

## MERGER CONSENSUS MEETING

5-6:30, February 10, 2022

Via Zoom

### ATTENDING

#### Members (21)

|                   |                  |                   |                |                   |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Harriet Bernstein | Marie Curtis     | Peggy Dellinger   | Ted Dellinger  | Elia Desruisseaux |
| Dallas Grove      | Robert Grove     | Pamela Herzenberg | Dallas Hlatky  | Marybeth Kelman   |
| Lois Kiely        | Eileen MacHaffie | Jayne Mackta      | Janice McGowan | Evelyn Murphy     |
| Eleanor Novek     | Luisa Paster     | Wilma Pfeffer     | Susan Sferas   | Pat Supplee       |
| Sherri West       |                  |                   |                |                   |

#### Guest

Anne Torre, *Merger Exploration Team Chair and LWVNJ Board Liaison to LWVSMC*

### BACKGROUND

The LWVSMC met via Zoom to consider and reach consensus on the question: *Should the four League entities\* in Monmouth County merge into a single League of Women Voters of Monmouth County?* In advance of the meeting, the Membership received a White Paper, outlining the findings and recommendation of the Merger Exploration Team, made up of representatives from all three Local Leagues. The meeting opened with a review of the analysis of the Merger Exploration Team. Each participant was called on to express their opinion on the question, followed by an open discussion of pros and cons. A consensus emerged:

***The LWVSMC supports the merger of the four Monmouth County League entities into a single League, to be structured in such a way as to preserve the social relationship-building, grassroots approach, and local action/advocacy that are treasured characteristics of the League of Women Voters.***

(The other two Local Leagues scheduled similar meetings: LWVWM on 2/9; LWVGRBA on 2/15.)

### DISCUSSION

| Support  | Concern  |
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| <p>Good move. We have numbers, but not great participation. Larger pool to draw from.</p> <p>White Paper answered my concerns. Interested how it will be organized.</p> <p>Good idea, with caveat about maintaining relationships.</p> <p>Applaud hard work of team. Need to maintain relationships. Whole-heartedly endorse merger.</p> | <p>Concerned for workload for one president.</p> <p>People join for mission; stay for the people. Attention needs to be paid to creating smaller groups to nurture relationships.</p> <p>Opposed. Several Leagues merged in past—all went downhill. Changes the nature of the organization to become a County League. We would be losing the local touch. Need local Leagues and local presidents. Losing grassroots nature of League.</p> |

\* LWV Greater Red Bank Area, LWV Southern Monmouth County, LWV Western Monmouth, and the Inter League Organization (ILO).

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| <p>Whole-heartedly support merger. Gain in clarity and clout. Unsure what the names of the Leagues mean [<i>does the League's name accurately describe its footprint?</i>]. Would allow us to be more inclusive of people—structure now seems narrow. Can overcome the concern for relationships.</p> <p>Strongly support. Understand there are concerns. Value to hear them expressed. Don't have to recreate the same structure as we already have—innovative ways to engage people. Concerns can be dealt with.</p> <p>Started not in favor—because of geographic challenges. Zoom solves problem, but takes away the personal contact. White Paper changed my mind.</p> <p>Great idea. Appreciate value of those who spoke against the proposal.</p> <p>In favor. Simplify and unify. Technology makes innovation possible. Would enhance our advocacy. Create a good committee system to address concerns.</p> <p>Impressed by White Paper. Don't have same attachment to relationships (I work). I'm motivated by the organization's cause. Organization the size of a county shouldn't be an impediment to socialization.</p> <p>Merged organization would be more effective. Size of organization would be more complex, but complexity can be addressed.</p> <p>Already have relationships with people across local League boundaries. Merger expands the possibilities. Also concerned about succession—merger can create more effective age targets.</p> <p>In favor. Centralizing gains efficiency. Through COVID we've learned how to design approaches to relationships and activism. Social media—confusing to public to have multiple LWVs—can be more consistent and branded for growth.</p> <p>I support the merger.</p> <p>No opposition to the merger. It makes good sense. I have friends in other Leagues. Would welcome opportunity to affiliate with them as part of League. There is some danger in getting too big—but it can be handled by sub-committees.</p> | <p>Originally opposed because coordination will be complicated and personal connection will be lost. Don't know if we can create a structure to keep it going. (New member phone calls.)</p> |
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**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE ON MERGER TEAMS**

*Volunteers: Marie Curtis, Willma Pfeiffer, Pat Supplee, and Elia Desruisseaux*