



The Voter

Controversial Election Integrity Commission Disbanded

Mary Ann Reeves

On January 3, 2018, the President disbanded by executive order the very controversial Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, which was widely criticized by states headed by both Republicans and Democrats, before it could issue any final report.

In 2017, the current President created this commission through an executive order, based primarily on his unsubstantiated and unproven claim that millions of people voted illegally in 2016. It was formally charged with investigating confidence in the voting system and improper and fraudulent voting and registration. However, its work was focused on gathering data to use to further tighten voting laws and invoke severe voter suppression either by the wrongful removal of eligible voters or by making the right to register and vote extraordinarily difficult.

To ensure that his objectives were carried out, the President appointed Vice President Pence to chair the commission; vice chair was Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, one of our country's leading activists in restricting access to voting. Several other commission members were well known advocates of suppressing voting rights. Unlike previous presidential commissions on elections that were bipartisan, it was tilted in favor of Republican members (8 to 5) and the leadership was held solely by Republicans instead of by members of both parties.

The Commission's first formal act was to ask all states to send it their voter registration lists, including personal information like the last four digits of all voters' Social Security numbers. The request was met with strong bipartisan opposition based on privacy concerns and the security of that information, among others. No state ended up sending all the information requested. Their mission did not include study of aging voting equipment and its security or fair access to voting for all citizens.

Continued on page 2

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Emily Jernigan, Voter Editor

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Precision Printing and Graphics supports the League of Women Voters of Oak Ridge by helping with costs for printing and folding *The Voter*.

A number of lawsuits were spawned by this and other commission activity, including a suit by one of the commission's own members, Maine Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap. One of only five Democrats appointed to the 13-member commission, Dunlap's federal suit charged that he and the other Democratic commissioners had been denied access to information, including documents prepared by Republican commissioners.

The [Brennan Center](#) for Justice at NYU School of Law is "a nonpartisan law and policy institute that seeks to improve our systems of democracy and justice." It announced that "this commission started as a tragedy and ended as a farce." The work of the commission, from the beginning, was fraught with legal challenges, high costs, lawsuits, and requests for highly private voter data - which in many cases asked states to violate their own privacy laws. The Leagues of several states, including Texas and Utah, joined lawsuits against releasing voter information to the commission.

While the League, and other organizations working to protect and defend the the rights of voters, is justifiably relieved at the disbandment of the commission, the relief may be only temporary. President Trump also announced that the Department of Homeland Security will take on the commission's mandate of investigating fabricated claims of widespread voter fraud. This will allow for the continuation of these specious claims absent the more public examination of a commission. Some of the real problems with our election system are the polling place closures, cuts to early voting, onerous voter ID laws, and the illegal purge of registered voters. Voting security, ensuring that every ballot is counted fairly, and the Russian interference with our elections are serious threats to our democracy and issues that need to be investigated and fixed quickly.

More information from the Brennan Center about this issue can be found here <https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/trump-fraud-commission>, and from a web search for the topic.

The League is dedicated to ensuring that all eligible voters - particularly those from traditionally underrepresented or underserved communities, including first-time voters, non-college youth, new citizens, communities of color, the elderly and low-income Americans - have the opportunity and the information to exercise their right to vote.

Editor's note: Mary Ann Reeves is Immediate Past President of LWVOR, and is a current board member. Since we do not currently have a president, board members will be responsible for the column traditionally prepared by the president. Thank you, Mary Ann.

Lunch with the League



On **February 6** our speaker is City Manager Mark Watson. His topic is "State of the City of Oak Ridge."

On **February 20** our speaker is Susan Moore, Regional Program Manager, Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee. Her topic is "Preventing Child Abuse in Oak Ridge and Anderson County."

On **March 6** our speaker is Bruce Borchers, Superintendent of Oak Ridge Schools. His topic is "The State of Oak Ridge Schools."

Lunches from the [Soup Kitchen](#) are available for \$8. Lunch with the League is open to the public and reservations are not required. We provide coffee, water and tea. Lunch with the League is at the [Unitarian Universalist Church](#), 809 Oak Ridge Turnpike.

Breakfast with the Legislators

The first session for Breakfast with the Legislators was **Monday, January 29**, Lt. Governor Randy McNally, State Senator Ken Yager, and Anderson County State Representative John Ragan were



present. Each spoke for about 5 minutes about the upcoming session, their committee assignments, and their priorities before answering questions and listening to comments from the audience. Roane County Representative Kent Calfee was unable to attend due to a broken rib.

About 50 people attended the Breakfast. We appreciate our local legislators continuing this event the League has sponsored for decades.

There is no charge for these events, and they are open to all. Coffee and a light continental breakfast are served at no charge.

