

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 18

*Commending the League of Women Voters.*

Agreed to by the Senate, February 6, 2020

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters was founded on February 14, 1920, by leaders of the movement for women's right to vote in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the League of Women Voters was to support understanding of and participation in the new responsibility of voting by women, in light of the 1920 ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and to support legislation that would help safeguard future movements for voting rights; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters of Virginia was formed on November 10, 1920, as a successor to the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters of Virginia was organized to "safeguard and advance the educations, industrial and legal rights and interests of women and to obtain for women the franchise on equal terms with men," and as "an earnest and serious body banded together for civic betterment and the welfare of the community in which they live"; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters believes that active and engaged citizens, without hindrance based on gender, ethnicity, or political affiliation, are the hallmark of democracy; and

WHEREAS, through ceaseless efforts over 100 years to strengthen and uphold its mission to empower voters and defend democracy, the League of Women Voters has become a trusted source of nonpartisan information; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters champions government systems that are open, transparent, inclusive, and equitable; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters has supported legislation and fought in the courts to protect and strengthen voting rights and access and for free and fair elections, civil rights, and issues related to children, health, and education; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters has received accolades for its conduct of candidate forums, provision of nonpartisan elections information, and work to register, educate, and mobilize voters; and

WHEREAS, throughout the history of the League of Women Voters, members have helped overturn restrictions on voting, including the poll tax, literacy requirements, and property ownership qualifications; and

WHEREAS, members of the League of Women Voters also supported early litigation to eliminate the segregated seating law in Virginia and joined lawsuits, testified, and organized against the segregation of Virginia public schools; and

WHEREAS, members of the League of Women Voters of Virginia have included Leslie L. Byrne, the first woman from Virginia elected to Congress of the United States; Mary Sue Terry, the first woman Attorney General of Virginia; Elizabeth B. Lacy, the first woman justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia; Laurie Naismith, a former Secretary of the Commonwealth; Vivian Watts, the first woman Secretary of the Virginia Department of Transportation and Public Safety; and Yvonne B. Miller, the first African American woman elected to the Virginia House of Delegates; and

WHEREAS, membership of the League of Women Voters has included members of statewide boards such as Mary Hynes of the Commonwealth Transportation Board; former state legislators such as Ellen Bozman, Judy Connally, Karen Darner, Evelyn Hailey, Kathryn Stone, and Mary Margaret Whipple; current state legislators Barbara Favola, Nancy Guy, Alfonso Lopez, Ibraheem Samirah, and Shelly Simonds; and judges such as Rose Mortimer Macdonald and Rosemarie Annunziata; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters has also benefited from the leadership of local officials like Evelyn Butts, the plaintiff in the Supreme Court of the United States case that overturned Virginia's poll tax and the first African American woman commissioner to the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority; Elizabeth Howell, the first woman elected to the Norfolk City Council; and Rebecca Reed, the first woman to chair the Stafford County Board of Supervisors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the League of Women Voters hereby be commended on the occasion of its 100th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the League of Women Voters as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for the organization's significant contributions toward empowering women voters and defending democracy.

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