



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>

August 2013

Volume 59, Issue 1

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

July 17-23 **165th Anniversary of the first Women's Rights Convention**, held in Seneca Falls, NY, in 1848 - 300 women and men met to plant the seed for the women's suffrage movement.

| Date | Time | Event |
|---------------|---------------------------------|--|
| August | | Congress and General Assembly in recess Time to make that call/visit to your legislators re League priorities (Voting Rights Act, gun safety, women's rights, fracking, immigration reform, etc.) |
| Sun, Aug. 25 | 1:00 PM | Annual Picnic and "Beach Party" Friends, Food, and News about Lake Michigan Ecosystem from Lake Michigan Inter-League Group at Gayle O'Brien's |
| Mon, Aug. 26 | | Women's Equality Day, LWV Birthday The anniversary of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. |
| September | | Voter Registration Month |
| Tue, Sept. 17 | | LWVIL's STATE OF THE STATE, a Celebration of 100 Years of Women's Suffrage in Illinois Union League Club of Chicago, 5 W. Jackson St., Chicago |
| Thu, Sept. 19 | Doors open 7 PM Program 7:30 | LWV September Kickoff Program Topic: Affordable Care Act, State Health Insurance Exchanges open Oct. 1 |
| Tue, Sept. 24 | | National Voter Registration Day Media efforts by volunteers, celebrities, and organizations to create awareness of voter registration |

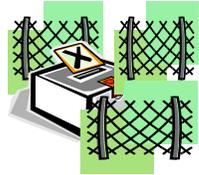
The League of Women Voters gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the Horner Group in providing all the printing, postage and mailing services for our bulletins.



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A MESSAGE FROM THE LWVUS PRESIDENT

As State League leaders gathered in Virginia for Council 13, the Supreme Court handed down its ruling concerning the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). The decision is a great win for voters upholding the power of Congress to control federal elections and protecting the voter registration process from political manipulation. . Delegates left the meeting not only energized but with one more victory over efforts to suppress the vote.



As pleased as we were with that Supreme Court's ruling, we are equally disappointed with the Court's holding in *Shelby County, AL v. Holder*. By cutting the heart out of the Voting Rights Act, the Court has weakened our ability to keep our elections **free, fair and accessible** to every eligible voter while at the same time it emboldened those who seek to create barriers to voting.

Already, states formerly subject to Section 5 preclearance are rushing to implement voter photo ID laws and discriminatory redistricting plans. The fight to protect the vote now involves not just the state legislatures, but Congress as well. **It is important that League members take every opportunity to remind their members of Congress that voting rights are not a partisan issue** and that equal opportunity to participate in the greatest democracy in the world deserves the same bipartisan support that it has had since 1965. We have many tools available to us, as League leaders, to engage our members and our communities such as social media and email blasts, websites and newsletters. **We need to create a national groundswell of support for protecting the right to vote.**

The Shelby County decision places the Supreme Court on the wrong side of history and it is up to us, as voters, to make sure that the decision is only another bump in the long road to fair and equal access to the polls. In the end, our fight to protect voters is always going to depend on voters getting informed and informing their elected officials that voting is the most precious right the Constitution guarantees.

With renewed conviction, let's get out there and power our voices to power the vote in 2013, 2014 and beyond.
Elisabeth MacNamara

With Regret

The Board regrets that Janice Krinsky finds herself unable to serve on the Board at this time. We will miss her fresh ideas, but hope she finds some less consuming aspect of League where she may share her skills. Janice was nominated and elected at the Annual Meeting in May.

