



League Links

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters
of the Arlington Heights, Mount Prospect, Buffalo Grove Area
Including Prospect Heights, Wheeling and Elk Grove Village, Illinois

July 2011

Volume 57, Issue 1

Celebrating 55 years of community service

Our Mission Statement/Purpose: The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Date	Time	Event
Wednesday, July 27	7:00 PM	LWVAH Board Meeting Pat Lindner's, 2719 E Bel Aire Dr, Arlington Heights
Thursday, August 4	7:00 PM	"Summer Chat" on Federal Role in Public Education Study Joyce Mark's, 200 W Campbell, Apt 411, Arlington Heights Topics: Historical Perspectives & Early Childhood Education
Wednesday, August 17	7:00 PM	"Summer Chat" on Federal Role in Public Education Study Cathy Duoba's, 582 Bristol, ELK GROVE VILLAGE Topic: Common Core Standards & Assessments
Sunday, August 28	TBD	LWVAH Annual August Picnic Josetta McLaughlin's, 1131 N Dryden, Arlington Heights Details in August League Links
Tuesday, August 30	1:00 PM	LWVAH Board Meeting Pat Lindner's, 2719 E Bel Aire Dr, Arlington Heights
September		LWVAH September Meeting - The Education Study: The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education Details in August League Links
Saturday, September 17		Constitution Day to be observed on Fri, Sept. 16



The Board thanks Connie Weissman

for all she has done while serving on the Board for many years. Her computer expertise is invaluable to our League. Connie established our website and continues to update it regularly. Every May she and her husband Craig publish the Annual Report booklets. Also they file the League's tax form. Although Connie has left the Board, she will continue as our Techno Geek and Webmaster—for which League is very grateful! Members should continue to visit www.lwvah.org.

Thanks are due to Anne Gorman

for her professional work as our bulletin editor last year. Coping with time constraints and the unexpected mishaps that always occur, Anne carried out her editorial duties with grace and skill. She made it possible for the membership to keep abreast of our many local activities and the League's work at other levels during this past year. Thanks again, Anne, hope we see you soon.

Summer/Fall Emphasis on The Education Study: The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education

By Cathy Duoba. Program Chair

Work is starting right now in local Leagues all across the country on the national education study "The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education", one of 2 new studies adopted at the national convention in 2010. For the past year, the LWVUS study committee has been researching the issues covered in the scope of the study and has published several background study papers to help Leaguers discuss the various issues on which we will try to reach consensus in late fall.

The Study Scope: The Education Study scope is broad and includes the following areas under the role of the federal government in public education (preK through grade 12): the history, funding and equity issues which are addressed under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the common core standards/assessments, which are required for many federal grant programs but are nation-wide, but not federally set. The culminating position will address only those issues delineated in the scope.



What about some Summertime Fun at a local "Chat"
August 4th and 17th, see details next page

**League believes in serious study before taking a position,
but that does not mean we can't have some fun while we learn.**

At LWVIL Convention in June, several Leagues suggested that the best way to get an exchange of ideas going among their members would be to hold "Chats" or Book Club-like gatherings on the background papers. Members at last October's discussion of Free Lunch enjoyed it so much, they urged other such meetings. Your Board has adopted this method of "working" on this study.

The idea is to hold "Chats" on each of the Background Papers, two in August and two in September (the Historical Perspectives paper will double up with Early Childhood Education).

Volunteers needed to provide chat locations, call Cathy at 847-437-6956

Watch August bulletin for Sept locations.

Then, Join Us!!

**Education is the keystone to our nation staying vital in the world.
Each of us needs to participate in ensuring our own futures.
And it will be fun, too!**



Background Papers

These papers were written to help Leagues educate members and communities about the Role of the federal government in public education issues. The References/Bibliographies on these papers are great sources for additional study.

These papers can be accessed online at the LWVUS website. Select For Members, then Projects and Programs from the list on left, then the Education Study from the list on right.

