

**WGG Meeting
February 4, 2019**

Women for Good Government held the February 2019 meeting at the Old Quarry Library.

Our guest speakers were **Travis County Democratic House Members** Sheryl Cole, Vikki Goodwin, Donna Howard, Gina Hinojosa and Celia Israel. They talked about some of the issues they will be addressing in this legislative session.

Celia Israel will again work for voter rights including online registration and stopping the disenfranchising of voters. (she says the flawed list of “noncitizen” voters should be taken down or the Texas Secretary of State should resign). She will also be focusing on traffic congestion and public safety.

Gina Hinojosa is beginning her second term. She will be focusing on a healthy community for All (Medicare for all), Education for All, and Democracy and Equality for All. These would include Medicare for all, a Lie and Try gun bill, requiring charter schools to take all students rather than cherry-picking, and requiring a polling place on every public college campus.

Sheryl Cole will be working on the Ways and Means Committee, Redistricting Committee and County Affairs. She is also working on Rosie’s Law which would allow Medicaid to pay for abortion and reproductive rights; and decriminalizing marijuana.

Donna Howard is very excited about the 12 new Democrats in the Texas House. She wants us all to work on voters staying connected and engaged. She will be focusing on Appropriations; higher education; school finance; full day pre-k; and the foster care system.

Vikki Goodwin will be working on public education including getting the message out that our property taxes are an investment in our children and communities and school finance reform. She has filed a bill that would require a person finance literacy course for all high school students. She also has filled a bill allowing public universities for decide if it allows guns on campus. She hopes to get safe gun storage legislation passed. She is on the Homeland Security Committee.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What are the advantages of online voter registration?

A: A state run system would be more accurate, efficient and state money

Q: Will you be able to work with the new Speaker?

A: Cautiously optimistic

Q: How likely is it the Secretary of State will resign?

A: Remains to be seen

Q: Can we fix the damage done by gerrymandering?

A: ... Working on it but will take time and more representatives

Q: Where are we with a statewide complete community count for the 202 Census

A: Sheryl has a meeting today to discuss a and will keep us posted

Q: Are independent school districts best?

A: Gina - there are different reasons for different independent districts – this speaks to equity in education which we need to address

Sheryl pointed out that she has very challenged schools in her district

Donna – pointed out that we also need to address the parallel funding of charters and public schools – charters get 100% funding per student from the state while public only get ~1/3 per student from the state. The state must maintain 50% of public education

Q: What is something the public can do to get online voter registration?

A: Celia recommends Texas Civil Rights Commission

Q: Any plans for Medicaid expansion?

A: Celia - there has been a bill filed to take it to the voters.

Q: Please require high school students to take a on Voter-centric Civics course.

A: Point well made the question is how to go about it

Q: What can we do today?

A: + stay informed

+ support Representatives

+ work on legislation (postcards, etc)

+ testify before Board of Elections

+ be careful not to create wedge issues within the party during primaries

Q: Any chance to lower voting age to 16?

A: Not likely but there is a bill to allowing 17year olds who will be 18 by the General election in November to vote in the Primaries early in the year.

