



## **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TENNESSEE**

### **November 2016 Election Poll Watching Report**

The League of Women Voters of Tennessee (LWVTN) had poll watchers during early voting as well as on Election Day. League poll watchers were at urban, suburban, and rural counties during early voting and on Election Day. Overall, LWVTN poll watchers reported well-run polling places with professional, friendly, and customer/voter-oriented poll workers. No systematic problems were reported.

Very few lines were noted which is consistent with media reports. Most voters were observed to easily sign the poll book and cast their ballot. However, on Election Day there were often lines observed for the clerk who assisted voters not on the precinct's voter roll.

The League of Women Voters of Tennessee commends the State Election Commission as well as the county elections commissions for a well-run election. Below are some observations from the League's poll watching that may be helpful in future elections.

#### **Use of Technology (GOVOTETN)**

Perhaps the biggest difference observed on Election Day among counties was the use of technology. Some counties, like Williamson, had portable devices allowing poll workers to look up some information regarding registration status for voters not on the paper voter registration roll. In other counties, every voter not on the precinct's list required a call to the main county election office. This often required time for the call to get through and/or a several minute wait once connected.

Based on LWVTN observations, the GOVOTETN app could have been used to resolve many of the questions that required a call to the main county election office. This is particularly true of voters who showed up at the wrong poll place and needed to find out where they were registered. Informally league poll watchers showed the app to several poll workers, many of whom were not familiar with it but were intrigued. In the absence of official guidance from the county election administrator, they appropriately did not start using it in the polling place.

LWVTN encourages the State Election Commission to consider guidance on use of the app in a polling place. Guidance could include when the app might be most useful and that it is a step in resolving registration issues, not the final answer. However, it may be very useful for reducing the calls to the main county election office, thus making more time available for problematic registration issues.

## **Registration Issues Related to DMV**

LWV poll watchers also observed a handful of voters who believed that they were already registered because they checked the appropriate box at the DMV when they applied for a driver's license, but did not realize that they needed to complete a separate voter registration form. This is an area of concern that has surfaced before, and needs to be addressed. The League hopes that the implementation of online voter registration will make the process easier at the DMV offices

## **Voters Purged Based on Not Voting**

During many poll watching shifts, league observers saw voters being told they were no longer registered because they had not voted in some time and did not return the form sent to them. It was disappointing to see citizens who should still be registered because they have not moved since their initial registration, not be able to vote. The League will continue its discussions with state officials about best practices in voter registration list maintenance.

## **Counties Visited by League of Women Voters Poll Watchers**

Early Voting (one report per polling place unless noted):

- Anderson County – 1 polling place, 5 reports
- Cheatham County – 3 polling places
- Decatur County -1 polling place
- Dickson County – 2 polling places
- Grundy County – 1 polling place
- Hickman County – 2 polling places
- Knox County –2 polling places, 3 reports
- Monroe County – 3 polling places
- Robertson County—1 polling place
- Sevier County – 2 polling places, 3 reports
- Shelby County – 4 polling places
- Smith County – 1 polling place
- Sullivan County – 1 polling place
- Sumner County – 1 polling place
- Union County – 1 polling place
- Wilson County – 2 polling places

Election Day:

- Anderson County – 2 precincts
- Grundy County—9 precincts
- Cheatham County – 2 precincts
- Davidson County – 20 precincts
- Knox County – 1 precinct
- Robertson County –1 precinct
- Shelby County – 1 precinct
- Sumner County – 7 precincts
- Union County – 1 precinct
- Williamson County – 10 precincts