LWV AH-MP-BG BOARD MEMBERS 2013-2014

| <u>Position/Portfolio</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Phone</u> | <u>E-mail</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| President | VACANT | | |
| Vice-President | VACANT | | |
| Secretary | Pat Lind | | |
| Treasurer | Nancy Duel | | |
| Membership/Finance | VACANT | | |
| Voter Service | VACANT | | |
| League Links Editor | Cathy Duoba | | |

OFF-BOARD LEADERS

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Action Chair | Judith Royal | | |
| League Geek | Connie Weissman | | |
| Frontier Days | Rosemary Krizan | | |
| Nominating Committee Chair | Pat Lindner | | |
| Nominating Committee Chair | Joyce Marks | | |
| Budget Committee Chair | Rosemary Krizan | | |
| By-Laws Committee Chair | Gilda Karu | | |

As you can see our leadership team is very small. We urgently need some additional members to join us. Our League is growing in numbers, but not in active participation to do "the work" of League. Please talk to current Board members about what you might be able to do On Board or Off Board. Many talents are needed.

Perhaps we all feel someone else will step forward. But they haven't. Will you?

IT'S A BEACH PARTY
SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 1:00 pm
At Gayle O'Brien's Home



Lake Michigan is the focus of this year's annual picnic – hence the Beach Party atmosphere (swimsuit wear NOT required).

At this year's State Convention, the delegates adopted by concurrence the Lake Michigan Ecosystem position that the League of Women Voters of Michigan (the state League) arrived at after study and consensus. Most, if not all, of our local Leaguers enjoy and respect our beautiful Great Lake, and our local communities depend on it for our water supply. Yet, this is a new aspect of Environmental Protection to most of us, so our League has invited two guests from the LWV of Lake Michigan, an inter-League group composed of the four state Leagues surrounding Lake Michigan.

Rosemary Heilemann and Henrietta Saunders will fill us in on the position itself, where to learn more about problems with the current ecosystem, how those problems affect us, and what members can do to help.

Join us, Sunday, August 25 for
FRIENDS, FOOD, AND FUN "AT THE LAKE"
Refreshments will be catered, cost \$10
RSVP to Pat at 847-259-2711

Our September Kickoff Program will focus on the Affordable Care Act State Health Insurance Exchanges Open on October 1, 2013

LWVIL Convention Highlight

Our local League did win an award at the convention for increasing our membership by more than 10%. For the first time in a long time, our League gained more members than we lost to moves or health problems. The credit goes to a few Leaguers who took seriously the need to grow our League. Hopefully others will be encouraged by their success to take the challenge of our League's situation to heart: we must either develop more League members or our League will vanish before we reach our 60th birthday in 3 years.

Frontier Days

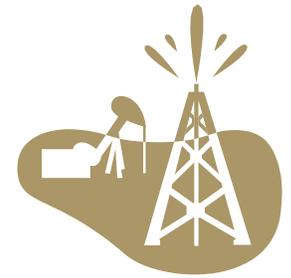


The dessert row weather was pleasant for a warm summer day with its usual gentle breeze from being situated on a slight hill. Much thanks and appreciation goes to the League volunteers who staffed the booth: husband-wife teams of Susan and Paul Fuller plus Joesetta and Gerry McLaughlin; mother-daughter team of Cathy and Becky Boykin; Anne Budin, Judith Royal and new members: Gayle O'Brien and Shannon Silverman. Thanks to Rosemary Krizan for organizing our participation.

Welcome to Ricki Sajbel

Another new member has joined our ranks. Ricki Sajbel has always been interested in registering voters and first heard about the League of Women Voters when she was in high school. Ricki studied journalism, worked as a reporter, and travelled around the world before she had their children. They spent a year in India, a year in China, and some time in other parts of Asia and in Europe for her husband's job. When she returned to work-for-pay, she switched to working as a medical receptionist. Now semi-retired and looking for something useful and challenging to do, Ricki has joined League. Her hobbies are gardening and creating beauty with stained glass.

Fracking Efforts at State Convention



The coalition urging adoption of the Pennsylvania position on Fracking had just under a dozen Leagues joining with our League. Over 50 people (delegates and some alternates) attended our Friday night caucus (there were 79 delegates at Convention). However, some last-minute official opposition made the vote very close and our motion lost.