Subsequent breakfasts will be held on the fourth Monday of every month the legislature is in session from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. at the Oak Ridge Civic Center Social Room. If the Oak Ridge schools are closed for snow or inclement weather, the breakfast will be cancelled.

~Dan Robbins and Charlie Hensley

Committee Reports

Education Committee

The first meeting of the LWVOR Education Committee was January 23. For more information please email Harriett McCurdy at mccurdy46@hotmail.com.

League Program Planning

What is it and why should I care?

Since its inception in 1920, the League has studied and approved, through consensus, many topics regarding government (e.g. redistricting, voting rights, money in politics) and many topics of public interest (e.g., clean air and water, education, health care, housing). Once approved through consensus, the League and its members can actively promote these issues through public education and political means.

This process is called Program Planning and is stated in the LWVUS Bylaws.

What is League Program Planning?

Programming takes place at the three levels.

Local Leagues such as the LWVOR or any of its members can identify local items of interest (e.g. problems/issues with local transportation). This identified item needs to be proposed and accepted at the annual program planning meeting, adopted by the local board, and approved by the membership at the annual meeting. After this approval the local League then carefully studies the item and comes to consensus. After consensus the League formulates a position. With an approved position the League and its members can then educate the public and actively and politically encourage implementation of that position.

The **LWVTN** works in a similar way under the LWVTN Bylaws. The items for consideration are those of state-wide interest. All local Leagues within the state and individual members may submit potential program items to the LWVTN Board for adoption and then approval at the state convention. After approval at the LWVTN Convention the items are studied by Leagues throughout the state and approved through consensus to reach a position. Once a position is reached, all Leagues in the State may take action to encourage implementation of that position.

In a similar way, the **LWVUS** does program planning at the national level every two years. The approval to study an item of national impact takes place at the national convention. After approval, all Leagues are invited to study the item; then there is a national consensus and formulation of a position statement. All Leagues and their members may use this position to educate, lobby, and encourage implementation of that position.

Program Planning is an essential League tool that allows us to focus and prioritize our work and insures that League resources are engaged where they have the most impact.

Why should I care?

League position statements, and resultant action, are very powerful. They are widely recognized and respected. They have undergone a long (some say too long) study and consensus process to ensure accuracy and they are written to be non-partisan. They are formulated only after careful study and consensus.

Social policy issues in particular appeal to a wide range of the membership who are passionate about topics such as voting rights, education, health, substance abuse, immigration, women's rights, equal rights, clean air and water. These positions allow members to take knowledgeable action, in the League's name, to educate the public, work with lawmakers, lobby members of the legislature, and actively work for change.

~Mary Ann Reeves

LWVUS Updates

The League of Women Voters of North Carolina won a major court victory (League of Women Voters v Rucho) when a panel of federal judges ruled that North Carolina Republican legislators unconstitutionally gerrymandered congressional districts seeking a political advantage. The court demanded a remedial plan by January 24. This is the first time that a federal court ruled on a case of gerrymandering that specifically addressed party affiliation rather than racial equity.

Dr. Wylecia Harris has resigned as the CEO of the LWVUS. The search for replacement has begun.

Chris Carson, President of the LWVUS, has issued a formal press release on the disbandment of the so-call Election Integrity commission, tasked with investigating supposed and unproven charges of voter fraud See article in this Voter.

EPA plan to repeal the Clean Power Plan: The League was on the forefront of getting much of the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts passed in the 1970's. The LWV statement on the repeal of the

CPP is, "By repealing the CPP, the White House is putting the interests of corporate polluters ahead of the health and safety of the American public. This decision will have a devastating impact on the planet at a time when we are seeing the powerful climate change effects with rising temperatures, deadly hurricanes and destructive wildfires. The League is appalled at this irresponsible decision that will have a long-term devastating impact on our planet and health of the American people." Public comment period ended January 16, 2018.

~Mary Ann Reeves

Observer Corps

LWVOR members attend meetings and report their observations of the meeting they attend. These notes are not official minutes. Contact the specific committee for official information. Longer versions of some of these reports may be posted on our website.

[Anderson County Commission](#)

January 22, 2018, meeting

Chair Tim Isbel called the meeting to order. All 16 commissioners were present.

Commissioner Warfield moved and commission voted to spend \$38,000 for a solar powered aerator for the Blockhouse Valley remediation.

Commissioner Hitchcock reminded commissioners that they have been working on this project for 20 years. He urged commissioners to remember the vision that inspired the effort.

The cost of the renovation of the Daniel Arthur building continues to grow. Commission voted to spend \$80,296 on the HVAC system. Oak Ridge has contributed another \$40,000 to the renovation, bringing their total contribution to \$70,000.

