



HOUSTON PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

March 16, 2017 Cohen House, Rice University

At 7.05 pm, President Pat Hughes called to order the Regular Meeting.

Membership Secretary Evelyn Keyes announced the new nomination process for selecting officers for election in April. She reviewed job responsibilities and encouraged active member participation.

After dinner, Aimee Mobley Turney as President of the League of Women Voters of the Houston area spoke to us about the Houston Area League's history and current activities. A non-partisan political organization, it encourages informed and active citizen participation in government, works to increase public understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and issues advocacy as explained in its mission statement, <http://lwv.org/content/mission-statement-and-core-values>. League members have included men since the 1970s.

Ms. Turney showed us images of League pioneers, and told us some of the League's history. It was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920, during the National American Woman Suffrage Association's convention six months before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified – the amendment that finally 'gave' U.S. women, not quite 100 years ago, the right to vote in national US elections. At that time, Texas women already had the right to vote, but only in primary elections.

The Houston Area League's current board is comprised of members 1/3 of whom lean liberal, 1/3 of whom lean conservative, and 1/3 of whom are in the middle on most issues. It adopt issues advocacy positions based on membership votes at Annual Meeting. Its current top three legislative issues are (1) education, (2) health care, and (3) voting rights. Current activities include, for example:

- Attending naturalization ceremonies and registering over 20,000 new voters annually
- Producing **Public Affairs, Public Access**, a public access TV program that addresses monthly various issues important to Houston voters;
- Producing a non-partisan **Voter's Guide** for each election, inviting candidates to speak for themselves to the issues – with an impressive 90% response rate. Also available online at <http://www.vote411.org>, she said that has not replaced the paper copies
- Keeping open 20 phone lines open on election day, to answer questions about voting requirements and polling locations;
- Undertaking in coordination with the state and national League an issues-study series
- Hosting forums, debates, and innovative events for people interested in the political process.
- Hosting an annual Repast luncheon that honors activists who have dedicated their careers to

For more information about the Houston Area League Ms. Turney directed us to <https://lwvhouston.org/about>, and to the Local History Collection at the Julia Ideson Library, part of the Houston Central Library for more information about its history.