Don't be upset: remember the PA LWV position was not our goal in and of itself. **Our goal was to get the State Board to start taking action on fracking.** The narrow defeat alerted LWVIL. Laura Kratz, out-going VP and Issues Committee Chair, announced publicly to the whole convention that it is **possible to take action** under the LWVUS Natural Resources position (confirmed by a visiting LWVUS Board member). With the previous argument for non-action gone, the only way we won't reach our goal is if we fail to keep insisting that action be taken.

Also, we achieved passage of a "Will of Convention" resolution." Though such resolutions are non-binding and non-funded, its overwhelming vote gives it influence. The State Board realizes that a majority of the delegates (and of the Leaguers back home) want ACTION on fracking.

NEWS FLASH: July 17, LWVIL e-News calls for **volunteers to serve on the committee which will research issues regarding the rule-making, funding and staffing requirements as well as, provisions for public input and local control to implement the Illinois Hydraulic Fracturing Regulatory Act.** **WHO'S INTERESTED?** Call Cathy Duoba.

WILL OF CONVENTION #1

WHEREAS, a bill meant to regulate hydraulic fracturing in Illinois has passed the Illinois General Assembly and awaits probable signature by the Governor;

WHEREAS, the question of rule-making, funding, staffing, public impact and local control are still to be resolved; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters of Illinois believes a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing is still the best way to protect Illinois from the dangers of hydraulic fracturing.

THEREFORE, the League of Women Voters of Illinois will continue to work for a moratorium;

AND, if the bill regulating the process becomes law, delegates to the LWVIL 56th Biennium agree that LWVIL will work for the most effective rules to protect Illinois residents, environment, and tourism; sufficient funding and staffing to enforce those rules; and provisions for public input and local control by those most affected by the introduction of hydraulic fracturing in Illinois.

LWVCC LUNCH and LEARN

Wednesday, July 31, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm

Speaker: David Carvalho, Chair of the Board of the Cook County Health and Hospitals System (HHS). Cook County is one of the few counties in the nation to fund a health care system. About 1/3 of the Cook County Budget is used to fund the HHS and about 60% of the patients last year using the HHS did not have an ability to pay. Come find out what are the plans for the future as more people have a choice as to their health providers with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

Cost: \$30 per person includes box lunch and hot and cold drinks.

Register by Friday, July 26, at the LWV Cook County website: <http://cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org/>

Suggested "Summer Readings" Agriculture Update

LWVUS Agriculture Update Study Committee has identified three documents and three websites that could be used as background "summer readings" and posted these to the Agriculture Update group at <http://forum.lwv.org/group/agriculture-update>. While these are not a formal part of the Update's reading materials that will be issued later, the committee feels that they will provide useful background reading for members not familiar with agriculture issues.



LWVIL Action Alert Issue Summary

Thank you to everyone who contacted your legislators in response to our **Time for Action** alerts during the spring session of the 98th General Assembly.

The General Assembly adjourned on Friday, May 31st following a flurry of activity in which several bills were altered, some several times in the final session. Issue Specialists will be reading the final versions of those bills and other measures of interest in the weeks to come.

Here's a summary of LWVIL action outcomes:

Gun Violence Prevention

LWVIL strongly supported common sense gun legislation with our coalition partner, the Illinois Council to Prevent Gun Violence, who reported: House Bill 183 which was originally the vehicle for common sense gun laws was amended and we **OPPOSED** the measure. While the bill has some of the issues we fought for including strong training requirements and limits on where loaded weapons can be carried, the bill would preempt home rule on concealed carry and transportation laws but is not the total pre-emption of firearms laws that was in previous versions of the bill.

The ban on large capacity ammunition clips that LWVIL supported did not pass.

Health Care

All three of the measures we supported have passed and are awaiting the Governor's signature: Medicaid Expansion, science-based and age-appropriate Sex Education, and establishment of Health Insurance Exchanges (Marketplace) needed for Affordable Care Act implementation in 2014.