[Common Core Standards and Assessments](#) by Janelle L. Rivers, PhD

[Early Childhood Education, Equity and Funding](#) by Pat Aaron

[Funding and Equity Issues](#) by Jean Pierce

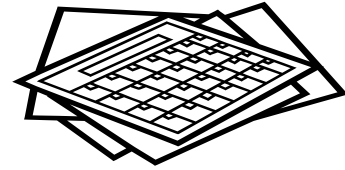
[Legislation and Funding for the Education of Children Who are Disadvantaged](#) by Patricia O'Brien Libutti, PhD

[Role of Federal Government in Public Education: Historical Perspectives](#) by Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins and Margaret Hawkins Hill

Save the Dates

Annual Picnic Sunday, August 28th

Guests being invited: Our State Reps & Senators
Details in August League Links



Summertime Chats August 4th & 17th, 7-9 pm

4th Historical Perspectives & Early Childhood Education, Joyce Mark's, 200 W Campbell, Apt 411, Arl Hts
17th Common Core Standards & Assessments, Cathy Duoba's, 582 Bristol, **ELK GROVE VILLAGE**.

Arrive Early - Start time 7 pm SHARP! So as to finish on time.

DUES ARE PAYABLE NOW

Many of you paid your dues at our Annual Meeting or soon after. However, there are still a significant number of members who have not yet paid for the 2011-2012 year. Please make your checks for \$75.00 payable to League of Women Voters, and mail to Nancy Duel, Treasurer, 115 N Windsor Dr, Arlington Hts, IL 60004. Any questions, contact Nancy at 847-259-3793 or nduel@aol.com.

GIFT CARDS ARE AN EASY WAY TO SUPPORT OUR LEAGUE



Our Gift Card project is such an easy way to raise money for our League without any additional expense to you. You get the full value of the gift cards and League receives a percentage of your payment. Mariano's Fresh Market has recently been added to the list of stores available. A few of you are regular purchasers, but many more participants would be a great boost to our treasury. A new brochure will be in the next League Links. In the meantime, use an old brochure, or contact Nancy Duel at 847-259-3793 or nduel@aol.com.

Member Updates

Joyce Marks and Pat Lindner visited long-time members Rena Trevor and Mary Schlott Repenning in mid-July. Rena is at Manor Care in Rolling Meadows for extended physical therapy and has been laid up since March. Fortunately, her son Jim is here for the summer, from Spain (where he lives). You can phone Rena at Manor Care, 847-397-2400, or try to visit her after 3:30 pm, if possible.

Mary's husband, Harry, passed away in early June, and she is now living in their condo at 110 S Dunton #2A, in Arlington Heights. Her phone number is 847-398-3274. Mary is in a wheelchair and has a caregiver staying with her, but plans eventually to move to the Lutheran Home when the condo and house in Arizona are sold. She, too, would welcome calls, cards and visitors.

Doody Caruso hopes to bring husband, Steve, home from the Moorings by the end of July and is busy rearranging their home to accommodate some of the equipment he will need. Doody's phone number is 847-255-0369. I'm sure we all hope that these League members have a chance to better enjoy the summer, soon!

Pat Lindner, Membership Chair

Report on the LWVIL State Convention June, 2011



By Cathy Duoba, Delegate

As usual, LWVIL Convention 2011 was a mix of the three E's -- Excitement, Education, and Entertainment. The excitement resulted from the lively debates over which new studies to adopt: a study of the **Illinois Pension System** (with NO SCOPE given) and a study of the **Expenditure Side of Our Fiscal Policy** position. The education came from the exchange of ideas with other Leaguers and from the discussions in the **Workshops** which several of our fellow Leaguers attended (Rosemary Krizan, Fay Michaelis, and Judith Royal). LWVUS President **Elizabeth McNamara**, our invigorating keynote speaker, encouraged us to "finish the job" of informing voters started by the suffragette founders of the League. **Mary Lou Ahern**, political reporter for NBC Chicago, with her anecdotal stories of politics in Chicagoland and **Chicago Bar Association Traveling Show** with its satirical parodies (yes, "Blago" did sing an Elvis parody but then so did "Attorney Peter Fitzgerald") supplied the entertainment.

