



# The Voter

## December 2017

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF THE HOUSTON AREA

### President's Message

Texas, 1917:

Women who were American citizens could not vote.

Men who were not American citizens could.

Who shall be a qualified elector? It's a question as old as our democracy, indeed as old as the very idea of democracy itself. The Texas constitution of 1845, our first as a state, granted elector status to "all free male persons over the age of twenty-one years; Indians not taxed, Africans and descendants of Africans excepted; who shall have resided six months in Texas."

Constitutional tinkering over the following decades modified this to "declarant alien voting," requiring male persons of foreign birth to state that they wished to be naturalized sometime soon as a condition of voting status.

In the matter of female suffrage, however, the Texas constitution did not budge. But in the summer of 1917 Governor James Ferguson was impeached, convicted and removed from office. He was succeeded by William P. Hobby, as fierce a friend of votes for women as Mr. Ferguson was opposed. With Governor Hobby's encouragement, primary elections were opened to women by an act of the legislature; no constitutional amendment required. Texas women voted in the Democratic primary election of 1918.

In 1919 Texans were called upon to adopt or reject a single constitutional amendment with dual effect: votes for aliens out; votes for women in. The measure failed.

A few weeks later the 19th amendment to the constitution of the United States – our national women's suffrage amendment – was presented to the states for ratification. The Texas legislature convened in special session and became the ninth state to ratify. American women – including Texas women – became American voters in 1920.

And what of alien voting? In 1921 an amendment to the Texas constitution put an end to the practice. So we return to the question: who shall be a qualified elector? Please share your thoughts and let me know if you'd like to explore the subject as a topic for unit group discussions. You are most cordially invited to get in touch anytime at [lindacohn@lwhouston.org](mailto:lindacohn@lwhouston.org).

Take good care and we'll chat again soon.

-Linda Cohn



## Message from a Rising Star

As a Rising Star class member, I feel like I am **learning so much and meeting wonderful people**. In addition to becoming Voter Registrars, and learning about various activities of the League, we are currently working on several projects.

Several class members are working on how to best construct effective press-releases for the League. Additionally, we are all working hard to get the LWV as many votes at Okra as we are in competition with three other charities for a sizable donation. We are also working on questions to submit for inclusion in the 2018 Voter's Guide. As our year goes on, we are looking forward to learning about other ways in which we can be active partners of the League.

In addition to the projects above, we are forging friendships and solidifying just what the League means to each of us. For me personally, it has given me a sense of fulfillment that I did not expect. I can see myself working with this group for years to come, and I'm excited about that.

Michelle Shabani-Ritchel  
Rising Stars Class 2018

## League Volunteers Shine at Naturalization Ceremonies

League volunteers at Naturalization Ceremonies held in September, October and November, 2017 registered 1,800 voters of the 2,330 new U.S. citizens, representing **77% of the applicants in attendance**. Statistics from the same quarter in 2016 were: 4,494 registered voters; 5,560 U.S. citizens for an 80% completion rate. The lower numbers indicate a reduced number of applicants for U.S. citizenship during 2017, and the impact of Hurricane Harvey. While the numerical count of new citizens is lower, the number of volunteer deputy registrars provided by the LWV-HA has grown significantly and enables each registrar to spend more time assisting individual applicants.

For more information about voter registration opportunities with the League, click here or contact [voter.registration@lwvhouston.org](mailto:voter.registration@lwvhouston.org)

## New Voice at the League Office

If you call the LWV-HA office and hear a new voice, it is probably our friends at Manifest Creative. The LWV-HA has contracted with this agency for much of the clerical and administrative work previously done by League staff and members. Kudos to the MC team for a smooth transition!

## Election Cybersecurity Meeting Makes a Big Splash

The Election Cybersecurity meeting on October 17 attracted an audience of interested League members and the public to discuss the **Harris County election cybersecurity study**. At that meeting, we reviewed the structure of the study and explored opportunities for League members to get involved (no tech knowledge needed!). You can read the press coverage at <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/techburger/article/League-of-Women-Voters-to-study-cybersecurity-of-12291145.php?cmpid=gsa-chron-result>

Since that meeting, members of the League have met with Harris County Clerk Stan Stanart, and performed a preliminary review of the technical "chain of custody." Over the winter, we will be conducting research, compiling notes, and discussing cybersecurity in preparation for a draft report in the spring.