Criminal Justice

LWVIL supported four pieces of legislation that passed in the General Assembly:

- **HB 3061** expanding the sealing of old convictions to include low-level, non-violent Class 3 and 4 felonies four years after sentences are completed
- **SB 1872** eliminating the felony enhancement for prostitution
- **HB 2404** changing the definition of delinquent minor to include a person who was under 18 (rather than 17) years of age when he or she committed an offense classified as a felony. The bill also changes the age concerning confidentiality of juvenile records
- **HB 1046** provides that any incarcerated person may apply for medical assistance prior to the date of scheduled release or discharge in order to be assured of such coverage when released.

Immigration

LWVIL supported the bill to allow the state to issue temporary drivers licenses to undocumented persons who pass a driving test and can prove they have insurance. The measure was signed into law by the Governor in late January.

State Fiscal Policy

LWVIL supported several measures to maintain funding levels for education and human services and many of these measures were moved to new bills at the end of the session. It appears that funding for education has been maintained at current levels.

Election Laws

The General Assembly passed a provision to allow a person who is 17 years old on the date of the primary may vote at the primary if that person is otherwise qualified and will be 18 years old on the date of the following election. Prior to passage, LWVIL sent a message to the House Committee suggesting that this bill be modified to include all elections, not just those held in even-numbered years. The sponsor indicated some interest but that the modification would have to wait.

House Farm Bill: Bigger Subsidies, More Hunger

By Cathy Duoba



The conservatives' version of a Farm bill: literally takes food out of the mouths of hungry children to give more money to Big Ag and Congresspersons. Consider these facts. The average farm income is 15% higher than the average American household income. Last year's drought saw one of the highest farm income years in a generation. The poverty level is \$23,550 for family of four and 10 million children live in families with half that amount. The majority of SNAP (food stamps) families are the working poor, since a large portion of new post-recession jobs are in the low-paying service industry. Rep Stockman's aide proudly published that his list of a week's food was bought within the \$31.50 SNAP limit with money left over. See his list at stockman.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/stockman-staff-beating-snap-challenge. Check it out! It contains no meat, fish or other high-quality protein and no fresh fruits or fresh/green vegetables, only applesauce and red beans.

The original House farm bill was defeated because the Far Right thought \$20.5 billion in cuts to SNAP (food stamps) was not enough and Dems believed it was too high. Also defeated: (1) an amendment prohibiting Congresspersons from receiving farm subsidies (**Rep. S. Fincher, who actually said on May 17 if you don't work, neither shall you eat, got over \$3 million in farm subsidies over the last decade**, 15 others got over \$200,000 in 2012) and (2) a means-testing amendment to stop crop insurance subsidies for persons with an adjusted gross income over \$250,000/year.

The final House Farm Bill that passed (with all Dems and 12 GOP voting NO) stripped the entire SNAP program completely out of the bill and then **added an additional \$8.9 Billion in spending to the original generous subsidy provision so as to increase the already high 80% crop insurance subsidy to 90%**! The unemployed would appreciate getting 90% of their lost incomes when disaster strikes and they lose their jobs. For decades, food growth and food needs were linked, no longer. There is no House bill restoring SNAP.

New Fiscal Policy, Poverty, Income Inequality

By Cathy Duoba

Corporate profits in the third quarter of 2012 were \$1.75 trillion, an all-time high and an 18.6% rise over 2nd quarter. According to the Economic Policy Institute, CEO pay rose 725% from 1978 to 2011, while average worker's pay rose 5.7%.

Economist Paul Krugman: The austerity obsession of conservatives has hurt the economy, harmed GDP, and caused public sector job loss. If we had created public sector jobs in line with population growth which is normal practice and what we did during the Bush recession, we'd have 1.5 million more public sector jobs than we have now. And those workers' purchasing power would create about another half million private jobs. Unemployment would be well below 7%; we'd be a long way back – if it wasn't for this totally misguided policy!