The Budget Committee reached a compromise on the EMS request for funding for new ambulances. They requested \$400,00, down from \$750,000 last month. Still there were objections. Commissioner White pointed out that commission is paying \$45,000 for an audit of the EMS. He wants to see

audit results before investing more money. In support of the expenditure, Commission McKamey reminded commissioners that until 2007/08 the service was funded half by fees and half by tax money. He does not think the current fee based funding is working. The motion failed with Commissioners Wandell, Emert, Warfield, Vowell, Isbel, White, Hitchcock, and Scott voting against it.

Commissioner Vowell moved that the County purchase a fire truck for Medford for \$241,215. Motion carried by voice vote.

Finance Director Natalie Erb warned again that the fund balance is low at \$4,125,323. If it falls below the \$4M target set by the County it will take eleven commission votes or a 2/3 majority to pass a budget amendment.

Commission approved the Budget Committee's guidelines for the 2018/19 budget. The goal is a balanced budget. "For the past few years, the General Fund budgets were approved with deficits. Thus, the County is using reserves to fund recurring operational costs." The guidelines point out that, "Deficit budgets are not sustainable..." The guidelines also urge, "The property tax will not be increased."

At the end of the meeting, Commissioner Wandell read a letter from Commissioner Hitchcock announcing that he is retiring from the commission and moving to South Knoxville. His fellow commissioners thanked him for his contributions and wished him good luck.

~Willa Reister, Observer

The report for the December 8, 2017 meeting is available on our website, www.lwvooakridge.org.

Recreation and Parks Advisory Board

December 14, 2017 and January 11, 2018 meetings

Members of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board: Alan Tatum, President, introduced a new

member of the Board, Melissa McMahan. Melissa joins other board members Naomi Asher, Mark Cantrell, Ray Garret, Kevin Hoyt, David Kitzmiller, Dan Robbins, Ken Rueter, and Brad Spears.

Citizen Comments (Doug Colclasure): The Boulder trail has been completed with much appreciated help from volunteers. Also, completion of the ED-6 multi-use trail that accommodates cyclists, walkers, dog walkers, etc. brings multi-use trails up to 4 miles. Doug noted that the trails on the west end of Oak Ridge are a real asset to our community.

International Friendship Bell Peace Pavilion (Alan Tatum): Fund raising efforts for the pavilion have exceeded \$760,000. Construction will begin soon, with projected completion by the end of March. In cooperation with ORNL and UT, the pavilion committee hopes to acquire 3-D printed benches for the park. Design for the carbon fiber beams is in progress.

Rails to Trails (Jon Hetrick): The Design and Engineering selection committee selected a Kingsport design firm to engineer the Rails to Trails project. If contract negotiations with the firm are successful, the contract will be presented to City Council for approval in February.

Trail Development (Brad Spears, Dan Robbins, Ken Reuter, and Ray Garrett): Brad Spears reported that a new trail steward organization has been formed and named The Clinch Valley Trail Alliance. The group will work with Legacy Parks and DOE in the Anderson/Roane County area on the stewardship and maintenance of trails. Seven to eight projects are pending; plans for potential multi-use trails encompass 100 miles of trails covering 1000 acres of land in different areas. The organization has commitments of about \$15,000 in donations.

Ken Reuter met with Legacy Parks Foundation regarding trail development and reported that, for Legacy Parks, more opportunities exist on "this side of the river."

Ken then reviewed areas for potential multi-use trail development: (1) Sinking Creek, (2) Happy Valley Development near K-25 (the footprints for the homes previously there provide good, expeditious opportunities to develop trails); (3) Bacon Ridge Trail (formerly a Bowaters Pocket Wilderness, now owned by Roane county); (4) Norwood (a "nature play" area); (5) East Fork Poplar Creek (Legacy Parks is working with Ray Garrett on this); (6) Clark Park (DOE is not certain of its future, but it could be for public use); and (7) CROET (1000 acres of former DOE property). For 2018 the Clinch Valley Trail Alliance will focus on Norwood, Sinking Creek, Happy Valley, and East Fork Poplar Creek.

Ray Garrett reported that he is working with Legacy Parks on obtaining the remaining two easements, from the Kennel Club and AMVETS, for the development of the East Fork Poplar Creek Trail.

Events (Naomi Asher, Jon Hetrick): Naomi suggested a bicycle ride for children that would include instruction in road safety, and an intermediate ride, with the idea of building a group of riders to participate in a Halloween ride. Jon Hetrick noted that there are certified cycling instructors in the area.

Jon announced plans for the Secret City Festival are underway with an entirely new board of directors. The festival will again be a two-day event.

Director's Report (Jon Hetrick): (1) The City has taken over the Centennial Golf Course and has hired a new manager. (2) The contract for the Blankenship Field project awaits signatures from State officials; the contract start date was listed as January 1. (3) Construction of an overflow parking lot for the Energy Solutions soccer field will be funded by Oak Ridge Surgeons, who will use the lot to supplement parking for their new surgery center when soccer field use for the lot is low.