Weighing the fact that study is useless without opportunity for action, I voted against the pension study because no scope was given to explain and direct the study and because, with 2 years needed to reach a position, we would be too late to influence the current pension crisis debates. On the other hand, the League has always been hindered during budget debates in fighting for our positions favoring various state programs/policies because our state fiscal policy position deals only with revenues, not expenditures. While 2/3s of State Leagues with Fiscal Policy Positions have Expenditure Positions, our LWVIL could not even oppose past/future "across the board" budget cuts, unfairly affecting services we support, or speak to proposed "Results-based Budgeting". Unfortunately, this study lost by four votes.

Helpful advice picked up at Convention. Claire McIntyre and Sharon McGuire, conveners and leaders of a "Chat" on the **LWVUS Education Study**, suggested local Leagues share the study with a neighboring League. Marti Stamper, President of LWV Palatine Area, sought me out to endorse sharing the study as we have shared programs in the past. She and I both had considered holding "Book Clubs" to cover the LWVUS study papers, an idea also brought up at the Education Chat. Three local Leagues approached me about having a program on facing.

Results of Convention

1. Re-adoption of all current positions

2. Re-adoption of current Action Foci

Fiscal Policy & Tax Reform	Campaign Finance & Ethics Reform
Redistricting Reform	Immigration (Voter ID & other anti-immigrant laws)
Large-scale Livestock Facilities (requested by Glenview due to their interest in food production)	

3. Studies

Recommended: Drop Recall & Term Limits Study (no volunteers)	Dropped
Study of the Illinois Pension System (NO SCOPE GIVEN)	Adopted

Non-Recommended: Study of the Expenditure Side of our Fiscal Policy Position
2/3s majority needed – Lost by FOUR votes (yea: 60, 64 needed to pass)
Wheaton LWV, in lead, did **extensive** research on the need and study resources.

4. Election of new State Board

President Jan Dorner (Elmhurst); VP for Voter Service Missey Wilhelm (Wheaton); VP for Membership Joni Painter (Bloomington); VP for Issues Laura Kratz (Elmhurst); VP for Communications Hollis Burgess (Glencoe)...for other officers elected or retained, go to www.lwvil.org.

5. PMP remains the same for next 2 years PMP=per member payment (dues). Budget adopted.

6. Direction to Board

Lake Michigan LWV asked LWVIL to consider MichLWV's Ecosystem Position with goal of concurring with it. LWVIL should work to get 2020 LWVUS Convention in Chicago (same place as original in 1920). More downstate media coverage needed about LWVIL activities.

For more information on any of the above, call me at 847-437-6956.

Pre-convention Workshop on Crisis Communications



Cathy Duoba and I attended an absorbing workshop led by Thom Serafin, who was able to share firsthand insights from a long and versatile professional career. Initially, he had been a political correspondent with network radio; later he was press secretary for several U.S. Senate campaigns, as well as a Presidential campaign. His mentor and long-time friend had been the late U.S. Senator Paul Simon. In 1987 he formed Serafin and Associates, a communications management consulting firm in Chicago's River North area.

His talk focused on conducting political forums/discussions in a way that would ensure their running smoothly and as intended. He offered practical and proactive strategies for League events of this kind. I highly recommend them for any program chair to have in her portfolio.

BEFORE AN EVENT:

Establish clear rules and guidelines; a written agreement with managers of political candidates is wise. Consider what potential disruptions might emerge and how you would address them, in order for your program to effectively move on with its goals. Determine your toleration level for disruptions and what your response will be. Don't hesitate to have local law enforcement present if deemed necessary. It's not a bad idea to have symbols of the League's patriotism on view, wearing of a flag pin or the flag upfront, in case a cohort of attendees determines to challenge the League in that regard. An important self-protective device is for the League to video-record any "hot button" program, should questions arise later. With technology being what it is today, it has become almost impossible to restrict audience picture-taking or filming. Serafin suggested that it may be advantageous to invite an audience to photograph or film a program, as it might expand favorable public recognition! It's assumed this invitation wouldn't go out for a "hot button" presentation!

