



League Links

LWV AH-MP-BG Area

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

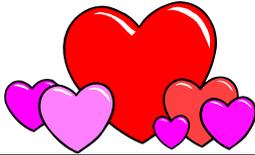
We are online at: <http://www.lwvah.org>

February 2013

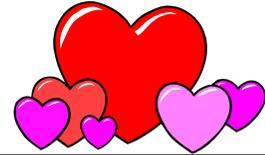
Volume 58, Issue 6

Serving our communities since 1955

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.



ACTIVITY CALENDAR



Date	Time	Event
February Black History Month, Women's Heart Health month		
Thursday, February 14		The League of Women Voters 93 rd Birthday
Thursday, February 21	6:15 Doors open 6:30 Pizza 7:30 Program	LWVAH-MP-BG Meeting: Pizza and Hot Topics, Planning for the Future, Local and State Program Priorities. \$5 for pizza. Members only.
Monday, February 25	7 PM	Board meeting at 7 PM at Nancy Duel's home. Members invited.
Thursday, February 28		First day of any voter registration.
March Women's History Month		
March 10-16		Sunshine Week. Open Government Is Good Government. www.sunshineweek.org
Tuesday, March 12		Last day for registration by Deputy Voter Registrar.
Wednesday, March 13		Grace period registration and grace period voting starts
Saturday, March 16	9:30 AM – noon	LWV AH-MP-BG presents candidate forum at Arlington Heights Village Hall, 3 rd floor, 33 South Arlington Heights Road.
Monday, March 18		Supreme Court hears oral arguments in the Arizona case challenging the National Voter Registration Act.
Thursday, March 21	7 PM Doors open 7:30 LWV program.	Details to be announced.
Monday, March 25		Early voting starts.
Saturday, April 6		Last day for grace period registration and grace period voting.
Saturday, April 6		Last day of early voting.
Tuesday, April 9		General Election.

The League of Women Voters gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the Horner Group in providing all the printing, postage and mailing services for our bulletins.



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A MESSAGE FROM THE LWVUS PRESIDENT

As January came to an end, the word 'change' came to mind in more than just the sense that we are changing from one month to another. The inauguration and various anniversaries remind us of the important changes that many of us have seen in our lifetimes and the changes that we would like to see for the future.

This month we celebrated the 40th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* which, along with *Griswold v. Connecticut*, recognized a woman's right to control her own body. As we celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, we remembered the vast change that the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act brought to the country. We look forward in the next few weeks to celebrating our own birthday and remembering the importance of women's voices in our electorate.

The recent fights to preserve the changes that we achieved in the last century, reminds us that making democracy work is an ongoing obligation that we all have. For many of us, as our state legislatures get back to work and the focus of our work shifts from the presidential election to state and local elections, the work to keep our democratic processes open and accessible to all continues.

The LWVUS Board met and change was very much on our minds. What can we do, at the national level, to change the conversation here in the Capitol? What can we do to support our grassroots in finishing the fight for open and accessible elections? What can we do to insure that the League of Women Voters remains a force for change and force to be reckoned with now and into the future?

Change can be good, but it is always hard and it is up to us to do the hard work for good change.

In League,

LWVUS Legislative Priorities for 2013

The LWVUS Board established the following as Legislative Priorities for 2013:

Money in Politics and the many facets of Election Reform.

In addition, the following were included as a second tier of focus for 2013:

Climate Change, Gun Safety and Immigration.

Other issues, such as Health Care, Defense and Budget/Taxes may be acted on as opportunities arise for League action, if they do not interfere with action on an LWVUS priority, and it appears the LWVUS can make an impact.

LWVAH-MP-BG BOARD MEMBERS 2012-2013

Position/Portfolio	Name	Phone	E-mail
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By-Laws Committee Chair	Jean Vanderlinde	847-537-6346	hjvdl@mc.net
League Geek	Connie Weissman	847-870-7719	connie_weissman@rush.edu

Hot Pizza, Hot Topics

Planning for the Future: Local and State Program Priorities



Bring your ideas! Bring your appetite!

