

## **League of Women Voters of Henderson County Honors Two**

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Two women were recognized for their service to democracy during the League of Women Voters of Henderson County's annual gala Friday afternoon.

The league hosted its event at the Highland Lake Inn, where the topic of congressional redistricting was discussed and two community leaders were recognized.

Taylor Calloway, a recent graduate of North Henderson High, was given the student leader award. Calloway did her senior project on voting rights and worked to register voters who participated in the league's candidate forums. Calloway was also part of the league's student membership and also worked the polls during last year's primaries and Election Day.

Calloway, who plans to attend Guilford College, was also given \$500 from the league last week during North's award ceremony.

Jan King, associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction for Henderson County Public Schools, was given the community leader award by the league. King was credited for acting as a liaison between the league and the school system. Through King's guidance, thousands of Henderson County students had the opportunity to participate in mock mid-term elections last year.

"She defines the spirit of cooperation and we're proud to recognize her," said league co-president Nan Jennings.

The gala also featured guest speaker Jane Pinsky, director of the N.C. Coalition of Lobbying and Government Reform, who discussed the congressional redistricting issues going on in the state.

Pinsky, who has worked on redistricting issues since 2008, began by showing the recent history of gerrymandering in the state by both the Democratic and then Republican parties during their leadership of the General Assembly.

But neither party is sure who will be in power in the General Assembly in 2021, prompting a series of redistricting bills to be filed. There are seven redistricting bills that have been filed. Pinsky focused on two bills cosponsored by a number of Republicans: House Bills 69 and 140 — both sponsored by Rep. Chuck McGrady.

House Bill 69, which avoids amending the state constitution, would create a commissioned appointed by elected officials who draw the maps. The General Assembly would then vote on those maps.

House Bill 140 is a constitutional amendment that would have legislative staff draw the maps. An advisory commission would gather input from citizens and then legislators would vote on it.

Neither are perfect bills, Pinsky said, but better than the current situation.

But what will it take to pass redistricting reform? Everyone in North Carolina who wants a change talking to elected officials, she said. While McGrady has been on the forefront of the issue, often taking heat for it from his own party leadership, she said Sen. Chuck Edwards needs a little help. Pinsky encouraged the audience to communicate their concerns with Edwards.

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