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Area Bulletin

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League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area

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Household Hazardous Waste, A Problem Without A Good Solution

Marcia Doust

ARTICLE TAKE AWAY: Always read labels with warning labels before buying the product. Health and environmental problems can occur. Safe disposal can be difficult to accomplish, or nearly impossible. Proper disposal can be expensive for the consumer, and/or the government. Only buy what you will be able to use within a year.

LONGER STORY:

When cleaning out my garage, I learned an important lesson to share with our readers. If there are any warnings about hazardous, toxic, flammable or dangerous components in items you no longer want, they must not be disposed of in your household trash, poured on the ground, or down the drain. To do so can threaten people's health and/or the environment. These household items could be oil paint, paint strippers, solvents, pesticides/herbicides, swimming pool chemicals, etc.



For example: On May 18, 2023 Huntington Sanitation Workers were sickened by collecting household trash that also contained swimming pool chemicals. These pool chemicals, once compacted in the back of the garbage truck, created a bubbling substance and chlorine gas fog, which injured the city workers who required hospital treatment. Fortunately, they were able to recover after about a week.

The problem: HOW can we get rid of dangerous items in our homes? As I tried to clean out 30+ years of junk, I realized I represent only one small portion of a nationwide residential, environmental problem.

Luckily, I discovered one limited solution to my own personal problem. After calling a multitude of local and WV agencies, I called the WV DEP Hazardous Waste Div. They sent a truck from the WV Dept of Homeland Security, which can, sometimes, collect small amounts of household hazardous waste, if they are in the area. The Homeland Security expert placed my chemicals in partially-filled chemical waste barrels. Once each barrel is completely filled, the State of WV pays about \$5,000-\$8,000/barrel for the safe disposal in a hazardous waste incinerator in Ohio. (Wonder about possible air pollution?) I was lucky to get rid of my own chemicals, because Homeland Security can only collect a few such hazardous items, and from just a few WV residents. They have budgetary restraints and a very small staff, whose primary focus is on much larger hazardous waste problems. An example is they monitored the pollution threats to WV in the Ohio River during the East Palestine, Ohio train derailment of February 2023.

My conclusion is to only buy small quantities of chemical products, and only those which can be SAFELY disposed of in a garbage can.

Library Preliminary Report

Betty Barrett



At this time (September 27) There is not much to report. A case has been filed, asking for a writ of mandamus on the question of the excess levy continuing to provide funds for the libraries and parks in Cabell County. I am not a lawyer, so this is not written in proper legal language. All four Cabell County circuit judges have recused themselves from presiding over the case. We are waiting for Chief

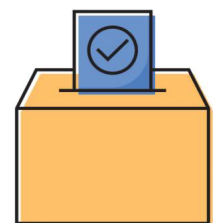
Supreme Court Justice Beth Walker to assign a judge from another county. There is a time limit of 30 days from the date of filing (September 14, 2023) for a response.

The Board of Education unilaterally decided that the requirement that a portion of funding should be shared with libraries and parks was unconstitutional, and that they no longer owed this money. The petition from lawyers Dennis Taylor and Marc Williams disagrees, since it was not ordered by a court, after many years of sharing.

The Power of Referendum

Nyoka Baker Chapman

26 states in the US have the power to petition for referendums to get amendments onto their state ballots. West Virginia does not have this ability.



REFERENDUM

Despite the powers delegated to citizens by our WV constitution, the actual authority to override our legislature remains denied to us.

Right across the river, the state of Ohio does have the power of referendum and the mechanics of getting citizen changes to state laws on the ballot are noteworthy. <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-constitution/section-2.1a>

[https://ballotpedia.org/Ohio_Issue_1,_Right_to_Make_Reproductive_Decisions_Including_Abortion_Initiative_\(2023\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Ohio_Issue_1,_Right_to_Make_Reproductive_Decisions_Including_Abortion_Initiative_(2023))

Many WV bills have tried and died over the decades to bring us the ability to petition for citizen initiative ballot measures. The most recent resolutions of January 2023, *HJR 4* and *HJR 11* went no further than the Judiciary and failed to move. The bills would have amended the WV State Constitution to give citizens the powers of initiative, referendum and recall. Achieving the passage of such a resolution or a similar bill is worthy of advocacy as we approach the 2024 legislative session in January.