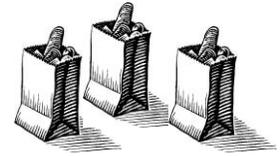
Members' Opinions Needed, February 21, at Arlington Heights Historical Society

Help decide the program priorities for our local League and LWVIL. Participate in open discussion about what you want our League to be doing and what you want LWVIL to consider when decisions are made at LWVIL Convention in June 2013. Share your ideas. Here are a few topics to get your thoughts started: **Gun Violence, Campaign Finance Reform, Pensions, Immigration, Fracking, Lake Michigan Concerns, Slot Machines at Arlington Park.** What are your thoughts?

Doors open 6:15, Pizza 6:30, Discussion at 7:30. \$5.00 for Pizza.

Reservations by February 19 to Nancy Duel at 847-259-3793 or nduel@aol.com.

Food Drive at February Meeting



Bad News Factoid: Because of last summer's drought, there were very little surplus agricultural products for the federal government to buy as part of its agricultural assistance efforts. That means federal government contributions to local food pantries are way, way down.

Our help is needed more than ever to get these pantries through the late winter/spring months. The non-perishable foods and personal hygiene products that you bring to our February meeting will be donated to the CEDA-NW food pantry. You've been very generous in the past, please keep it up!



By

January Program Recap and Follow-up

The Sequester Fiscal Battle

Cathy Duoba

At the January Rev. M. L. King Commemorative Program we discussed the LWVUS call for **a new direction to our nation's fiscal debate on how we use our resources.**

The League of Women Voters supports a federal fiscal policy that recognizes the importance of a fair tax system, that provides for social needs, and that will carefully manage the deficit and the economy. With graphs and data, we showed how, far from runaway spending, the deficit has been decreasing over the past 4 years and how our tax system exacerbates income inequality because, though the top 10% own 2/3s of our nation's wealth, they pay only 40% of federal taxes.

In the debate over revenue vs spending cuts, we pointed out that the austerity policies adopted in Europe have damaged their economies, increased poverty and unemployment, e.g. Britain now has negative GDP growth and is facing triple-dip recession. We noted that, so far, deficit reduction measures have been 30% new revenue and 70% cuts to discretionary spending, particularly to those programs for low income persons and the working poor. Finally, we showed how both Social Security and Medicare have not been and are not now adding one penny to our current deficits (though there is a future concern for both programs). Other aspects of these issues, as well as various spending cut proposals were also presented.

The article on the Sequester (page 5) is a follow-up to that discussion.

Welcome Our New Member

Welcome to new member Illinois House Representative Elaine Nekritz. She is already a member of the Glenview League, but sent in dues to our League as well because she wants to get acquainted with people in the western part of her new district. She anticipates attending our meetings when her schedule permits.

LOCAL ELECTIONS

Candidate Forums and Sunshine Week

By Judith O. Royal

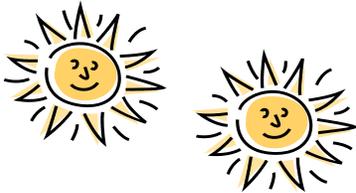
Election time again! Yeah, I know, it seems like we voted not long ago. Nonetheless, the **April 9 Election** for local races is around the corner. Early voting starts on **March 25**. Since December your League's Voter Service Committee has been discussing plans for April Elections. In fact, the League's webmaster, Connie Weisman received in November 2012 an inquiry about our spring candidate forum from a candidate-hopeful. (His petition was challenged; he is not on a ballot this time.)

Circle **Saturday, March 16**, on your calendar. LWV Arlington Heights-Mount Prospect-Buffalo Grove will present a candidate forum at the Arlington Heights Village Hall at 9:30 AM. Candidates running for the following offices will be invited to participate: Mayor—3 candidates, Village Trustee—5 candidates for 4 openings, and AH Memorial Library Board—4 candidates for 2 openings. These races are nonpartisan. Uncontested races will not be included. It will be a full morning!