Criminal Justice

By Cathy Duoba

New York City's "Stop and Frisk" from NY Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU)
In 2012, the NYPD made 533,042 stops. In only 6% of the stops was an arrest made or a ticket handed out. 85% of the persons stopped were Black or Latino, BUT 89% of them were found totally innocent. The NYCLU points out that at a 6% arrest rate, stop and frisk is not even a good crime-fighting policy and it poisons the police relationship with the community whose help the police need.

Solitary Confinement Practices 81,622 US prisoners live in solitary confinement

In California prisons more than 29,000 inmates began a hunger strike on July 8. Their main complaint is the solitary confinement practices in the California state prisons. A federal court is threatening to hold Gov. Brown in contempt if some basic demands are not met. The court had ruled that the State was not providing proper medical care for inmates, including clean water and nutritional food. Moreover, there is an investigation into a report that nearly 150 women were coerced into being sterilized over the last decade. The Center for Constitutional Rights filed suit against the State's solitary confinement practices at the Pelican Bay prison where over 100 inmates have been in solitary confinement for more than 20 years. Learn more about problems with solitary confinement in the U.S. at their website: ccrjustice.org, Search: solitary confinement Pelican Bay.



Gun Violence Prevention & Stand Your Ground Laws

By Cathy Duoba



At the NAACP Convention this July, Attorney General Eric Holder remarked:

“It’s time to question laws that senselessly expand the concept of self-defense and sow dangerous conflict in our neighborhoods. These laws try to fix something that was never broken. There has always been a legal defense for using deadly force, if, and the “if” is important, if no safe retreat is available. But we must examine laws that take this further by eliminating the commonsense and age-old requirement that people who feel threatened have a duty to retreat, when outside their home, if they can do so safely...

By allowing, and perhaps encouraging, violent situations to escalate in public, such laws undermine public safety. We must stand OUR ground to ensure our laws reduce violence and take a hard look at laws that contribute to more violence than they prevent.”

In 2005, Florida became the first state to adopt Stand Your Ground (SYG). Leading the charge was (and is) the group most interested in making sure there are millions of people walking around fearful and armed – the National Rifle Association (NRA)*. Soon after, this law became an action focus of ALEC, the corporate-funded American Legislative Exchange Council, which produces “model” legislation on conservative issues like corporate taxes, voter suppression, anti-choice and anti-workers’ rights, etc. ALEC and the NRA want to

(1) Sell a lot more guns, (2) Expand the places where you can carry a gun, and (3) Make safe the discharging of a gun to remove any liability concerns that might stop potential gun-buyers. Since Florida became the first state to pass an explicit Stand Your Ground law, more than 30 others have passed some version of it (see map).



Info and map from www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2013/07/15/everything-you-need-to-know-about-stand-your-ground-laws/

Stand Your Ground supporters ask **why all the furor now?** SYG wasn’t even used in George Zimmerman’s defense. However, when a legislature passes a SYG law, it changes the rules of engagement: eliminating the duty to avoid the danger and any duty to retreat. And that changes jury instructions in self-defense cases:

Jury instructions prior to SYG (Source: former Florida State Rep Dan Gelber, opponent of SYG):

“The defendant cannot justify the use of force likely to cause death or great bodily harm unless he used every reasonable means within his power and consistent with his safety to avoid the danger before resorting to that force. The fact that the defendant was wrongly attacked cannot justify his use of force likely to cause death or great bodily harm if by retreating he could have avoided the need to use that force.”

Jury instructions to the Zimmerman jury:

“If the defendant was not engaged in an unlawful activity and was attacked in any place where he had a right to be, he had no duty to retreat and had the right to stand his ground and meet force with force, including deadly force if he reasonably believed that it was necessary to do so to prevent death or great bodily harm to himself or another or to prevent the commission of a forcible felony.”

Former Representative Gelber argued at the time of the SYG debate: If someone is inclined to be uncivil or overly aggressive or to do something stupid, you essentially encourage him not to have a sense of restraint since he doesn’t even have to avoid getting into a situation where he might have to use deadly force.

