 22 years old, he defeated a 26-year incumbent State Representative to become the youngest member of the South Carolina state legislature and the youngest African American elected official in the nation. In 2014 he was the Democratic Nominee for Lt. Governor in the state of South Carolina.

Earning his undergraduate degree from Morehouse College, where he served as student body president, and his law degree from the University of South Carolina, Sellers has followed in the footsteps of his father, civil rights leader Cleveland Sellers, in his tireless commitment to service taking championing progressive policies to address issues ranging from education and poverty to preventing domestic violence and childhood obesity.

His impressive list of accomplishments, in addition to having served on President Barack Obama's South Carolina steering committee during the 2008 election, Sellers is widely considered to be a rising star within the Democratic Party and leading voice for his generation. That coupled with his uncommon ability to reach across the aisle and get things done has led to numerous accolades including being named to TIME Magazine's 40 Under 40 in 2010 as well as 2014 and 2015 "The Root 100" list of the nation's most influential African-Americans.

He has served as a featured speaker at events for the National Education Association, College Democrats of America National Convention, the 2008 and 2016 Democratic National Convention.

Sellers practices law with the Strom Law Firm, LLC in Columbia, SC and is a Political Commentator at CNN. He is married to Dr. Ellen Rucker-Sellers.



“Loyal Opposition” Op-Ed Piece Submitted to the Greenville News on Behalf of the Greenville League By Victor (Ted) Volskay

“Loyal opposition” is a critically important principle that underlies America’s 241 years of success as a representative democracy. The essence of “loyal opposition” is that all political entities, without exception, must share a common commitment to the foundational values of our democracy and that these values always supersede the outcome of any election. Following an election, it is acceptable for those who lost in an election to continue to oppose the politics of those who prevailed in the election; however, it is vitally important to a democracy that all political entities accept and uphold the legitimacy of free and fair elections. The peaceful transition of power within municipal, county, state, and federal governments can be attributed to the honorable practice of “loyal opposition”.

A poignant display of “loyal opposition” lies in Presidential candidate Al Gore’s concession speech following the controversial and disputed 2000 presidential election:

While I strongly disagree with the [Supreme] Courts decision, I accept it. For the sake of our unity and the strength of our democracy, I offer my concession. I also accept my responsibility, which I will discharge unconditionally, to honor the new president elect and do everything possible to help him bring Americans together, in fulfillment of the great vision that our great Declaration of Independence defines and that our Constitution affirms and defends. This serves to remind us that we are one people with one shared history and a shared destiny. [Our] history gives us many examples of contests as hotly debated and fiercely fought. And each time, the victor and the vanquished have accepted the result peacefully and in the spirit of reconciliation. The disappointment [my supporters and I share] must be overcome by our love of country. This is America. Just as we fight hard when the stakes are high, we close ranks and come together when the contest is done. While there will be time enough to debate our continuing differences, now is the time to recognize that that which unites us is greater than that which divides us. There is a higher duty than what we owe to political party. This is America and we put Country before party. We will stand together behind our new President.

In contrast, 2016 Presidential candidate Donald Trump preemptively questioned the integrity of the voting process before the first vote was cast. He said that the only way he could lose the election is if the election was “rigged”. He offered no definitive evidence to support his claim.

Donald Trump prevailed, winning a majority of the Electoral College votes and the 2016 Presidential election; however, he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by over 1.9 million votes. Unfortunately, President Trump claims that he was denied a majority of the popular vote because millions of votes were fraudulent.

Op-Ed continued from page 3

Despite offering no credible evidence to validate his claim, President Trump recently signed an Executive Order establishing the Election Integrity Commission (EIC) which will investigate allegations of improper voting and improper voter registration. Establishment of the EIC is wrong on many levels; the least of which is that it is a waste of government resources.

- Information requested by the EIC is an intrusion on voter privacy;
- Information requested by the EIC can be used to suppress voting rights and voter participation;
- The premise upon which the EIC was formed is baseless. Consequently, the EIC mandate should be judged as an unwarranted and therefore an unconstitutional intrusion of our Federal government in the administration of elections which is the sole responsibility of the states (U.S. Constitution, Article 1);
- Russian tampering with our elections could be facilitated by the EIC if the EIC is allowed to centralize voter information; and
- President Trump's EIC perpetuates the myth, instigated by some with nefarious intentions (e.g., Russia), that American elections have been fraudulent.

But most importantly, President Trump has undermined, and continues to disrespect the principle of "loyal opposition". "Loyal opposition" is not just an American tradition. "Loyal opposition" is a critical tenet of all democracies and it must be universally respected for the sake of civility and the peaceful transition of power.

