

South Carolina League Leaders,

I hope 2011 got off to a good start for you and your League. The year ahead will be difficult--The tremendous economic challenges that 2010 presented for our communities and state are expected to worsen. And I'm sure you as shocked and saddened as I am at the tragedy in Tucson in which public servants and citizens gathering to participate peacefully in our democracy were gunned down. Clearly, this was the act of one crazed person. A national discussion is underway to try to fathom what led him to commit this heinous act, other than that he was angry with government and demonized an elected official. Thankfully, leaders from all political perspectives have condemned the tragedy. That being said, this is an opportunity to for our nation to reflect on the increasing levels of polarization and anger directed toward government and public officials that exist in America today. As Americans, let's come together and call for an end to the heated vitriol in civic discourse that emanates from both sides of the political divide. Join me in calling on our fellow citizens to treat one another with courtesy and respect--no matter our political differences. These are League--and American--values.

At no time in our state's history has the League been needed more--to build on successes, to model civility and respect in our interactions with one another and with public officials, and to champion state policy decisions that will help ensure brighter futures for all who are blessed to call South Carolina home.

Gini McGirr, South Carolina's Membership Recruitment Initiative national coach, LWVAZ leader and Tucson resident, sent the following message to our state MRI coaching team:

I am sure you have been watching the news about the horrible shooting we had here yesterday morning. Rep. Giffords is a good friend of mine and we had planned to go to this event as it was only a few miles from where we live. Gordon had been taking down the luminaries around the driveway and had a fire going in the front patio fireplace. So I took our tea out to sit by the fire and we got to talking. I looked at the time and it was just after 10 am so we decided not to go as you need to get there early as so many people in line to talk to her. Went inside and sat down at computer and I get all the breaking news from one of the TV stations. It told about the shooting so then turned on the TV and saw the mess of vehicles and helicopters. So we were really glad that we had not driven over there.

Mary Klenz was here for the Xmas week and we had breakfast at the bakery on the corner across from where this happened.

A woman knocked the bullet clip out of the man's hand or he would have shot more people. It held 30 bullets and he had shot 20 people. She was one of the wounded. I believe these are illegal and if these are around, you do not need an assault rifle anymore as pistols are easier to hide.

This is such a loss for Tucson and AZ. Gabby is our District 8 representative and had just started her third term. Such a wonderful person. She always does a lot with our League and was a member when she was back in the state legislature. That was where I met her.

Personal stories like Gini's bring the tragedy closer. Our heartfelt condolences go to our grieving friends in Arizona.

This update is also attached as a Word document and will be posted at <http://lwvsc.org/forleaguemembers.html>. Please share this information with your leadership team and members, as appropriate. Thanks for your leadership and friendship,

Barbara

Membership & Organization

League Leaders Conference Calls. Thanks to all who joined a conference call with Peggy Appler and me in December. The feedback we received from participants was overwhelmingly positive--You liked the opportunity to discuss League matters with other leaders and you prefer conference calls over in-person regional meetings that were held in the past. Based on the positive response we plan to schedule these

calls at least quarterly and will be in touch with you soon about the next call. We will try to time the calls so that at least one representative from each local League can take part.

Update Member Lists by January 31. On January 31 the LWVUS will use your League's report ("summary sheet") on the LWVUS online member database to determine your League's member count for 2011-2012. The report will determine your League's per member payment (PMP) and set your League's delegate count for the LWVSC Convention in May 2011. Remember, to inactivate a member you must change the "A" (active) to "I" (inactive). If you have any questions about this process, contact Betty Taira at LWVUS (202-263-1345 or btaira@lww.org). Also feel free to contact LWVSC Member Services VP Janie Shipley (janrel@mindspring.com; 864-885-1967), Laurel Suggs (lsuggs@imgsc.com; 803-799-7050) or Barbara Zia (ziab1@comcast.net; 803-251-2726) for help. While you are updating your online member roster, do check to see that there are correct email addresses and phone numbers for your members. And be sure to update membership expiration dates. Last but not least, be sure to click the "Submit Changes" at the bottom of the page before leaving it.

Planning Your Local League Annual Meetings. At local League annual meetings each spring members adopt a budget and a program of study and action for the coming year, amend bylaws as needed, and elect officers and directors who will carry out the League's mission and the membership's direction. Consult your local League bylaws for specifics. Information about Program Planning meetings can be found below.

Your Nominating, Budget and Bylaws Committees should be at work to help prepare for annual meeting. LWVSC does not anticipate a need to request an increase in the \$14 Per Member Payment (PMP) for 2011-2012. The LWVUS PMP rate will increase to \$30 on July 1, as set by the 2010 national convention.