Volunteers are needed NOW! To make posters to announce the candidate event. For time-keepers during the event. To sort questions for the moderator on the day of the event. And volunteers to make an exhibit for the hall to publicize League. This is a great opportunity to show the voters which issues the League is focusing on. Call Judith Royal, 847-259-5838, to offer your invaluable services.

In particular an exhibit about Sunshine Week would be a wonderful addition and appropriate since Sunshine Week is from March 10-16 this year! During the last year or so there are several examples of deliberate lack of "sunshine" or transparency in some state legislatures. They voted at short notice or during the night without discussion of an issue, without disclosing their intentions to the minority party to vote on an issue, and without the public's awareness that laws to limit rights and institute policies that had been declared of no interest to the controlling party. Google "Sunshine Week" and you will find helpful sources. Visit www.sunshineweek.org/.

Also, League member Shannon Silverman has asked the League to help with a candidate forum for 5 candidates running for 4 openings on the School Board of District 25. No date has been chosen yet. Shannon is Co-President of Arlington Height Council of PTAs. I hope she will encourage the PTAs to invite our League deputy voter registrars to register voters at the March 8 cultural event.



SUNSHINE WEEK

Open Government is Good Government

By Judith O. Royal

Sunshine Week is a national initiative to educate the public about the importance of open government and the dangers of excessive and unnecessary secrecy. It was established in March 2005. Sunshine Week occurs each year in mid-March, coinciding with James Madison's birthday and National Freedom of Information Day on March 16. This year's theme is "Open Government is Good Government."

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), enacted in 1966, formally established a presumption that records held by the government (with some specific exemptions) are accessible to the people. However, additional polling data indicates that most Americans continue to view our government as secretive.

A Sunshine Week exhibit could be a good, short-term winter project for an industrious League member. She could find ways to urge citizens and civic organizations to press state and local officials to find meaningful ways to participate in Sunshine Week and demonstrate they are committed to true transparency in government.

Haste Makes Waste: The Sequester

By Cathy Duoba



How many times did your grandma admonish you with this phrase "Congress needs a grandma!"? As we discussed at our January meeting, the Beltway "wisdom" is that we need to make drastic spending cuts...right now...to tame runaway deficits! However, both public opinion and economists do not agree. All polls show the first priority of Americans is jobs, jobs, and jobs.

Most economists cry out that such cuts would seriously damage our fragile economy. Just look at Spain, Italy, and Great Britain (whose conservative government embraced austerity cuts and took Britain's GDP to a negative growth rate and a triple dip recession). The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report issued February 5 states that the drastic, across-the-board sequester budget cuts would slash Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth IN HALF and raise unemployment (because the cuts produce job losses and a 1.something% GDP growth rate cannot keep up with normal growth of the job market. Add in the recent repeal of the payroll tax holiday (which took \$100 billion away from the spending power of wage earners) and the future of our economy becomes very uncertain. Besides the deficit is already being reduced under President Obama. For example, according to the CBO, the 2012 deficit was \$1.1 trillion, but the 2013 deficit will be \$845 billion.



A Stitch in Time Saves Nine: Sequester Cuts Preventive Programs

As part of the debt limit deal reached in August, 2011, a bipartisan committee was established to find \$1.2 trillion in budget cuts. If the committee failed to agree to specific ways to cut the budget, then a "doomsday" scenario in which the \$1.2 trillion is cut across-the-board to defense and domestic discretionary programs without regard to which programs are more necessary than others would automatically take effect March 1, 2013. The committee failed.

Once again, for the umpteenth time, business and the general public are facing uncertainty and probable economic damage due to a man-made deadline. There will be \$85 billion in cuts by this fall alone. In the name of fiscal responsibility, many programs established to reduce future problems (and costs to remedy the problems) will see \$54.7 billion in cuts for this fiscal year. Your grandma would know this is not only morally indefensible, it is fiscally crazy.