Stand Your Ground and Civil Rights

The Urban Institute’s Justice Policy Center found that in SYG states, those cases with a white shooter/black victim are 15 times more likely to be ruled justified (16.9%) than those cases with a black shooter/white victim (1.4%). In non-SYG states the white shooter/black victim justified rate decreases to less than 10%.

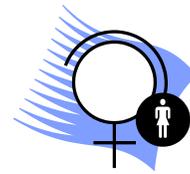
A Texas A&M University study found similar results: in non-SYG states, white on black cases were 250% more likely to be ruled justified than black on white cases; in SYG states, that likelihood rises to 350%

*The NRA is currently fresh off another victory: passing a concealed carry law in the last hold-out state, Illinois: see http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-07-10/news/ct-met-illinois-concealed-carry-whats-next-0709-2-20130710_1_gun-law-gun-owners-concealed-carry-law

Women's Reproductive Rights

The New Face of the War on Women

by Cathy Duoba



On July 16th Andrea Mitchell opened her newscast with the following:

“We are seeing state by state, actions, often without hearings, to roll back access to healthcare.”

The new face of the War on Women is TRAP (Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers) laws. These laws target clinics offering women's health services, including abortion, requiring them to meet regulations for ambulatory surgical centers. Since many clinics provide only first-trimester medical abortions, this is far beyond the recommendations of national health organizations, e.g. the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, which opposes these laws. No longer satisfied with merely setting up obstacles or humiliating women with mandatory vaginal ultrasounds, “forced birth” proponents are determined to block women from access to the legal procedure that is their constitutional right by eliminating abortion provider clinics. To avoid hearings, these provisions are attached to bills that have already passed through “proper order” rules and then fast-tracked to immediate vote. (In NC, a motorcycle safety law; in OH, the budget). In the NC House, it took only 16 hours from “going public” to completed vote. This speed repeated in Texas, Ohio, Wisconsin, etc.

Andrea: “this is about preventive healthcare” In Texas, the closing of these private clinics follows the Governor's shutting down the entire State Women's Health Program, leaving 100,000 low income women without preventive health care from cancer screenings to birth control.

Did He Really Say That!?

When Governor Scott Walker signed neighboring Wisconsin's fast-tracked Senate bill 206 (which includes a mandatory ultrasound and a TRAP admitting-privileges provision, among other things), he did it very privately on the Friday after the Fourth of July. However, he did issue a statement which read:

“This bill improves a woman's ability to make an informed choice and will protect her physical and mental health now and in the future.”

This deeply condescending statement assumes that women cannot make an informed choice without enduring a procedure that is not medically necessary (so not covered by insurance) and that she does not want (but must pay for herself). But proponents insist they are just trying “to improve the health and safety of women.”

And She Replied...

Planned Parenthood and the ACLU filed suit. In her temporary restraining order, the federal judge commented: “There is a troubling lack of justification for the admitting privileges requirement... Moreover, this court's review of the **limited legislative history** of the Act does not reveal any medical expert speaking in favor of the Act or otherwise articulating a legitimate medical reason for the admitting privileges requirement.”

Clinics in Jeopardy from TRAP Laws

The state by state numbers of clinics currently and if TRAP laws passed or being passed take effect:

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Texas from 42 down to 5 | N. Dakota from 1 down to 0 | Virginia from 20 down to 4 |
| Wisconsin 4 down to 2 | Alabama 5 down to 2 | Ohio 12 down to 8 |
| Mississippi 1 down to 0 | | N. Carolina 16 down to 1 |

From 101 clinics to access a legal procedure, constitutionally guaranteed, to 22

Temporary injunctions or restraining orders have been issued by federal courts against the TRAP laws of Mississippi, Alabama, Kansas, and Wisconsin. BUT there has not yet been a definitive ruling to permanently overturn a state-level TRAP law. The legal challenges are piling up — lawsuits have also recently been filed against similar laws in North Dakota and Virginia — and there's a theme emerging. Federal judges agree that TRAP laws impose regulations on abortion clinics that are nearly impossible for them to follow, and they suspect that allowing states to shut down clinics will prevent the women who live there from exercising their reproductive rights.

