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# The Essentials

## LWV of the Lower Cape Fear

Hot Topics October 22, 2018

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### TODAY'S TOPIC: NC Constitutional Amendments

**Gail Bromley, Presenter**

As a member of the League, Gail is currently involved in Voter Protections & Education. Today she will show us how the Constitutional Amendment language on the ballot is just part of the story. The full wording of the actual amendments have much information that is not reflected on the ballot. What is the backstory for these amendments? What is the cost to taxpayers and what are the consequences to us as voters and as citizens?

### CALENDAR

- Nov 9      **Environmental Action Team.** 3:00 PM NC Coastal Federation Headquarters  
309 W. Salisbury St., Wrightsville Beach.
- Nov 12     **Board Meeting.** 9:30 AM Bridge Church, 497 Olde Waterford Way #205,  
Leland. Open to all members.
- Nov 15     **Education Action Team.** 10 AM YWCA 2815 South College Rd. Wilmington
- Nov 14     **FEAT.** 2 PM New Hanover Public Library-Downtown, 201 Chestnut St.  
3rd Floor.
- Nov 19     **Women's Issues Action Team.** 10 AM, 1018 Sunskipper, Leland. Discuss  
ERA, centennial celebration, affordable & accessible health care, expanding  
Medicaid in NC.
- Nov 26     **HOT TOPICS.** "Homelessness in the Cape Fear Region—Community  
Response and Resources." New Hanover Public Library-Downtown, 201  
Chestnut St., 3rd Floor. Meagan Zielinski, Homeless Continuum of Care  
Director for the Cape Fear Council of Governments will give an overview of the  
problem, but will also look to the future and how we can both end and prevent  
homelessness.

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## INTERESTED IN A PARTICULAR ISSUE OR COMMITTEE?

Sign up for a committee or Action Team list. Be involved to just the degree that suits you: Receive the emails so you can be informed or jump right in and attend the regular meetings of the group. Contact the committee or Action Team chair who will put you on the list.

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<b>Women's Issues</b>	Linda Kurta	<a href="mailto:LJK125@bellsouth.net">LJK125@bellsouth.net</a>	910-833-4627

### The Importance of Candidate Forums

Carol Roberts, President, LWV of the Lower Cape Fear  
Barbara Burrell, Brunswick County Voter Services Chair

Voting is a fundamental right and for nearly 100 years the League of Women Voters (LWV) has assisted citizens in exercising that right. LWV believes that all eligible voters should have an equal opportunity to exercise their right to vote. As a nonpartisan organization, the League cannot tell people for whom to vote, nor can it endorse candidates or give them money. The League **does** advocate for policies that ensure that our elections remain free, fair and accessible.

As part of its voter educational effort the League has long sponsored non-partisan candidate forums to help voters get acquainted with issues and meet and hear from candidates seeking their vote. The League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear (LWVLCF) has successfully conducted such forums for decades in this region. Over the last several elections we have added forums for Brunswick County voters. For the 2018 election the LWVLCF planned forums in Leland, Shallotte and Southport to give residents living in all parts of the county an opportunity to hear and learn from candidates for legislative and county offices.

Unfortunately, implementing these Brunswick County forums this year proved to be difficult as the candidates of one major party (the Republican Party) refused to participate. For the

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most part, they just ignored our invitations to participate. We have not had the courtesy of them even initiating a discussion about their concerns with the forums. When candidates decline to participate in these nonpartisan forums, democracy suffers. People want to hear from their elected officials before they cast their votes. They want to understand how candidates would address issues of concern to them. Elected officials who choose to listen only to their supporters and avoid people who might not agree with them, do themselves as candidates a disfavor and certainly don't help enlighten the voters on their views.

The format of the League's forums involves inviting all candidates for elected offices in the local area to participate and provide participating candidates with equal time to answer questions. The questions come from a variety of sources, including from members of the community, League Action Teams and League co-sponsors. Our professional moderators review the questions to ensure they are presented in a non-biased manner. The Alliance of Brunswick County Property Owners Association and the Brunswick County Chamber of Commerce offered to co-sponsor these forums this year. Jon Evans, WECT anchor, agreed to moderate two of the forums as he has done in the past and WWAY-TV offered to moderate the third forum. The League mandates that at least two candidates for an office must be included to have a forum for a particular office.

The League's forums have been very positively received in previous election years with participation from all parties' candidates. Elections matter! Elected officials make significant choices that affect our daily lives. Local and state officials make decisions that affect how we plan for the rapidly growing community we call home. They will decide matters affecting our pocketbooks, transportation choices, natural resources, health care and public schools. When one party ignores invitations to participate in a nonpartisan professionally run forum in which all candidates are given the same opportunity to present their ideas it is saying an informed electorate does not matter. It is a shame.