DURING AN EVENT:

Make clear to an audience or debaters from the start what the purpose of your program is and the standards you hold as to fairness and politeness. With some circumstances, a moderator that is standing and mobile, better conveys a sense of active focus and control over things. Someone may call for reshaping your program, such as insisting on everyone singing the Star-Spangled Banner. "Reposition yourself. Enlarge the context." was the major piece of advice Serafin offered for these situations. [As I understand it~~ seize this moment for making the League look good, turn the tables, include the audience in decisions, make the divergent path your path if within reason.] If time would allow, act enthusiastic and ask the petitioner to lead the singing! Put them on the spot! If time is limited, ask the audience for their choice as to whether to sing or get on with the program. All this requires fast thinking on one's feet! Address disruptive behavior in stages~~ bang gavel, stand, call on offender to cease, have escorts usher him or her out. Men with badges usually provide needed clout! As a "hook" for newcomers and a reminder for regulars, mention when closing, upcoming happenings on the League schedule.

FOLLOWING AN EVENT:

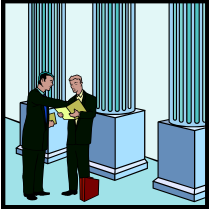
Have a template press release ready to put out immediately as to the positive features of an event. Call on non members in audience to voice their satisfaction. Get out in front of potentially explosive or perhaps embarrassing issues by contacting the media. Be sure to respond whenever the League is attacked. "A charge unanswered is a charge believed," is a quote Serafin often shares.



SERAFIN'S SPECIAL WORD TO THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS:

The League has a "brand"~~ a "reputation" that should be called on with confidence! It's extremely important for each League to have media and website persons, who are ready to release information as soon as possible to the public about the League and its activities. Making information known is key in today's high-communication world.

Fay Michaelis



Pre-convention Workshop on How to Lobby

Judith Royal and I attended this dynamic workshop on How to Lobby, led by Linda Sullivan. Ms. Sullivan had taught U.S. history at Lyons High School in Lombard until her retirement. She has been engaged with the Sierra Club, as well as being active with the League of Women Voters~~ whose members she calls “democracy warriors”.

Beginning in 2005, she worked on developing an active corps of Sierra Club lobbyists. Each person commits to 3 years of “systematic lobbying” directed toward a single, assigned legislator. Focus was on 4 environmental bills per year. The lobbyist would get to know the legislator and the legislator would have a contact person whenever environmental legislation questions arose. [Consider in Illinois, a legislator has around 5,000 bills to evaluate yearly.] Linda emphasized such lobbyists representing citizen groups are crucial to counter the ubiquitous influence of paid lobbyists. Her Sierra Club approach has proved to be effective and has earned recognition. [Might this be something suitable for the League to try?]

Here are 6 ways in which a legislator might be contacted, given in order of increasing effectiveness:

- 1] organization's click-on e-mail
- 2] personally composed e-mail
- 3] phone call to local or Springfield office
- 4] personally composed letter
- 5] personal visit in Springfield
- 6] personal visit in local office



General tips: If presenting the League's position on a bill, make certain you don't digress into giving your own opinion or those of others. This will set up confusion in the mind of the legislator and be a disservice to the League!

When your organization is promoting a bill, you want to have co-sponsors. The more sponsors, the more strength the bill will have against opposition. Do not hesitate to ask if the legislator is willing to co-sponsor. When you phone a legislator about a bill, an aide is likely to answer the phone. On the federal level, ask to speak to the aide that deals with your particular topic. See if that person provides useful information on the legislator's position. Don't hesitate to ask the legislator to respond to your phone call.

In the Illinois General Assembly, a Senate Bill [SB] continues with its same number when voted on in the House and a House Bill [HB] continues with its same number when voted on in the Senate. A bill dies in the Rules Committee. The fall session is called the “Veto Session”. You can get the Daily Calendar for the House or Senate by going to www.ilga.gov. To learn how your Illinois legislator has voted on a bill, go to www.ilga.gov/legislation/default.asp. Click on Bill Number to get its Status. In the dated list of Actions, go to Third Reading, which will give voting results when clicked on.

Tips for that influential office visit: It's recommended to go in a group of 2 or 3 persons. One person can discuss the bill; one can take notes, making sure things are understood; one can keep the conversation focused. Arrive dressed suitably and with a positive attitude. Do not guess as to facts related to a bill. If you don't know the answer, say so and commit to getting the answer. Over time attempt to discern what your legislator's viewpoint and interests are. Approach your topic accordingly.