If you are interested in getting involved on the study committee, please email Jeff Reichman at [jeff@januaryadvisors.com](mailto:jeff@januaryadvisors.com).

## New Unit Start-Up

A brand new LWV-HA Unit is organizing in the **Humble, Kingwood, Atascocita area** and you can get in on the ground floor! Initial plans are to sponsor a Deputy Voter Registrar training in the area. Other proposed projects are voter education and registration in the area high schools and participating in the election cybersecurity study. For more information or to join, contact Gina Remmes (281) 615-4437 or [GinaTina2@hotmail.com](mailto:GinaTina2@hotmail.com); Lori Hathaway (281) 813-1600 or [Lori.Hathaway@icloud.com](mailto:Lori.Hathaway@icloud.com)

## Membership

We are so pleased to add **new names** each month to our LWV member roster! The membership committee is working hard to communicate with each of you and find out how you would like to participate in League activities. If you have joined the LWV-HA in the last 6 months and have not been contacted, please send an email to [jbhol@hotmail.com](mailto:jbhol@hotmail.com) or phone me at 281-857-0595 and let me know if you are interested in getting more involved.



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## Units Celebrate in December

Traditionally, unit members take a **holiday break** in December and replace the regular discussion topic meeting with a social get-together. Please contact Unit leaders for date and location of the December gatherings. Regular schedule resumes in January.

## Units Meet

3rd Monday  
City-wide Unit 6 pm  
Cafe Express  
1422 West Gray 77019  
Unit Coordinator Jackie Friedman  
[freidmanjj@gmail.com](mailto:freidmanjj@gmail.com)

3rd Thursday  
Midwest Unit 10:30 am  
Womack Building  
4412 Almeda 77004  
Unit Coordinator Penny Shaw  
[shawlaw@bellsouth.net](mailto:shawlaw@bellsouth.net)

## Please Consider the LWV Education Fund

Please consider an **end-of-year gift** so that we can continue to provide trusted, nonpartisan voter services right here in Houston.

You are with us every time we register a new voter. Every time we welcome a new American to citizenship. Every time we answer a question about polling locations or how to request a ballot by mail.

Every time an earnest voter looks to our legendary Voters Guide to work through candidate opinions, sort out the pros and cons of a complicated ballot issue or the essential points of voter ID. You are with us every single time.

Today when a bit of reflection is so much a part of the holiday theme, we hope that you will think well of the League's achievements. We are grateful for your gift in any amount.

Please visit League of Women Voters of the Houston Area for online donations at [www.lwvhouston.org](http://www.lwvhouston.org).

Mail checks to:  
League of Women Voters of the Houston Area  
P.O. Box 52997  
Houston, Texas 77052-2997

The League of Women Voters of Houston Education Fund is a 501(c)(3) charitable trust. Contributions are tax deductible as the law allows.

## Help Wanted

**Voters Guide—**  
see article on page 5 for specific needs  
**Voter Registration**  
**Election Cybersecurity Study**  
**Website**  
**Newsletter**  
**Membership Committee**  
**Repast 2018** (Annual fundraising luncheon)

Interested? Need more information?  
jbhol@hotmail.com or 281-857-0595

## Calendar of Events

Tuesday, December 5  
**LWV-HA Board meeting**  
6pm  
1301 Texas Avenue 77002

Saturday, January 13  
**Member Orientation meeting**  
10am - 12 noon  
1301 Texas Avenue 77002  
RSVP to jbhol@hotmail.com

## November Voters Guide a Big Hit!

**Congratulations** to Jackie Alfred and the Voters Guide team for an excellent VG for the November 7 election! Because of the unusual ballot (no candidates for City of Houston offices!) the LWV-HA Board decided that only an electronic edition would be published. It was published in both English and Spanish but not issued in a print edition. The work accomplished by the Voters Guide committee was significant and resulted in a large number of hits on our website.

## March Voters Guide Work Begins

Work is beginning on the Voters Guide for the March 5

**Primary Election!**  
The Houston Voters Guide for the March Primary Election will be covering candidates seeking the Democratic and Republican Party nominations for US Senate and House, Texas Senate and House, several statewide offices,

and Harris County offices including County Judge, County Commissioner, County Clerk, Treasurer, District Clerk, Justice of the Peace, County Board of Education Trustee and the Judicial races for District Courts and County Courts at Law. The Guide will also include **valuable information** about how citizens can exercise their most precious right--"right to vote."