According to Maya Wiley from the Center for Social Inclusion, interviewed on MSNBC February 6, some of the cuts to domestic programs and the number of people affected are:

WIC a supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children
\$539 million in cuts impacting 735,000 women and children (68% of them black or Latino)
Purpose: to prevent future health care costs

Head Start a pre-school educational program for low income children
\$664 million in cuts impacting 93,000 children (67% of them black or Latino)

Repeatedly proven to increase high school graduation rates and future earning power, stabilize communities, and reduce incarceration rates

Title 1 Education Programs - education grants to schools with a high number of low-income children
\$664 million in cuts impacting 1.76 million children (approx. 1 million of them black and Latino)

Pell grants college assistance program, \$60 million in cuts

Also affected: **Education funding for children with learning disabilities, special needs, or living in poverty.**
The Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (in Illinois, IHEAP).
Homeless Assistance funds to help get homeless families back in permanent housing.
Many, many other preventive domestic programs.

We are the richest country in the world and we have fellow-citizens in need. Why are we insisting on drastic cuts starting at an artificial deadline and based on the ideology that the federal government has a "spending problem?" Why not recognize that the deficit is already shrinking, that concentrating on jobs will bring in new revenue (further reducing the deficit), and that taking time to study data and research will allow us to selectively cut in ways that invest in our future and do no harm to our economy? Isn't that the American way?



Update on Gun Violence Prevention

Even if we cannot save every potential victim, common sense and decency say we must do something.

By Cathy Duoba

On January 10, the League sent a letter to Vice President Biden urging him to propose common sense solutions to the gun violence plaguing our nation. The League advocates for measures that will ban assault weapons, place limits on magazine size, close the gun show loophole and mandate annual reporting on gun violence in America. Full text at <http://lwv.org/content/league-sends-letter-vice-president-biden-regarding-gun-control>

During January, a number of bills were introduced in both House and Senate.

Our Senator Mark Kirk joined Senators Chuck Schumer, Joe Manchin, and Tom Coburn in a bipartisan bill to require background checks (USA Today, Jan 30th).

Johns Hopkins University Poll shows 89% (75% NRA members) support for universal background checks.

Other gun safety bills introduced: assault weapons ban (Sen. Diane Feinstein), Magazine limit (Sen. Frank Lautenberg, and Anti-trafficking (Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand). Mark Kelly (Gabby Giffords husband) testified at the Senate hearing that the young girl killed in Tucson was killed with the 13th bullet.

At our January meeting, an announcement was made about needed gun safety reforms that might be overlooked. Nobody (including LWVUS it appears) outside law enforcement seems to know that a “straw buyer” engaged in gun trafficking is only guilty of a *misdemeanor*! Such light sentences discourage district attorneys from prosecuting and encourage gun traffickers. Pretty sure LWVUS will support anti-trafficking.

Our Senator Dick Durbin, as Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights, will hold a hearing on the constitutionality of reasonable gun laws under the Second Amendment.

Update on Immigration Reform

By Cathy Duoba



The hue and cry that we must secure the border before taking any steps toward citizenship for undocumented immigrants is strange when one considers The Facts:

Only 60% of undocumented immigrants “crossed the border”. 40% came legally and overstayed of their visa

The media has pointed out that we have already met most of the benchmarks set by the McCain-Kennedy bill: more miles of fence have been built than originally set (670 miles and the Government Accounting Office says border is 100% monitored, the Border Patrol has 21,00 agents (benchmark was 20,000), and deportations have increased 25% over 3007 (410,000 in 2012, 2 million total by 2014). The budget for border security(\$18B in 2012) is larger than the combined budgets of ALL other federal law enforcement agencies (FBI, ATF, DEA, etc.) More money spent to turn the border into a military zone might be better spent on a tracking system to enforce visa expiration dates (the other 40%) and on work site enforcement. Also, tougher border means professional “coyotes” do the crossings with more dangerous counter-military devices for border patrol to contend with.

