



Voter

July/August 2009 ☑ *Encouraging active and informed citizen participation in government*

Inside:

Co-Presidents' Message	2
Board of Directors	2 & 3
Voter Services Assistance Needed.....	2
Action Chair Needed.....	3
Health Care Unit Report	3
Letter to VDOT	4
Membership Form	5
Member Survey	5
Upcoming Events	6

July Breakfast Unit Meeting

Meet your candidates for the next Delegate to the General Assembly from the 80th District!

The 80th District represents:

- four precincts in Norfolk along the Elizabeth River
- one precinct in Chesapeake
- the majority of Portsmouth

Join the LWV-SHR Breakfast Unit as we welcome:

- Jennifer Lee, Republican
- Matthew James, Democrat

Come hear their views on public policy for Virginia!

When: Tuesday, July 28, 2009, 7-8 a.m.

Where: Tabb's Restaurant, 4019 Granby Street, Norfolk

Unit meetings are free and open to the public. Continental breakfast is available for \$5.

For more information, contact Martha Rollins, 423-0205.

Help us Get the Word Out!

The LWV-SHR needs an editor for the *Voter* newsletter. The *Voter* is published 10 times per year.

Help us get the word out about League! If you are interested, contact Kim Lewandowski at 646-4522 or Melanie Perez-Lopez at 423-7655.

Thanks to Our Renewing Members

- Sandra Brandt
- Bettie Minette Cooper
- Kaye Tice

We appreciate your help and support!

Educate and inform the whole mass of the people ... They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty.

Thomas Jefferson

Co-Presidents' Message

Hello Leaguers!

What a great time of year this is—fresh tomatoes and basil from the garden, way too many cucumbers to count ... But the fall election season is right around the corner, and we need your help educating voters on the issues. We are starting early, with an 80th District candidates' forum at the July 28 Breakfast Unit meeting. We have more events coming up, so contact Voter Services Chair Susan Sharp to help out.

We are also planning the LWV-SHR general membership fall kick-off meeting. We are starting up an Observer Corps this year, so we will be recruiting observers to attend, or watch on cable, various public meetings and reporting on what goes on. This is democracy at its finest—keeping the sunshine on our elected officials.

Registration is now open for the LWV-VA Summer Workshops scheduled for Saturday, August 29 in Charlottesville. If there's enough interest, we may organize car-pooling. Contact Kim or Melanie if you are interested in attending; you can find more information at www.lwv-va.org.

Transportation problems continue to plague Hampton Roads; be sure to read the letter drafted by the Transportation Committee and sent to VDOT by the co-presidents.

As always, there's lots to do! Contact a director or chair to find out how you can help us make a difference.

Kim Lewandowski, Co-President
Melanie Perez-Lopez, Co-President

The November election is coming! Time to start educating voters on the issues!

The Voter Services Committee has received requests for a program for Women's Equality Day August 26, and to sponsor two candidates' debates in September or October. Women's Equality Day marks the date on which the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed, giving women nationwide the right to vote.

Contact Voter Services Chair Susan Sharp to volunteer to help with these activities: voter-services@lwv-shr.org or 581-6192.

LWV-SHR Board of Directors

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Co-President

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(Continued on page 3)

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info@lwv-shr.org

***If interested in an
 available position,
 contact Kim
 Lewandowski or
 Melanie Perez-Lopez.***

We Need Action!

The LWV-SHR needs an Action Chair to coordinate our advocacy activities. To find out more information on how you can help, call Kim Lewandowski at 646-4522 or Melanie Perez-Lopez at 423-7655.

***Report of the LWV-SHR Norfolk Breakfast Unit
 Meeting June 30, 2009***

By Arnold Barr, M.D., Health Care Committee Co-Chair

The speaker, Dr. Qi (Harry) Zhang, a health economist in the School of Community and Environmental Health at Old Dominion University, spoke on health care in the United States.

Fifteen percent of our gross national product (GDP) is spent on health care, to the tune of \$2.1 trillion annually, the most expensive program in the world. However, our life expectancy is only 78 years, ranking us 50th in the world. Our infant mortality rate ranks 44th in the world. We are the only developed country without universal health care coverage. We have 48 million uninsured citizens.

Medicare is projected to be bankrupt by 2020. To keep it alive, \$30 trillion will be needed. To pay for the increased cost, income taxes will need to increase probably two-fold, or benefits will have to be cut by approximately half.

Politically, health care reform is not popular. In Europe, 50 percent of income goes to taxes to operate government-run programs. Government-run health care would reduce the income

of physicians and hospitals; they are therefore mostly against government-run health plans.

A purely public universal health care system will have a start-up cost of \$1 trillion. Sixty million more people will have health care coverage. Prevention will reduce health care costs, but this will take time. The opposition fears that universal coverage will lead to abuse and overuse of the system. Private health insurance companies do not want a public plan to compete with them, in part because this would probably eventually drive them out of business. However, private plans do not want to cover the elderly and low-income people because their care costs more.

The current system of employer-run programs is a huge expense for our businesses, and makes many of them non-competitive in world markets. As an example, \$3,000 of the price of every General Motors car goes to pay for current and retired workers' health insurance. There is a long battle ahead.

Letter from LWV-SHR Co-Presidents to the Virginia Department of Transportation

Transportation Planning Division
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad Street
Richmond VA 23286-0496

Dear Transportation Planners:

Members of the Transportation Committee of the League of Women Voters in Hampton Roads attended the June 25th public meeting held in Chesapeake Virginia. We were impressed with the multi-modal displays and the depth of knowledge of the representatives covering each mode. We made a number of comments by placing numbers and corresponding statements on several maps and hope they will be considered as you continue to work on VTrans2035.