(thinkprogress.org/health/2013/07/09/2269791/four-states-failed-shut-down-abortion-clinics/?mobile=nc)

TRAP laws may eliminate abortion clinics, but they do not eliminate the need for abortions. They just turn safe, legal abortions into unsafe, illegal, but still constitutionally guaranteed, abortions. Until the Courts step forward to sort this out, hundreds of thousands of women will be suffering.



THE SUPREME COURT and VOTER SUPPRESSION

By Cathy Duoba

The LWVUS press statement on the impact of the Supreme Court's decisions on voting rights:

“In one case, *the Supreme Court upheld the National Voter Registration Act and protected the voter registration process from political manipulation*. This decision bolsters the important work of the League and that of organizations like ours - that host thousands of citizen-led voter registration drives in communities across the country seeking to engage new and underrepresented voters in the democratic process.

In a second case, *the Court gutted the Voting Rights Act, thereby erasing fundamental protections against racial discrimination in voting that have been effective for over 40 years*. This decision opens the door for states that may previously have been dissuaded from pursuing legislation to limit voting rights due to the need for federal approval outlined in the Voting Rights Act. We are concerned that states will now be emboldened to attempt to pass restrictive laws, such as voter photo ID, cutting back on early voting and discriminatory redistricting maps, and **encourage voters to rise up in opposition to help us overcome these attacks.**”

The Crucial Nature of Section 5 Preclearance

Ari Melber, former counsel to the House Judiciary Committee, which handles this legislation, commented: Section 5 is still absolutely necessary because of what Justice Soto-Meyer described as ‘the innovation of discrimination.’ -- the many ways these local districts find to discriminate. [Before one tactic is thrown out by a court, a new one is enacted.] One must act in advance of the tactic being used and the damages of the restricted election are irrevocably installed. Some Justices said states with preclearance were offended, but the 14th & 15th Amendments make it very clear that it is more important to treat people equally than states equally.

Through the Open Door

Two hours after the decision Texas moved to implement its restrictive Voter ID law and discriminatory Redistricting Plan previously blocked by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act -- followed the next day by Mississippi and Alabama implementing their now un-blocked laws. North Carolina, South Carolina and others are currently fast-tracking restrictive voter laws in their state Assemblies. According to the Brennan Center for Justice “without court action in 2012, as many as five million votes may have been lost.” Five million votes was the winning margin in 2012.

The Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights has a fascinating interactive (non-copyable) “Map of Shame” displaying the various States and their restrictive voting rights measures at: www.lawyerscommittee.org/page?id=0042

But the Voting Rights Act (VRA) was most important at the local level where 85% of the blocked voting changes occurred: redistricting, location and equipage of precincts, limiting early voting hours/locations, even cancelling elections (Kilmichael, MS) and manipulation of terms of office to prevent re-election of black school board members (Beaumont, TX). There is not enough money among all the civil and voting rights groups’ coffers to file individual suits under Section 2 of the VRA against all this suppression. Moreover, what States do catches the limelight; local voter suppression often goes unnoticed. These groups do not have the monitoring manpower to match the results achieved under the mandatory reporting requirement to the Dept. of Justice.

What’s Next?

The Supreme Court ruled that Congress must create a new formula (Sec. 4) before preclearance (Sec.5) can be invoked. Though the VRA passed unanimously in the Senate and overwhelmingly in the House in 2006, times and minds have changed. On July 16, the Senate held its first hearing in the Senate Judiciary Cmte., chaired by Sen. Patrick Leahy, a supporter of the VRA. On July 17, the House held its first hearing, chaired by Rep. Trent Franks [“instances of pregnancy resulting from rape are few”], one of the only 33 Reps who voted against VRA in 2006. At this hearing, Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), conservative, author of the Patriot Act and manager of the Clinton Impeachment, testified to “the continuing importance of the VRA,” adding “discrimination in the electoral process continues to exist...I am committed to working to pass a constitutional response to the Shelby Co. decision.” In spite of his influence, the VRA faces big trouble in the House.