Still needed, upgrading of the E-Verify system for accuracy. The President has required all federal agencies and contractors to use E-Verify, but Congress must pass a law to require it be used universally nationwide. Still a 2009 government study of E-Verify effectiveness found the inaccuracy for unauthorized workers is about 54%, due primarily to ID fraud.

Also desperately needed, reform of the broken visa system, which is so convoluted it can take 7 to 28 years to come here legally (according to a chart deliberately made user-friendly by the libertarian magazine, *Reason*, depending on how many “side-corridors” you get delayed in). Common Catch 22: child applies to join parent, but by the time visa granted child is no longer a minor and is disqualified.

The bipartisan plan for comprehensive reform produced by 4 Republican and 4 Democratic Senators (including our Sen. Durbin) almost matches the proposals of President Obama from a speech in spring, 2011. The sticking point appears to be whether the certification that the border is secure by a Commission which includes Governors from SW border states is non-binding or has veto power. That is, does nothing happen toward citizenship until the SW Governors, publicly anti-immigrant, certify security?

FYI: Mexico accounts for only 55-60% of undocumented immigrants. The next largest group is from Latin America (particularly El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Ecuador). Next largest at 15% are the Asians mostly from India, Vietnam, Korea, and China. Next Europe and Canada. Lastly, the Middle East (2%). Source: PEW Hispanic Center.



Why a Graduated Rate Income Tax (GRIT) Amendment? A Breakdown of Illinois' Debt Problem

from Claire Flynn McIntyre. LWVIL

What does Illinois' debt look like for Fiscal Year 2013 (FY 2013) (Budget for July 2012-June 2013)?

The budget passed by the General Assembly had a projected deficit of over \$8 Billion.

Projected revenue: \$33.72 B

FY 2013 Hard costs: \$9.32 B (Hard costs include non-discretionary spending: debt service owed to bond holders and costs that are not subject to the authority of the General Assembly and Governor)

Deficit Carry forward from FY 2012: \$9 B (This is the amount of unpaid bills carried into this fiscal year that must be paid)

Net FY 2013 General Fund Revenue Available for services: \$15.40 B

Now the Bad News:

General Fund FY2013 Appropriations for services enacted in the General Fund Budget: \$23.54 B

In other words, to pay for services (almost all of which sustained budget cuts in FY 2013) requires the appropriated \$23.54 B. Yet there is only \$15.40 B available. With hard costs and unpaid bills from FY 2012 eating up a large portion of revenues, Illinois began FY 2013 with a minimum debt of \$8.14 B, or 34.6% of the General Fund Services appropriations. (The budget deficit as of January, 2013 is now projected at \$9.7 B)

Why is this shortfall a huge problem?

Because over \$9 out of \$10 of the General Fund (GF) spent on vital core services:

Education (Pre-K through Higher Ed): 35% of the GF dollars

Healthcare: 30% of the GF dollars

Human Services: 21% of the GF dollars

Public Safety: 5% of the GF dollars



But we're spending more money on these services than we ever have, aren't we?

Excluding Group Health and Pensions and adjusting for inflation and population growth, Illinois is spending 25% less on these core services today than in 2000. Illinois has not been spending more this past decade but rather has been cutting spending significantly.

What does "Adjusted for Inflation" mean and why would it be included in the calculation?

Economists define inflation as an increase in the price of a basket of goods and services that is representative of the economy as a whole. This is an inflation adjustment. Add in population growth because more people mean more need for services. To get a more accurate depiction of the cost of services to the government, the price of that service must be adjusted by inflation and the growing population must be accounted for. Service costs tend to rise faster because it is labor intensive, so it is recommended that the inflation for government services be measured by the Employment Price Index (EPI) rather than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which measures the cost of goods.

