

# LWV: We're all equal at the ballot box



**Kate Stockman**

**T**his year marks a century since the League of Women Voters (LWV) was founded and embarked on the mission of “empowering voters, defending democracy.”

Founded the same year that women were constitutionally given the right to vote through the passage of the 19th Amendment, the league has been a nonpartisan, activist, grassroots organization that believes voters should play a critical role in democracy. League members are passionate activists who support our work in all 50 states and in more than 750 communities. The LWV of Henderson County is an active chapter of the national organization.

LWV envisions a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate. LWV is fully committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in principle and in practice, which is central to the organization’s current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities and policymakers in creating a more perfect democracy.

And while LWV “believes in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy,” there are no barriers to full participation with the league on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style,

personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity. The league welcomes members from all walks of life.

We are all equal at the ballot box, but only if we vote. Nationally, the league engages millions of voters every year ensuring Americans have the information they need to participate in elections that determine our future.

About your local league:

The League of Women Voters of Henderson County (LWVHC) was founded Nov. 12, 1963, and has been a strong influence in voter education and advocacy ever since. Many needs and issues have been addressed and many collaborative, effective solutions have been put into place in the ensuing 45 years in our community and county, driven by the influence of the league.

The many local efforts your league has been involved in include:

- Publishing the first Local Government Handbook.
- Participating in land use, solid waste and land use environmental impact studies.
- Offering forums on county planning, courthouse and jail conditions.
- Advocating for child care, affordable housing, juvenile justice, ERA, immigration, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI), civil discourse and redistricting reform.
- Conducting voter registration at high schools, Blue Ridge Community College and community events (and created the “Students Voting for Democracy” program for local elementary students).
- Holding candidate forums or “meet and greets” for all candidates to meet and inform voters for each November election.

Throughout the year, LWVHC members observe governmental bodies to learn,

watch the process of decision-making, and keep other league members informed. Our observers are present at the meetings of a number of boards across the county.

After in-depth research, study and consensus decision-making, the league takes positions on issues of interest to the public and then sponsors forums, programs and opportunities for all community members to become informed.

Three local nonprofits that were created based on such studies and input include the Land of Sky Regional Council, the Dispute Settlement Center (now the Mediation Center) and the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy (now Conserving Carolina). Many league members serve and volunteer with many of our community nonprofits.

To offer comprehensive voter information for the recent primary, the LWV online voter guide, VOTE411.org, includes candidate positions on issues for federal, state and local races. On this site, you can check your voter registration and find your polling place, ballot information and more. The site will be updated for the national election in November.

Upcoming free public programs:

- March 19, 11:30 a.m., Sunshine Week Lunch and Learn Program (BYOL), Agudas Israel Synagogue, 505 Glasgow Lane, Hendersonville.
- March 25, 4 p.m., 2020 Census, Kaplan Auditorium, Henderson County Public Library, 301 N. Washington St., Hendersonville.

*Kate Stockman is a League of Women Voters member with a passion for building a stronger community. This monthly column is designed to introduce your local LWV to the community. To learn more about LWVHC, please visit [www.lwvhcnc.org](http://www.lwvhcnc.org) and [www.facebook.com/LWVHendersonCountyNC/](https://www.facebook.com/LWVHendersonCountyNC/).*