You can make an appointment for a legislative visit by phone or by going into the local office. In preparation for your visit, study the bill and write notes about what you want to cover. You may consider e-mailing the legislator your topic and agenda, along with contact information. On the day before, call to confirm your appointment~~ typically 1/2 hour is allotted. On the morning of the visit, check out your bill's chief sponsor[s] and co-sponsors at www.ilga.gov. Your legislator might be listed and you can thank him or her for the alliance!

After the visit, it's advisable to go out for coffee with your team so you can compare observations. Send a thank you note to the legislator. Summarize the visit in writing to share it with your League members.

Fay Michaelis

Roll Call at LWVIL Convention 2011

As each local League was introduced at the podium, they were asked to list three distinguishing things
Here are our League's "Three Things".

LWV AHMPBG Area: This year our members worked on three local Action campaigns

1. Testifying and lobbying against the expansion of gambling as a source of additional revenue for Arlington Heights and Illinois: specifically installing slot machines at Arlington Park.
2. Lobbying for abolition of the death penalty through letters, calls, and a legislator meeting with a "targeted" local state representative. That representative credited his local League's arguments with swaying his vote to "Yes".
3. But we are most proud of our League's efforts on behalf of a proposed development of supportive housing for persons with mental illness. For over a year, we worked with the North and Northwest Suburban Task Force to build community support and sponsored three meetings to encourage and coordinate the efforts of community organizations. For our efforts, last October, we were given the 2010 Friend of NAMI award by NAMI Illinois (National Alliance on Mental Illness).

Excerpt from [Splash!](#)

The Newsletter of the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters

Federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Improving the Health of Lake Michigan

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is a 5-year commitment from the Obama Administration to restore the health of the Great Lakes. Activities include cleaning up toxic contaminants and areas of concern; combating invasive species, protecting watersheds from polluted run-off, and restoring wetlands and other habitats.

Projects are underway throughout the Great Lakes region.

Find a project near you by visiting <http://www.glri.us>.

Attention all LWV members in Cook County:

Please make your reservation by July 25 for the next LWVCC Lunch and Learn and invite your friends and colleagues to attend as well.

LUNCH & LEARN MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 11:30 am to 1 pm

Featuring Kurt **Summers**

Chief of Staff to Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle

**"It's a New Day in Cook County:
What's Been Accomplished and What's Coming"**

North Café, DePaul University Center, 11th floor

1 E Jackson (corner of State Street and Jackson), Chicago

(walk through the Barnes & Noble store to reach the elevators to the 11th floor)

Cost: \$30 per person (includes a buffet salad luncheon)

Lunch & Learn is a series of fundraising luncheons featuring speakers talking about different aspects of Cook County government. Proceeds benefit The League of Women Voters of Cook County.

Reservations due by Monday, July 25. Questions? Call Pris Mims at 312-861-0166

LWV of Cook County Annual Meeting Report

Our own Karen Hribar elected Vice President, LWVCC

The League continues to maintain an active Observer Corps attending County Board meetings, budget meetings, Health and Hospital Service and Forest Preserve meetings, and post reports on the League web site, www.cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org. Vice-President Karin Hribar is seeking additional volunteers to observe, in part because of the need to observe some of the key Board committee meetings.

Voter Service continued to work actively on voter education, providing candidate information on line, and working with the County Clerk on voter audits. League officers maintained a program of Action and Advocacy, meeting with County Commissioners and staff, continuing efforts to have county staff put the Organizational Chart developed in a special project posted on the County web site, and meeting with Toni Preckwinkle to present concerns about Board meeting procedures, the growing use of Special Purpose Funds, and our common interest in an open and accountable government process. The four interest groups remain active in looking into important county issues and possible issues for advocacy:

Join one of LWVCC's Interest Groups

All of the Interest Groups can use more volunteers. So if you have an interest in these areas, contact the coordinators and get involved. It is interesting and fun too.

Structure and Budget of Cook County

Next Meeting - Thursday, July 14, 10:00 am Cosi Restaurant at Franklin and Washington Sts., Chicago.
Meeting Agenda - Observing Committees of Cook County Board, Redistricting of Cook County Commissioner Districts, anything of interest from the CC Board meeting of July 12th, other issues of interest.