Other (Dan Robbins): Dan Robbins presented a historical review of the Oak Ridge Greenways System to commemorate its 25th Anniversary. In

1992 Oak Ridge City Council asked a group to develop a concept for the project. Endorsed by environmental groups, the project was adopted by Council in 1993. The trails were developed according to the pace and uses of potential users. The Cedar Hill trail was the first, followed by Elm Grove and Melton Lake, all excellent for walkers, runners and cyclists. Haw Ridge attracts trail runners, hikers, and mountain bikers. Oak Ridge Greenways partnered with DOE for the use of portions of the reservation, utilizing the Gallaher Bend Greenway as a test case. Other trails, such as the North Boundary Loop and West End BORCE help to make up the existing 9 miles of paved trails, 32 miles of DOE roads, and 13 miles of dirt biking trails. The benefits of the system of trails are numerous. These trails are maintained by trail stewards and volunteers. Future, long-range plans include a trail from Elza Gate to Clinton, going along the river where feasible.

~Mary Lou Daugherty, Observer

EQAB

January 18, 2018 meeting

With the new year, EQAB welcomed three new members, Rebecca Bowman, Wende Doolittle, and Kelley Smith. Continuing members Darcie Holcomb, Robert Kennedy, plus student representatives Tripp Chinn and Adithyan Sujithkumar were also present. William Dean, Kaela O'Dell, and Jianqiu Zheng were absent. EQAB still has two vacancies.

Robert Kennedy was elected chair, Kaela O'Dell (accepting by phone) vice-chair, and Darcie Holcomb secretary for 2018.

Discussion focused on the potential clearcutting for approximately two miles along the crest of Pine Ridge announced by the NNSA to enable a new transmission line to the Uranium Processing Facility. Most board members questioned and objected to the project in its present form; Sandy Sexton, City Staff liaison, and City Council member Ellen Smith added

details about the regulatory process and the justification and communication provided to the City so far.

With unanimous approval, Robert Kennedy will write a letter to Council recommending strong protest to NNSA. EQAB's objections to the present plan will include its failure to qualify for the "categorical exclusion" finding received, its potential for significant impact on the Scarboro community, and lack of communication by the NNSA to the City.

Three upcoming events were announced:

Tree Planting Day, February 24, with seedlings distributed at Jackson Square

Arbor Day, Friday, March 2, at 10:00 am at Willow Brook School

Keep Anderson County Beautiful's Erase Your Trace collection, April 14

Details are available on the [City website](#).

~ Marion Burger, Observer



Lt. Governor Randy McNally addresses members of the public at the first 2018 Breakfast with the Legislators.

Stewart Clifton Updates

To get email updates from the state League lobbyist, send an email with your request to Stewart Clifton at QA@LWTN.org.

Membership Notes *New Members*

Diane Petrillo and Eric Keller
167 Liberty Court
Oak Ridge, TN 37830
931-224-5149

Please contact Janis Williams, 483-1219 or janisor@bellsouth.net, with membership corrections and updates.

In Memoriam

We remember with fondness and extend our sympathies to the families of

Helen Adams

I want to join the League of Women Voters

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State and Zip _____
Phone (Day / Work) _____
Phone (Evening) _____
Email _____

Individual annual dues _____ \$60

Household annual dues _____ \$90

*Donation to Education Foundation \$ _____

*Make a separate, tax deductible check payable to LWVEF

Please send this form and your dues, payable to:

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*******OUR SNOW POLICY*******

If Oak Ridge Schools are closed due to weather, League meetings that day are cancelled. If they are simply delayed, we will hold meetings as scheduled. However, please be safe and use your best judgment.

Calendar

February

- 6 Lunch with the League*** 11:45, lunch; 12–1. Speaker: Mark Watson, Oak Ridge City Manager. Topic: "State of the City of Oak Ridge"
- 13 Board Meeting*** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- 20 Lunch with the League*** 11:45, lunch; 12–1. Speaker: Susan Moore, Regional Program Manager, Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee. Topic: "Preventing Child Abuse in Oak Ridge and Anderson County"
- 20 Education Committee** 2 p.m. Secret City Cafe
- 26 Breakfast with the Legislators** 7:30 to 8:30 a.m., the Oak Ridge Civic Center Social Room. Open to all. Coffee and a light continental breakfast are served at no charge.

March

- 6 Lunch with the League*** 11:45, lunch; 12–1. Speaker: Bruce Borchers, Superintendent of Oak Ridge Schools. Topic: "State of Oak Ridge Schools"
- 13 Board Meeting*** 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

* Unless otherwise specified, Lunch with the League is at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 809 Oak Ridge Turnpike at Laboratory Road. Board Meetings are in the Main Conference Room, UT Resource Center, Rutgers Ave. at the Turnpike.