There's a helpful guide to annual meeting at http://www.lww.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Essential_League_Resources&CONTENTID=13865&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm. Got questions about preparing for annual meeting? Please contact Peggy Appler, LWVSC Community Relations VP (843-688-5171 or dappler@homesc.com).

Local League Leadership Structure. Changes to your local League's governance structure can be made at annual meeting as a bylaws amendment. During our December leaders conference call there was interest expressed in the national League's "Streamlining the League" project. For this project, a committee gathered information from Leagues across the nation as to ways to simplify the running of League at the local level. A workshop at the 2010 LWVUS Convention focused on the committee's findings. At the workshop, the Committee presented ideas and materials to help Leagues streamline our operations, focus on what is essential to retain our good reputation, enable busy people to have enough time to be part of a leadership team and retain our community based, grassroots organization! A tool kit that was distributed at the workshop can be found at <http://www.lww.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Presidents&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=15582>

Neither the national nor the state League is suggesting that local Leagues change their board structure. However, the toolkit offers some useful ideas and resources and it's well worth your looking over. You and your leadership team may feel your structure is working well, and that's great. But if you see a need to examine how your board operates and explore possible changes, please talk with Janie Shipley, LWVSC Member Services VP (janrel@mindspring.com) or Peggy Appler, LWVSC Community Relations VP (dappler@homesc.com). State League leaders and our Membership Recruitment Initiative coaches will be happy to present workshops in which your members can carefully consider changes that will increase your League's effectiveness and member satisfaction.

LWVSC 2011 Convention--May 14-15 in Sumter. Ask anyone who's ever taken part--A state League

convention is an incredible learning experience. On May 14-15, South Carolina Leaguers can participate in grassroots democracy at its finest at the LWVSC biennial convention. In February, League presidents will receive a First Call to Convention with details, including information about the number of voting delegates that local Leagues can send. All League members are welcome to attend. Voting delegates are appointed by local League boards.

League Business Cards. A business card template is available along with several other items you might find helpful for your League activities. You can find these items at: http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Membership_Recruitment_Initiative&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=13802

Attractive business cards are easy to print from the template using your own printer and are handy for League leaders to carry.

League Membership Brochures. A MS Word template for creating handy, pocket- or purse-size membership brochures is available from Janie Shipley (janrel@mindspring.com or 864-885-1967). Leagues can personalize the brochure with their local activities and contact information. They're perfect for displaying at libraries and LWV events. No Leaguer should go anywhere without them!

Citizen Education

Initiative on Judicial Independence and Diversity. We are delighted to report that LWVUS informed us that the Initiative will receive funding through 2012. If you haven't already done so, please talk with Peggy Appler about your League's plans for participating in the initiative. Peggy will be happy to help you with ideas and action plans. There are several exciting local League projects underway already. LWVSC was invited to submit a guest column on the judicial initiative to "The Nerve," the online journal of the SC Policy Council. The column should be posted this week at <http://www.thenerve.org/Homepage.aspx>.

Advocacy 101 Handbook is online at <http://www.lwvsc.org/files/lwvadvocacymanual.pdf>. This free LWVSC publication is an essential tool for anyone who wants to advocate on state legislative issues. Hard copies will also be available at Legislative Advocacy Day and regional advocacy workshops and by contacting Peggy Appler (843-688-5171 or dappler@homesc.com).

Know Your State. LWVSC's acclaimed "Know Your State: South Carolina Government" is available for purchase. KYS is offered to League members at a special price of \$7 per copy. They make the perfect gift for speakers at League meetings. Some local Leagues are selling copies at their events as a fundraiser. Contact Peggy Appler at 843-688-5171 or dappler@homesc.com to order.

Issues and Action

Program Planning. We hope your calendar includes a member meeting to plan the study and action that your local League will undertake in the coming year and that LWVSC will tackle in the 2011-2013 biennium. In a LWVSC convention year, local Leagues undertake program planning for state League as well as their local League. You'll find complete info, including the reporting form, at <http://lwvsc.org/issuesandaction.html>. March 1 is the reporting deadline. During your program planning process please consider:

- LWV/Charleston Area is asking state League members to concur with its position on illegal drugs. The positions and background information were sent to local League presidents in December. Contact Sharon Fratepietro with questions or for a resend of the materials (<mailto:sharoninsc@hotmail.com>; 843-670-3077).
- LWV/Clemson Area is proposing that LWVSC members adopt that League's position on growth management. That position and background were also sent to presidents in December. Please

contact Holley Ulbrich to request the materials again or to with questions (holleyu@nctv.com; 864-654-6828).

- Voting systems--Eleanor Hare and Duncan Buell have been leading LWVSC's efforts to ensure that South Carolina's voting system is secure, accurate, recountable and transparent. They are proposing that the state League implement a voting systems task force in 2011-2013. The task force would be made up of League members from across SC who would consider alternatives to our current voting system. Attached you will find the proposal.