For more information contact Karin Hribar at khribar@comcast.net

Juvenile Justice

Next Meeting - Saturday, July 16 at 10 am at LWVIL office, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1150, Chicago.
Meeting Agenda - To include discussion of information from the Jane Addams Foundation concerning the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center and transparency and accessibility of data from the court system and other topics pertaining to juvenile justice in Cook County.

For more information contact Meredith Schilsky at maschilsky@gmail.com

Cook County Health and Hospitals System

Next Meeting - TBD - sometime in August
Group continues to monitor the actions of the independent HHS Board with attention focused on execution of the Strategic Plan that was adopted by the HHS Board a year ago.

For more information contact Cynthia Schilsky at cschilsky@comcast.net

Forest Preserve District

Observes Cook County FPD Board Meetings and has met afterwards for discussion of areas of interest.

For more information contact Henrietta Saunders at handandboys@comcast.net

LWVUS ADVOCACY

LEAGUE ACTION FOCUSES ON THE VOTER & THE POWER OF THE VOTE



LWVUS President and the League Founders' Challenge

In numerous "Updates" and as keynote speaker at our own LWVIL Convention 2011, LWVUS Pres Elizabeth McNamara has been sounding our Founders' challenge at the first national LWVUS Convention: Organizing to "finish the job" since having the right to vote means nothing unless the voter is educated on how to cast an informed vote. "Get visible...organize registration drives... [and] continue to work together to fight proposed new laws that will suppress the vote. In closing, I urge Leagues to continue to focus on the voter and the power of the vote. I cannot overemphasize the importance of **(1) the power of an informed electorate in today's politics and (2) the necessity of follow-thru to hold elected representatives to their campaign promises.**"

Voter Protection Legislative Update

The Score: Voter ID 6, Voters Rights 10!

Informed, active, and organized voter rights advocates can stem the tide

Hats off to all the state leagues that have done an outstanding job fighting for voter protection across the country. The advocacy efforts of LWV and coalition partners have resulted in eight states defeating **photo identification legislation** (CO, IA, MT, NM, VA, ME, MN* and MO*) and five states enacting new photo ID legislation (KS*, FL, SC, TN, TX and WI). The most immediate threats at this time include passage of voter ID in PA and OH. [*Kansas's law also includes a proof of citizenship requirement as a pre-requisite to registering to vote (to begin in 2013). Missouri's legislation puts a constitutional amendment on the ballot in November 2012, asking voters if Missouri should require a photo ID to vote; however, Missouri Governor Nixon vetoed enacting legislation in June 2011. A constitutional amendment may also appear on Minnesota's ballot in November 2012.] .

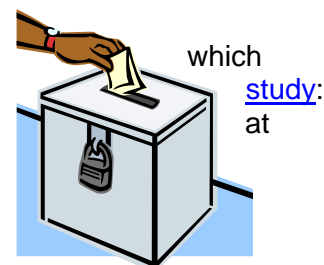
Voter ID bills were vetoed by the governors of North Carolina, Minnesota, and New Hampshire, making a total of 10 states where photo ID bills have been defeated. Having claimed victory on the ID front earlier, the LWV of Maine has now launched a fight against the [repeal of same-day registration](#).

In an unprecedented assault on democracy, the new laws include: requiring photo ID to vote (some of the most restrictive ever passed); burdensome and unreasonable **restrictions on voter registration drives** (LWV of Florida has been forced to stop all voter registration campaigns because the legal and financial risks are too high); **shortening early voting periods**; and **increasing residency requirements** that make it virtually impossible for out of state college students to vote. In one state, student ID's are not acceptable Voter ID, but a gun license is!

The national League and state Leagues across the country will continue to work together with coalitions against proposed new laws that will **suppress the vote**. To learn more about the Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP) project go to: www.lwv.org/pavp For ongoing discussions and news from state Leagues, visit our [Facebook page](#).