Let's look at education as an example of budget cuts. PreK-12 education: Illinois FY 2013 Enacted Budget Compared to FY 2000 Enacted Adjusted for Inflation and Population Growth (\$ in Millions)

FY 2000 \$7,464 M

FY 2013 \$6,542 M or, \$922 M less than FY 2000. This is a change of -12.35%.

Even more shocking is the decline in funding for Higher Education:

FY 2000 \$3,315 M

FY 2013 \$1,980 M or \$1,335 M less than FY 2000. This is a change of -40.28%

Using those same sources cited above and adjusting for inflation and population growth, the other core services have also seen Draconian cuts since FY 2000:

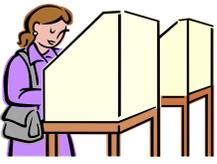
Healthcare (excluding Group Health) - a loss of 23.30% of funding

Human Services (excluding Healthcare) - a loss of 32.98% of funding

Public Safety- a loss of 22.82% of funding

In short, Illinois is unable to provide the core services it is responsible for - not because these services have grown to be too unwieldy and expensive, but because Illinois' revenue system has not allowed for adequate revenue growth. This allows for a structural deficit that inhibits Illinois from paying its bills and from providing adequate services to Illinois' most vulnerable residents.

Information from the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability Power Point done for the League of Women Voters of Illinois
Sources of data available upon request.



Election Reform: LWVUS' Four Point Plan

Intro by Cathy Duoba, Body from LWVUS website

Prior to the 2012 Election, the media was focused on voter suppression efforts in various states. These efforts are on-going (see article this bulletin). On election day, there was considerable publicity about the long lines impeding citizens as they tried to exercise their right to vote. In Florida alone, an estimated 200,000 citizens gave up and left without voting. Since then, the President has stated several times the "we have to fix that." LWVUS has long studied these problems and has put together a four point plan.

Election administration needs more data, modernization

By: LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara 01/10/2013 EXCERPTS

Full text at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elisabeth-macnamara/path-free-fair-accessible_b_2278842.html

American election administration is a leaky vessel kept afloat by a lot of very dedicated people including election professionals, poll workers, organizations like the League and the voters themselves... the system is still decentralized, starved for resources and dependent on local volunteers on the day itself. It is mired in politics and rooted in the past.

We all remember the 2000 election when the presidential race was so close that the U.S. Supreme Court got involved. The result was the Help America Vote Act which created the U. S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) that oversees and conducts vital research in the field of election administration. [LWVUS has been involved with diverse groups regarding] the need for more data and the need to move election administration into the 21st century. Unfortunately, recent legislation was more politicized than in the past and resulted in court challenges that left election professionals in flux right up to the eve of Election 2012.

Reform cannot move forward until we have the data and the facts to defeat the assumptions the public and politicians alike are using to politicize election administration. The League has identified a four-point proactive election administration reform agenda that we believe is supported by facts - priorities for our elections administration reform work next year:

[Secure Online Voter Registration](#)
[Permanent and Portable Statewide Voter Registration](#)
[Expanded Early Voting](#)
[Improved Polling Place Management](#)



Secure Online Voter Registration: States must develop online voter registration programs to modernize registration and make it more efficient... reduce costs for already strapped state and local budgets and can reduce the errors [from having] to re-enter information from handwritten forms. ...over 15 states have begun to upgrade their voter registration systems...want to ensure that these programs are ... available to all eligible citizens. Unfortunately, many states currently restrict online voter registration to those who already have a driver's license, which means that millions of eligible voters cannot register or update their registrations online... raises concerns about the discriminatory effect.

Permanent and Portable Statewide Voter Registration: Once a voter has taken the responsibility to properly register to vote, the registration stays active whenever they move within that state. Voters would still be able to update their addresses before Election Day, but with portable registration, they will also be able to update their addresses when they go to vote... ensures that those who have a high propensity to move, including renters, young people and lower-income voters, aren't kept from voting.