Members are also asked to consider consensus questions for the LWVSC study on school district structure and governance. Questions were sent with program planning materials in December. You will also find them at <http://lwvsc.org/whatsnew.html>. Background materials on issues related to the study are at <http://lwvsc.org/schoolgovernance.html>.

LWVSC Water Study. The Water Supply Study Committee, co-chaired by Mullen Taylor and Joan Kinne-Shulman, has worked hard since the 2009 LWVSC Convention researching issues around our state's water supply. The LWVSC board in November received the committee's opinion that current national and state League positions on water supply and transfers cover the issues and allow the League to advocate. Rather than submitting questions to members for consensus, the study committee plans to prepare and present a report to state convention in May. The report will be published for use to educate League members, legislators and the general public.

Advocacy Workshops covering the basics of advocating with state legislators are being held:

Midlands--Saturday, Jan. 22, 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Heyward Career and Technology Ctr., Teleconference Ctr., 3560 Lynhaven Dr., Columbia (Registration deadline: Jan. 14)

Upstate--Saturday, Jan. 29, 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Mauldin HS Auditorium, 701 E. Butler Rd., Mauldin (Registration deadline: Jan. 21)

Participants will learn about South Carolina's legislative process, how bills become laws and ways to effectively advocate with elected officials, and hear from some South Carolina legislators. The registration fee is \$10.00. Make checks payable to SC-SIC and mailed to: SC-SIC, USC College of Education, 820 Main St., Suite 001, Columbia, SC 29208. Indicate the workshop you want to attend (1/22 or 1/29) & that you are a LWV member. These regional workshops are sponsored by LWVSC, S.C. School Improvement Council & AAUW SC. Kindly share this information with your members and networks. Flyers with registration forms are at <http://lwvsc.org/whatsnew.html>

Legislative Advocacy Day, Wednesday, February 23. LWVSC is partnering with AAUW SC and SC School Improvement Council to present an exciting advocacy event on the theme of "Coming Together for South Carolina's Future: Our Children." Advocacy Day will take place at Epworth Children's Home, 2900 Millwood Ave., Columbia. The cost of \$20 per person will include the full-day program, lunch, and transportation by Epworth bus to and from the Statehouse. Attendees can choose between 2 morning options: advocating with legislators on children's issues at the Statehouse, or sessions at Epworth, including an advocacy training workshop. Afternoon speaker highlights to date include:

- Mike Fanning will address comprehensive tax reform. Mike is Executive Director of the Olde English Consortium, an educational collaborative seeking to promote excellence in education. Its members include school districts and universities in the North Central SC.

- Bob Davis, Chief Financial Officer of Richland District 2 School District, will speak on SC education funding.

Information can be found in the Winter SC VOTER and at <http://lwvsc.org/whatsnew.html>

Meetings with Your Legislative Delegations. Please arrange meetings with your local legislative delegations. We encourage you to use the legislative and policy priorities that are in the Fall SC VOTER as a discussion guide with your legislators. This is a great opportunity for local Leagues and legislators to get to know one another over conversations on policy issues. Legislators really do value the opinion of League members, especially when they are constituents. Please contact JoAnne Day (jvday@yahoo.com) or Carole Cato (ccato@att.net) with questions or comments.

The Guardian ad Litem (GAL) program is in desperate need of volunteers! The GAL program in South Carolina is a totally volunteer program that trains caring adults to be child advocates. These volunteers represent abused and neglected children in Family Court. South Carolina legislators mandated the use of volunteers in this capacity in 1984, and the program became one of the first to be state funded in the nation. The program is seeking an additional 300 volunteers to join this effort. Please share this need with your boards and membership. Staff at GAL will gladly come to a board meeting and/or attend and share information at any of your local events.

They provide a free 30-hour training course that focuses on the skills needed for effective child advocacy, and explores a broad range of children's issues. Trainings are scheduled in many counties during January and going forward. If you or members of your local Leagues are interested in becoming a volunteer with this very important program, go to www.scgall.org for more information. You may also call 1-800-277-0113. Please contact Rita Paul, LWVSC Child Welfare Director, at ritagpaul@hotmail.com if you are interested in having them present at an upcoming local League board or member meeting.

Lastly, the LWVSC Board meets next on Jan. 22, 12:30-4:30 p.m. at Laurel Suggs' office, IMG, 1600 St. Julian Place, Columbia. All League members are welcome to attend.

And the Winter SC VOTER will arrive in members' mailboxes soon. Please alert Laurel Suggs about any delivery problems (lsuggs@imgsc.com).