VOTER SUPPRESSION & MINORITY RIGHTS

One fundamental League argument against photo ID is that it erects barriers to voting disproportionately affect minority populations. The LWVUS suggests reading [this new](http://latinodecisions.wordpress.com/2011/05/24/the-disproportionate-impact-of-stringent-voter-id-laws/) “Does Access to Required Forms of Identification Vary across the Population?” available <http://latinodecisions.wordpress.com/2011/05/24/the-disproportionate-impact-of-stringent-voter-id-laws/>



The Washington Post, PostOpinions Letter to the Editor
“A nationwide assault on voting rights”

Published: June 2011

The June 5 news article “[La. redistricting seen as a crucial test](#)” missed a crucial point: what our democracy would look like without the critical protections afforded by the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

By all accounts, a nationwide assault on voters’ rights is underway. State laws are being passed at an alarming rate that make it harder for millions of eligible voters to cast ballots by shortening early-voting periods, requiring photo IDs and erecting burdensome barriers to voter registration efforts. At the same time, those in power have made clear attempts to manipulate the redistricting process specifically to shortchange minority voters. Last week, the Texas Senate passed a Congressional redistricting plan that would leave minority voters with less representation, despite the fact that 90 percent of that state’s population growth over the past decade is in minority communities.

Clearly, we still need processes to ensure that minority voting rights are protected, and the Voting Rights Act has proved an effective vehicle for doing so time and time again. This landmark law remains one of the most significant protections to help us realize our vision of a truly representative democracy.

Elisabeth MacNamara, Washington

The writer is president of the League of Women Voters of the United States.



Redistricting: Mapping the Next Ten Years



Our redistricting work continues, working closely with stakeholders in nine states — California, Florida, Texas, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri, North Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia — to make sure the process is transparent and has adequate public input. Several states’ redistricting maps will be finalized in the coming weeks, and Leagues are working full time to ensure their views are heard.

TX League Takes Statewide Action on Redistricting With its four newly allotted Congressional seats, resulting from the 2010 Census, Texas is one of the most active redistricting states. The LWV of Texas is working vigorously to urge lawmakers to draw representative districts in a transparent manner. It recently [testified](#) before committees in the House and Senate regarding draft plans and held multiple statewide educational forums bringing together civil rights groups, community leaders and voters to discuss how new district lines should be drawn

Florida League, Partners Cry Foul on Redistricting Process In June, the League and its partners in the Fair Districts Florida coalition [sent a letter](#) to legislative leaders expressing deep concerns about the redistricting timeline, lack of transparency and public input, as well as [continued efforts to oppose the landmark amendments overwhelmingly passed by voters last year](#). Their letter, which gained a large amount of [high-profile press coverage](#), comes as legislators embark on 26 public hearings across the state. Local Florida Leagues will attend and testify at these meetings throughout the summer.

California Redistricting Maps Released The LWV of California was a key force behind the 2008 ballot initiative creating [the independent Citizens Redistricting Commission](#) and has collaborated with diverse [partners](#) to make the new process open and transparent, [pointing out](#) the importance of the criteria for drawing maps set by the initiative. After 23 hearings around the state and thousands of public comments, the Commission released its [first draft maps](#) to a flurry of media attention on June 10. The California League is actively monitoring commission hearings and [commenting](#) on Voting Rights Act considerations. Local Leagues have produced materials and held outreach programs to facilitate community participation in both local and state redistricting.



LWVUS Efforts to Protect the Clean Air Act

Opposes shift in debate from health threat to economic issues

ACTION ALERT: Tell the President You Don't Want to Breathe Smog

Take action now at (lww.org). Tell President Obama to fight for a strong smog standard to protect the health of all Americans, including those who are most vulnerable to air pollution -- our children and seniors.

The League's efforts earlier this month to defend the Clean Air Act by calling attention to votes by Senator Scott Brown (R-MA) and Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO) that blocked new air pollution standards have made an impact on this vital public health issue and raised the importance of protecting clean air.

The [accountability ads](#) aired for two weeks, calling on Senators to "protect the people, not the polluters." The New York Times published [a story](#) noting the impact of our accountability ads on this vital issue. "League leaders were motivated by what they perceived as a shift from treating air pollution as a health threat to one based more on the economic impact of new rules."