The League of Women Voters urges all Americans to contact their Senators, their Congressional Representative, and members of their State Election Commission, and urge them to oppose the EIC. In addition, ask your Congressional representatives to restore funding to the Election Assistance Commission (EAC). The EAC is an independent bipartisan commission that was established following the 2000 election. The EAC strengthens our electoral process by promoting the adoption of voluntary voting system guidelines, serving as a national clearinghouse of information on election administration, and certifies voting system hardware and software.



VOTER INFORMATION REQUEST By Lawson Wetli

President Donald Trump established the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity by executive order in May 2017. The Commission's purpose is to investigate alleged voter fraud, but, according to League of Women Voters president Chris Carson, it was clear from the beginning that the Commission "was created to justify President Trump's false claims of widespread voter fraud in the 2016 elections."

In late June, the Commission's vice chair, Kris Kobach, sent a [letter](#) to all 50 states, including South Carolina, requesting detailed information on voters such as names, dates of birth, party affiliation, the last 4 digits of Social Security numbers, and much more.

The South Carolina Election Commission evaluated the request and declined to provide the requested information, explaining that the agency had "determined that release of voter data to anyone who is not a registered South Carolina voter is not permitted by state law. The agency may only provide voter data to registered South Carolina voters."

In response, South Carolina Republican Party chair Drew McKissick indicated that he would purchase the information in his capacity as a South Carolina citizen and provide it to the Commission, although, [as of July 17](#), he had not done so. As of July 10, the Commission [asked](#) states not to send voter data pending a ruling by a federal court considering privacy-related issues.

The League of Women Voters opposes the efforts of the Commission, including the request made for South Carolina voter data. National president Chris Carson [stated](#) that the Commission "is not interested in facts, but rather false accusations in order to implement dangerous election policy" and [noted](#) that "the League stands with those state leaders who have already come out to support their voters and refuse these requests."

The co-presidents of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina wrote the chair of the State Election Commission. In their letter of July 1, 2017, they highlighted that past reviews of the accuracy of South Carolina voting rolls have found "only a handful of clerical errors" instead of evidence of voter fraud. They strongly urged the state agency to reject the Commission's demand, stressing that "sensitive data collected by our state and counties should not be released without an assurance of a proven need and demonstration of secure protections against misuse or release."

VOTE

Greenville County Delegation Meeting July 10, 2017 By Leslee O'Kelly

Lawson Wetli and Leslee O'Kelly attended the quarterly Greenville County Delegation meeting on Monday evening, July 10, 2017. After the meeting was called to order several attorneys who are running for Circuit Court Judgeships were recognized. The next portion of the meeting focused on electing board members, mostly by acclamation, for vacancies on county boards. There was much discussion regarding a position on REWA for a Mr. Thompson. As of this date, there are eight positions that are due to be open soon. Applications are on the Greenville County web site.

There were also several presentations. Ed Paxton spoke about Family Friendliness with regards to funding cuts to the Disability and Special Needs Board (DSNB). Chuck Saylor, along with several members of the Greenville County school board, asked the delegates to pass funding for new school buses. Upstate Forever gave an update on work that they are doing and provided updated maps. Finally, Rachel Franco gave a presentation regarding dangerous road conditions off of Old Buncombe Road in the San Souci area. She asked the delegation for help in getting the lines painted on the road moved in order to make the lanes wide enough for the traffic.

The next meeting will be October 9th at 5:30 in County Council Chambers in County Square.



Notes of Interest:



We have many new members that have joined our League. Please welcome Dusty Acosta, Karen Akerhielm, Erica Amorim, Carolyn Baird, Beverly Calhoun, Debbie Cotterman, Cris Crain, Catherine Cuneo, Dorothy Dowe, Lydia Dunn, Melissa Ericksen, Thayer Fleming, Jane Haeflinger, Katherine Herckner, Lucille Herwald, Gayle Hewitt, Nadia Land-Greene, Florence Lince, Wanda Meade, Narayan Naik, Selina Naik, Eleanor Perkins, Peggy Schotsch, Michelle Shain, Michelle Simpson, Stan Simpson, Sally Sobolewski, Susan Speirs, Craig Stine, Katherine Umstetter, Yvonne Vance, Margaret Watson, Victoria Welborn, Lawson Wetli, Jeannette Wilcox, and Susan Zeigler. We now stand strong at 69 members.

Facebook Page

We have a new Facebook page courtesy of new member and new Board member Lawson Wetli. She volunteered for the job and we can't thank her enough. She just got it set up and we anticipate lots of information to be forth coming. You can find our new page [here](#). Be sure to "Like" it and be a "Friend" to keep up on the latest League information. "Share" our pages with others, as well.