LWV-Houston will continue to publish both **English and Spanish editions** of the Voters Guide. Guides will be available in both print and electronic formats. We will be sending members a direct link to the Voters Guide prior to the start of Early Voting. Voters in Houston/Harris County will be able to obtain a free copy of the Guide

in printed form through local libraries and through electronic links that will be available on the LWV website and on our Facebook® page. We will also be working with many community partners to help people "connect" to the Guide. Finally, candidate responses to our Voters Guide candidate questionnaire will be available to voters through the **VOTE411 app.**

## Join the Voters Guide Team!

*Want to be a part of ensuring that we provide the very best Voters Guide to our community?*

Here are some ways that you can help:

Volunteer to be part of the Voters Guide **Fundraising Committee** or suggest organizations, businesses and individuals that might wish to support the Voters Guide through a contribution. Please send complete contact information to [votersguide@lwvhouston.org](mailto:votersguide@lwvhouston.org) so that our development team can follow up with them. Producing and distributing the March Primary Voters Guide will cost about \$15,000, so fundraising is critical!

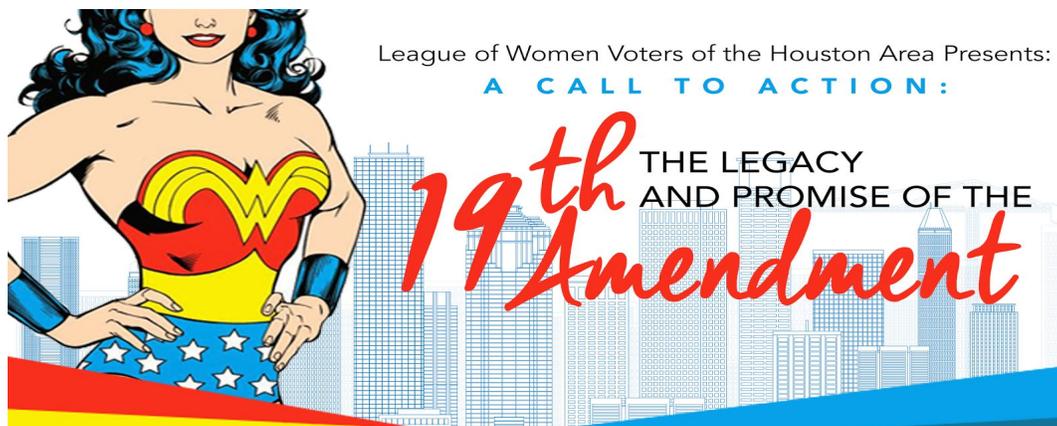
**Suggest organizations**, schools or businesses that might wish to work with us to send information about the March Election and the link to the Voters Guide out to their constituents/members. Please provide organization name and contact information and we will add it to our contact list. Go to [votersguide@lwvhouston.org](mailto:votersguide@lwvhouston.org) to leave a message with this information.

Volunteer to **call candidates** or contact prospective community partners. We will need at least 10-12 callers. Calling is easy and can be done from your home or office. You will receive a script and a list of names and phone numbers. Go to [votersguide@lwvhouston.org](mailto:votersguide@lwvhouston.org) and leave your name and contact information.

Volunteer to do **updates of election information** that will appear in the Voters Guide. Go to [votersguide@lwvhouston.org](mailto:votersguide@lwvhouston.org) and leave your name and contact information.

Volunteer to **proof read** (especially if you are bilingual). We will need at least 4 bilingual proof readers and 5 English proofreaders. Go to [votersguide@lwvhouston.org](mailto:votersguide@lwvhouston.org) and leave your name and contact information.

Volunteer to spend a day in the LWV office to **fill orders** for the printed Voters Guides and/or assemble the Voters Guide mailing to LWV members. Go to [votersguide@lwvhouston.org](mailto:votersguide@lwvhouston.org) and leave your name and contact information.



This October **Wonder Woman** themed event had all the makings of a fun filled evening and an opportunity to meet fellow League members and friends of the League. Everyone enjoyed the very tasty food from Cafe 101 and the movie screening of 2017 Wonder Woman. Many thanks to our sponsors of The Legacy and Promise of the 19th Amendment event as well as our hard working co- chairs, Rey Guerra and Kathy Cheng.

**Save the Date** Mark your Calendar for the **2018 Repast** scheduled for Monday, March 26, 2018 at The Junior League of Houston. Our honorees will be announced soon. Be sure to visit [lwvhouston.org](http://lwvhouston.org) for further information.