Among letters-to-the-editor published soon after the ads were aired is one from [Dr. Douglas C. Johnson, a Massachusetts pulmonary physician](#), to *The Boston Herald*: "...LWV should be applauded for asking that Brown protect the people, not the polluters, and for presenting the truth about his disregard for the health of 134,000 Massachusetts children with asthma." The *Boston Globe* published a [front-page article quoting League President Elisabeth MacNamara and Board members](#). More recently, a [letter was sent to Senator Scott Brown](#) signed by numerous environmental and public health organizations and individuals asking him to stop changing the subject from clean air and the health of Americans. These same concerns have been echoed through [op-eds](#), [letters to the editor](#) and [blogs](#).

LWVUS on Supreme Court Ruling re Public Campaign Financing



In a statement released June 27th, the League of Women Voters expressed profound disappointment at the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *McComish v. Bennett*. The Supreme Court once again ruled that speech in this country is not free, at least not during elections. The majority opinion in [McComish v. Bennett](#) follows a tortured route to the conclusion that provisions in the Arizona Clean Elections law that trigger matching funds for candidates facing opponents with bags of private money were unconstitutional. Rather than upholding the triggers as a means of expanding electoral speech, the majority opinion held that the matching funds unfairly penalized the candidate with the most bucks.

McComish v. Bennett is a Poorly Reasoned Decision

League President MacNamara declared, "...we see another poorly reasoned decision by the Supreme Court on campaign finance, one that is untethered to the Constitution. While the *McComish* decision is another blow by this Court against clean elections, public financing itself has not been put in jeopardy."

Earlier this year, the League (with seven other public interest groups) filed [an amicus brief](#), basing its arguments primarily on the legal principles of *Buckley v. Valeo*, the decades-old precedent upholding campaign finance reform efforts. According to the brief, "the legal principles set forth in *Buckley* in its review of the presidential system govern this Court's review of the challenged provisions and compel the conclusion that the trigger provisions of Arizona's Citizens' Clean Elections Act ("Act") are constitutional."

"The League believes in the need for campaign finance reform and has fought for decades in support of public financing systems," concluded MacNamara. "The Court's watering down of protections against corruption in our elections is profoundly disappointing. We will continue to fight for public financing of elections because it protects the very integrity of our democratic form of government."



See also articles on the Assault on Voting Rights, Redistricting, Supreme Court, and Clean Air Defense

Budget and Health Care Defense

The League and coalition partners sent a [letter to Senators](#) urging them to consider a number of important principles as discussions on the debt ceiling and FY 2012 budget continue.

HR 672 (to terminate the federal Election Assistance Commission) Defeated!

On a 235-185 vote, the House defeated a motion to suspend the rules and pass HR 672. Under suspension a 2/3 vote was required for passage. A day earlier, the League publicly urged the House to oppose HR 672 and not to terminate the Election Assistance Commission. Also, our LWV Lobby Corps contacted select Representatives' offices, urging them to defeat the motion.

NEWS FROM LWVIL

See also [Convention 2011 & Workshops Reports](#)



Governor Quinn Signs Death Penalty Abolition into Law!

Illinois joins the ranks of New Jersey, New Mexico and New York, becoming the 16th state without the death penalty and the fourth to abolish it in recent years. The sentences of the men who were on death row have been commuted to life in prison.

Clean Air and Water: The LWVIL testified Tuesday, May 24, at an EPA Public Hearing held in Chicago on a National Standard for Mercury Pollution from Power Plants. LWVIL Issues Specialists Laura Kratz and Judy Johnston wrote and provided testimony in defense of clean air and water at this hearing.

Redistricting: Illinois Senate and House Democrats have released their proposed maps of General Assembly districts. Public hearings on these maps have now concluded. View the proposed maps and LWVIL redistricting campaign at <http://www.lwvil.org/redistricting.asp>.

Court Watching in Cook County Courts: Eleven of the thirteen court watchers in Cook County are League-trained. Their work is of a very high caliber; however, more volunteers are needed. They will be asked to attend a brief orientation session and commit to a minimum amount of court-watching time, perhaps only four mornings in a courtroom. Interested? Contact Michelle Jordan at issues@lwvil.org.

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