Expanded Early Voting: Early voting rules vary widely from state to state, with some offering no early voting options at all! Early voting is important not only because it gives us all an additional opportunity to fit the important act of voting into our busy schedules -- it also reduces the crush of voters on Election Day and makes the whole process more efficient...no voter to wait more than one hour to vote.

Improved Polling Place Management: ...sometimes the resources that are available -- voting machines, ballots, voter registration lists, polling places and poll workers -- are not allocated properly and fairly... We need to increase the total resources that go toward making our election system work, but we also need to ensure that those resources are distributed fairly and equitably. States need standards that aren't just based on the old patterns but take into account all eligible voters.

A dozen years into the 21st century, it is time to do more than just patch up the 19th century election vessel that has carried us so far and build a new sleeker ship to carry our elections forward



Suppressing Voting Rights: The Big, Bad Wolf Who's Afraid? Voting Rights Advocates and The Fight Goes On!

Taken from the LWVUS website article by: tobrien 01/17/2013, Headings by C Duoba
Full text and related links at <http://www.lww.org/blog/2013-%E2%80%93-no-rest-weary>

Voting rights have been under attack in state legislatures for more than a decade and there are no signs of it letting up in 2013. **Indeed 2013 could be a year that sets back voting rights more than all of the attacks of the past decade combined.**

Where's the Action?

2013 has already seen photo ID legislation introduced or soon to be introduced in **Alaska, Montana, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, Missouri and Wisconsin**. The make-up of each state government will ultimately determine the outcome of these bills. In some states, like New York and Montana, it may be possible to stop or lessen the impact of some of these bills. In other states like Alaska, North Carolina, Wisconsin and Missouri, which have fended off photo ID bills for multiple years, proposed legislation may be passed due to changes from 2012 elections.

Where is Time on our side?

Missouri and Wisconsin would need to pass a state constitutional amendment in order to enact a voter photo ID law in their perspective states (assuming the courts continue to strike down the Wisconsin photo ID law as unconstitutional under their state constitution – something that the Missouri State Supreme Court did several years ago). This would likely be a multi-year process, giving voting rights advocates time to continue to educate the public about both the cost of such a proposal, the fundamental American values it undermines, as well as the barriers it erects for many voters. Minnesota successfully beat back such a ballot measure, proving that when we have time to discuss it with the public they overwhelmingly reject photo ID - but it takes a great deal of resources.

Help from the Voting Rights Act

Nearly half of North Carolina counties and all of Alaska are covered by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act – thus while these states may vote on voter ID legislation, any changes to their election laws would need to be pre-cleared with the US Department of Justice (DOJ) and/or a three judge panel in Washington DC. In 2012, a voter ID law in Texas was struck down through this process.

The Biggest Threat to Voting Rights: Court Challenges

While there is plenty of action happening at the state level to limit voting rights, perhaps the greatest threat to voting rights in a generation will occur at the national level when the U.S. Supreme Court hears two important voting rights cases this year.



Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder – This case will determine if Sections 4(b) and 5 of the Voting Rights Act are unconstitutional. If the Court sides with Shelby County it would gut the enforcement mechanism of the Voting Rights Act and weaken it beyond repair. This case will be heard on February 27, 2013. LWVUS and LWVSC filed amicus *curiae* brief in this case. Updated information available at <http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/electionlaw/litigation/ShelbyCountyAlabamav.Holder.php>

Arizona v. The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. – This case will determine if the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) can stop Arizona from requiring documentary proof of citizenship when registering to vote. If the Court sides with Arizona, states would be allowed to require onerous documentation beyond that required by the NVRA in order to register to vote in their state. This case will be heard on March 18, 2013. Updated information at <http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/electionlaw/litigation/gonzalez.php>

The outcome of these cases will determine what laws voting rights advocates can use to protect the right to vote in this country.

Besides these two cases before the U.S. Supreme Court League continues our legal battles in state courts in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin and in Federal Court in Texas and Florida.