The National Conference of State Legislatures provides much information about this process and how it operates from state to state.

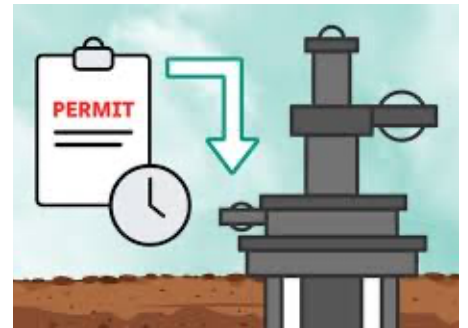
[Initiative and Referendum Processes \(ncsl.org\)](https://www.ncsl.org/initiative-referendum-processes)

[Initiatives and referendums in the United States - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Initiatives_and_referendums_in_the_United_States)

Can WV Execute and Monitor a Class VI Permit?

[Nyoka Baker Chapman](#)

WV has applied for a Class VI permit to begin CO2 sequestration projects in WV that were authorized in 2022 under WV HB 4491.



Per the US Department of Energy: *‘The Class VI injection permit is the latest in a line of permits issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for waste disposal. It is geared toward regulating injection of carbon dioxide for geologic sequestration purposes.’*

[FE00006821-Class-VI-Injection-Permit--Salient-Features-and-Regulatory-Challenges_Final.pdf \(doe.gov\)](#)

Per the: [Carbon Capture Coalition](#) *‘Two states have received primacy over Class VI wells, North Dakota and Wyoming. The State of [Louisiana’s Class VI primacy application](#) is under review at EPA in the “completeness of determination” phase of the application process. Arizona and **West Virginia** are listed as being in the “pre-application” phase. North Dakota has issued two [permits](#) for Class VI wells, and additional well permit applications are pending.’*

CO2 sequestration projects have yet to be proven as working solutions to carbon capture and the process has yet to be technically and geologically perfected to be safe, economical and efficient. Currently, several organizations are reviewing reasons for a denial of a Class VI permit to WV from the EPA, with specific argument that the responsibilities are beyond the range of the state's capabilities to execute.

As 95% of hydrogen is currently created from the steam-methane reforming of natural gas ('blue' hydrogen), there does not seem to be adequate utilization of hydrogen as an energy source to justify advancing increased fracking when the future of hydrogen has yet to be determined in more mainstream usage. There are ways to produce 'green' hydrogen ([Green hydrogen - Wikipedia](#)) that are less harmful to us and the environment, but the natural gas industry is grasping this foothold into the clean energy market. Now the competition is on among regions and states to be an authorized hydrogen hub.

*'In steam-methane reforming, methane reacts with steam under 3–25 bar pressure (1 bar = 14.5 psi) in the presence of a catalyst to produce **hydrogen, carbon monoxide, and a relatively small amount of carbon dioxide**. Steam reforming is endothermic—that is, heat must be supplied to the process for the reaction to proceed.'*

Per the US Dept of Energy: [Hydrogen Production: Natural Gas Reforming](#)

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/26092023/appalachia-hydrogen-hub-benefits-disputed/>

<https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/hydrogen/use-of-hydrogen.php>

<https://mountainstatespotlight.org/2023/09/26/hydrogen-hubs-west-virginia/>

<https://ohiorivervalleyinstitute.org/>

[Hydrogen: A Clean, Flexible Energy Carrier](#)

Health Care Report

Betty Barrett

CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program), provides health insurance for low income children. Medicaid, which is health insurance for low income families, was expanded during the pandemic to cover more low income people who had not been eligible before, a great benefit to families and children. Now that the pandemic is mostly over, Medicaid is planned to be cut back to previous levels. When the

families that have difficulty responding to bureaucratic requirements to prove eligibility for both Medicaid and CHIP, such as lack of transportation, lack of a stable address to receive notices, no telephone, and more, the result is reduced Medicaid for more families. Poor families cannot afford health insurance, and Medicaid is their only resource for access to health care. Ending eligibility for Medicaid and CHIP because of procedural errors, estimated at 24% of recipients, results in greater poverty for children and families.