See two Ari Melber articles at: <http://tv.msnbc.com/2013/07/18/republican-hearing-confronts-voting-rights-act/> -- especially the second article regarding why states **can** be treated differently despite Chief Justice Roberts’ contrary view and how this Court developed a new limit on the Congress’s power to enforce voting rights – even though the power to decide HOW to enforce the Amendments was given specifically to Congress, not the Court, by the 14th Amendment.



NEWS FROM LWVUS

The Good: Revised Election Bill Moves Forward In Wisconsin – Voter ID Out

In early June, the Wisconsin state assembly's election committee approved a bi-partisan election reform bill that removed the most onerous restrictions for voters that were in the original court-blocked bill. This vote was followed by a bi-partisan vote for passage in the whole Assembly. It moves now to the Senate. The bill now includes a provision for online voter registration, that the Wisconsin League of Women Voters supports, and removes the reinstatement of voter ID and the limit on early voting at clerk's offices.

The Bad: Sweeping Voter Suppression Legislation Introduced in WI State Legislature

Unfortunately, Assembly Speaker Robin Vos vowed that he will do everything possible to quickly reinstate the requirement that Wisconsin voters present a photo identification in time for the 2014 general election. Also in early June, the Wisconsin State Legislature held a hearing on a new sweeping voter suppression bill that, among other things, would create **new criteria for voter photo identification and stop all in-person absentee voting on weekends**. This bill comes on the heels of a loss in the courts in late May when a circuit court judge overturned a lower court's decision in LWVWI's lawsuit. Luckily two additional cases are proceeding in separate courts.

League Lauds President Obama's Plan to Cut Carbon Pollution, Support the President's Plan

President Obama's speech is a turning point in the fight against climate change. After months of calling on the President to move forward with life-saving measures to protect our children, our nation and the world from the damaging effects of climate change, the League was proud to stand by while he announced his plan. We are thrilled that the President is taking the necessary steps to cut carbon pollution in America and is stepping up to lead the world through the greatest challenge of our lifetime: climate change.

Senate Takes Huge Step on Immigration Reform

LWVUS hailed Senate passage of the comprehensive immigration reform bill. "Overall, it is a positive step forward," said Elisabeth MacNamara, President of the League of Women Voters of the U.S.

League Reacts to Supreme Court Decision on Affirmative Action

The League is pleased that the Supreme Court recognized that increasing racial and ethnic diversity in educational settings is critical to our nation's democratic institutions. This week's Supreme Court decision in the case of *Fischer v Austin* upheld equal opportunity in education for all Americans.

League President Testifies at U.S. House Hearing

Elisabeth MacNamara testified at a hearing of the House Administration committee on H.R. 2115, The Voter Registration Efficiency Act and answered questions from several U.S. House members.

New Report Details Latest in Online Voter Registration

Read an interesting new report, Issues in Election Administration: Online Voter Registration, from our friends at Project Vote. Online voter registration is just one of four key positive election reforms Leagues are advocating for nationwide. We are also focused on expanding early voting, establishing permanent and portable statewide voter registration, and improving polling place management.



NEWS FROM LWVIL

Gun Violence Prevention - Concealed Carry

Unfortunately, on July 9, the General Assembly had the votes to easily override Governor Quinn's amendatory veto of HB 183 (the Governor had proposed a number of restrictions supported by LWVIL). Illinois now becomes the last state to enact a law permitting concealed carry. The law is scheduled to take effect on July 19, but Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan may be getting a stay so the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals can determine whether the law, as passed, follows the Court's criteria.



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FIRST CLASS MAIL

See you August 25th at the Annual Picnic & Beach Party!

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