And after all of this, voter photo ID is not the only threat to voting rights. We'll also be working to defeat attacks to decrease early voting days, illegally purge voting rolls, and make it more difficult to register to vote.

The Fight's On, but... We SHALL Overcome!



NEWS FROM LWVUS

FILIBUSTER: League Calls for Reform of U.S. Senate Rules

The League calls upon the Senate to rise above partisanship and reform the Senate filibuster rules to achieve openness, accountability, decision-making capability and effective performance. Ed. Note: the reform measures passed fell short of the League's hoped-for transparency goals.

VOTING RIGHTS

LWVUS Amicus Brief before the Supreme Court

In yet another voting rights challenge to state legislation, the brief in *Arizona v. Intertribal Council* argues that the National Voter Registration Act blocks a documentary proof-of-citizenship requirement to register to vote imposed by the state of Arizona. The League of Women Voters of Arizona is one of the parties in the case.

North Carolina Photo ID Law Could Impact 613,000 Voters

As State Legislators in North Carolina make a renewed push to pass a voter ID law, a new report from the State Board of Elections suggests that nearly one in ten voters lack state-issued photo identification: Some key politicians, including the Governor Pat McCrory and House Speaker Thom Tillis, are now saying they are willing to include non-photo identification in the legislation.

Voter Suppression Tactics Continues Amongst Some Early Wins

First the good news: The League's aggressive advocacy has led to New Mexico legislators deciding NOT to introduce a photo ID bill this session, Florida's Governor, Rick Scott, has indicated his willingness to fix suppressive elections laws passed in 2011 and WI Governor, Scott Walker, rescinded his support for repealing same day registration. Now the not-so-good news: photo ID bills have been, or soon will be, introduced in AK, MT, NY, MN, MO, NC and WI. This will be another year of ups and downs but together we will continue to succeed in protecting voters across the country.

Leagues Join Amicus Briefs in the Case of *Shelby County vs. Holder*

LWVUS and the South Carolina League point out the continuing importance of the Voting Rights Act and urge the Court to uphold its constitutionality in amicus briefs before the Supreme Court.



NEWS FROM LWVIL

LWVIL LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

Thank you to everyone who responded to our recent TFAs for the Veto and Lame Duck Sessions.

Here are the results for the bills we advocated either for or against:

Immigration - Highway Safety (SB 957): LWVIL supported this bill to make drivers' licenses available for all Illinois motorists. The bill received bipartisan support and passed in the Senate during the Veto Session and in the House on January 8.

School Funding: LWVIL **opposed HB 5825 S A2**, a bill making the Charter School Commission autonomous with no operational oversight. The bill passed both houses and has been sent to the Governor.

Felony Sealing Bill (HB 5723): The bill was expected to come up for a vote in the Veto Session, however, the sponsor was indicted and the bill was tabled.

Hydraulic Fracturing (SB 3280): LWVIL supported a moratorium on this method of mining for natural gas because it poses a threat to drinking water and groundwater resources. No vote.

Gun Violence Prevention Bills: LWVIL supported bills banning the possession and sale of military style assault weapons (**HB 1263**) and high capacity ammunition magazines (**HB 815**). No Vote.

There is some good news:

On January 8th, Attorney General Lisa Madigan announced that she filed a petition asking the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals to review the three judge panel's decision declaring Illinois' ban on concealed carry of firearms in public unconstitutional. You may read her full press release at:

http://illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2013_01/20130108.html



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See You Thursday, 2-21, for Hot Pizza, Hot Topics!

In this issue:

Page 1

Activity Calendar

Page 2

LWVUS President Message

Local Board Members

Page 3

Hot Pizza, Hot Topics

Page 4

Local Elections

Sunshine Week

Page 5

Haste Makes Waste

Page 6

Updates: Immigration & Gun Control

Page 7

Graduated Income Tax Rates

Page 8

Election Reform

Page 9

Voter Rights

Page 10

News from LWVUS & LWVIL

Page 11

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