Once again the child poverty rate in West Virginia has skyrocketed, now according to Kids Count, to 25%. It had dropped to 20.7% in 2021 before and during the pandemic, due to many important factors, including increased Medicaid.

In addition, there was a new and expanded child care tax benefit that has since been eliminated by Congress, which added a \$300 monthly cash payment for eligible children. Studies proved this extra money families could spend as they needed was reducing the child poverty level. Advocates who had been proposing that cash payments controlled by the recipient families would have a positive effect were encouraged, but the benefit was unfortunately short-lived.

Second, childcare costs were drastically increasing, because of inflation, and because of the needs of childcare workers for a livable wage. This made it more difficult for a caregiver parent to work, because these costs became unaffordable. It is no wonder so many women in West Virginia are not employed.

Members of Congress, including those representing West Virginia, need to be convinced of the benefits of the childcare tax credit and expanded Medicaid. This is an area where members of our League need to advocate for families and children.



The WV Freedom Caucus: Freedom from or Freedom to?

[Nyoka Baker Chapman](#)

We have all heard of the Freedom Caucus, [Freedom Caucus - Wikipedia](#), yes, those members of congress who signed on in support of overturning certification of the presidential election in 2020, among other things, and appear to represent a party within a party. These are the same folks that are currently battling for the government to pull back funds already allocated from passed legislation in the current debt ceiling negotiations. This group is now openly coalescing at the state level in WV and creating their own block within our Republican dominated legislature.

Delegate Geoff Foster of Putnam County, [wvlegislature.gov/House/lawmaker.cfm?member=Delegate Foster](http://wvlegislature.gov/House/lawmaker.cfm?member=DelegateFoster) is the Chair of the newly founded WV Freedom Caucus. Their mission statement can be found at this link per WV Metro News. [West Virginia INITIAL-PRESS-RELEASE - 14 Sep 2023 - DocumentCloud](#)

One would imagine that Freedom would mean what it says. That freedom would embrace diversity, allow choice, and promote liberty and justice for all. On the verge of a new Millenium there can be no peddling backwards to restrict hard won rights for women and advancements toward equality for all. An unshackled state of being would mean the freedom to be safe from guns in public places; the freedom to choose the best time to start a family; freedom from autocratic government control over universal healthcare availability and the suppression of teaching facts and truth in our schools; as well as freedom from policies that have opposed EPA supremacy and allowed an increase in harm to the health and welfare of WV citizens, particularly children and the unborn.

Freedom is a beautiful word, the light of our evolving democracy. When the word is kidnapped to represent the opposite that is irony indeed. Without checks and balances to protect our fundamental rights to freedom our liberty becomes a pathless land.

<https://www.shalepalwv.org/shale-resources/for-municipal-officials/>

See **Health Impacts** and note the available articles under that heading as they relate to fracking and public health.

Membership

Marcia Daoust

The LWV of the Huntington Area's Membership Committee is seeking volunteers to help improve communication with our members. We also need ideas

on how we can attract more concerned voters to join the League and work with us to strengthen voting rights, democracy, and other League positions.

Please contact Marcia Daoust at gmardaoust@gmail.com if you have time and interest in participating on this committee or in any of our local League activities.

We welcome your suggestions.



You're Invited

League of Women Voters of the
Huntington Area
Board of Directors Meeting

1401 Sixth Avenue, Huntington, WV

Tuesday, October 17, 2023
4:00 p.m.