While good planning is necessary to efficiently meet the future transportation needs of the Hampton Roads region, the LWV-SHR believes that the major impediment has been, and continues to be, the lack of adequate funding to implement these plans. The state legislature, over and over again, has abdicated its responsibility to provide the needed funds for the projected growth of the ports, roadways and transit of this region. There has been a continuing deterioration in our infrastructure. With the use of public private partnerships (PPPs) some long-delayed projects may be funded. But, even these projects are likely to require some support from the state.

The Hampton Roads area brings international trade to the state, creating thousands of jobs throughout the entire state. The area is home to many military families and military installations. In addition, Hampton Roads is critical for evacuation from northeastern North Carolina and our coastal areas which are battered by frequent flooding and intense storms.

The plans being evaluated for VTrans2035 are encouraging, but at this point there is no real prioritization or indication of how the projects presented in this plan will be funded. The congestion that hampers economic growth in our ports, in our tourism industries, in our competitiveness in attracting population and commercial growth will continue to increase and degrade our quality of life unless these plans become reality.

At a minimum, the League of Women Voters of South Hampton Roads supports:

- the Third Crossing of the Elizabeth River;
- the expansion of the Midtown Tunnel and improvements to the Downtown Tunnel as proposed in the current PPP;
- the improvement of RT 460 and I64 on both the Peninsula and Southside; and,
- the improvement of public transit to include increased passenger rail service.

Planning for VTrans2035 statewide projects has been done regularly and plans will continue to be developed. However, if we fail to gain the backing of the state's legislative bodies and their commitment to authorizing new income streams, the VTrans2035 could be copied and used again for the VTrans2045 and VTrans2055.

Sincerely yours,

Melanie Perez-Lopez, Co-President

Kim Lewandowski, Co-President



MEMBERSHIP FORM

The League of Women Voters of South Hampton Roads

www.lwv-shr.org · (757) 627-3396 · PO Box 1010, Norfolk, VA 23501-1010

Name: _____ Home Phone: _____
 Address: _____ Work Phone: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

- _____ Individual Membership \$55.00 - one year [NEW Renewal]
- _____ Family Membership \$80.00 - one year [NEW Renewal]
** Two members in a single household. All correspondence sent to household address.*
- _____ Student Membership \$25.00 - one year [NEW Renewal]
** Please enclose photocopy of valid student ID card.*
- _____ Contributions payable to LWV [Support lobbying efforts, **not** tax deductible.]
- _____ Contributions payable to LWV Education Fund [Tax Deductible]
- _____ Additional contribution to subsidize dues for students or other members who may be unable to afford current membership rates.

_____ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

LWV-SHR is a non-partisan political organization. Our mission is to encourage participation through education and advocacy. LWV membership is open to all U.S. citizens, men and women, 18 and older. Membership includes subscriptions to the National VOTER, Virginia VOTER, and LWV-SHR VOTER.

For more information, call the office at 757-627-3396 or visit us online at www.lwv-shr.org.

Please send dues/contributions to:
**The League of Women Voters
 of South Hampton Roads**
 P.O. Box 1010
 Norfolk, VA 23501-1010

NEWSLETTER PREFERENCE:

League of Women Voters of South Hampton Roads Member Interest Survey

Thank you for your membership. To help the board include you in League activities that fit your interest. Please check the box next to any of the events or projects you would like to work on.

COMMITTEES & WORK GROUPS:

- Gun Law Enforcement
- Immigration Study
- Education
- Election Laws/Voting Rights
- Basic Human Needs (Health Care / Housing / Welfare Reform) (circle choices)
- Housing
- Fundraising/Development
- Transportation
- Justice (e.g. Judicial Selection, Restoration of Civil Rights, Indigent Defense, Juvenile, etc.)

- Bylaw Review
- Environment
- Suggestions for other activities:

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS:

- Working 3-4 hours at a Voter Registration Drive.
- Planning the Annual Meeting in May.
- Helping with administrative work (keeping the media list updated, helping update member's voting district information, working on mailings, membership, etc.).
- Working on special events (candidate's forums, public issue forums, etc.).
- Helping with the web site, www.lwv-shr.org.
- Participating in the Observer Corps.
- Serving as a Unit Leader
- Being a Big Sister to a new Leaguer.
- Calling 5-10 members monthly with meeting reminders.
- Serving as a Board Member.
- Speaking about the League and the importance of voting.

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of South Hampton Roads**

P.O. Box 1010
Norfolk, VA 23501-1010

www.lwv-shr.org

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The *VOTER* is published 10 times per year to inform members of the LWV-SHR about League activities and events and to provide other information of interest to League members.

Submissions from all members are encouraged. The deadline is the fifteenth of the month.

Send submissions to info@lwv-shr.org



***Check your renewal date on the mailing label
Remember, Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport—
We Need Your Help and Participation!***

Upcoming Events

Unit Meetings are free and open to the public. Call (757) 627-3396 for more information

Breakfast Unit Meeting

Tuesday, July 28, 2009, 7 -8 a.m.
Tabb's Restaurant, 4019 Granby St
Topic: 80th Virginia House District
Candidates' Forum
For more information, contact Martha Rollins, 423-0205.
Continental breakfast available: \$5

LWV-SHR Board Meeting

Saturday, August 1, 2009
10 a.m.-12 noon
Location TBD
For more information, call 627-3396.

Women's Equality Day

Wednesday, August 26, 2009
Commemorates the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving women full voting rights throughout the nation.

LWV-VA Board Meeting

Friday, August 28, 2009
Holiday Inn, 1901 Emmet Street
Charlottesville, VA 22901
For more information, visit lwv-va.org.

LWV-VA Summer Workshops

Saturday, August 29, 2009
Holiday Inn, 1901 Emmet Street
Charlottesville, VA 22901
For more information and to register, visit lwv-va.org.