



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>

October 2013

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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
Saturday, Oct. 5		100 days since passage of the bipartisan Immigration Act in the Senate. Pressure is built only with REPEATED phone calls/emails to your US Representative
Saturday, Oct. 5	9am	NAMI cook County North Suburban hosted "Take a Hike" for your mental health at Blue Star Memorial Woods in Glenview. For those who could not take part on Oct 5 th but wish to support NAMI CCNS, contact admin@namiccns.org
Friday, Oct. 11		Legislative Interview with Senator Dan Kotowski, jointly with LWV Palatine Area
Friday, Oct. 11		United Nations "Day of the Girl"
Oct.15-17		Lake Michigan LWV Annual Meeting The Blue Harbor, in nearby Sheboygan, Wisconsin
Thursday, Oct. 17	Doors open 7 pm Program starts 7:30 pm	LWV Fall Public Education Program "Obamacare" aka the Affordable Care Act What It Is, What It Isn't Arl. Hts. Historical Society, 110 W. Fremont, AH
Thursday, Nov. 14		Cook Co LWV Fall Tour of Medical Examiner's Facility More details in late Oct.

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 Critical Message From the LWVUS President



October 3, 2013

The LWVUS board is meeting this weekend in Washington. As board and staff work together making decisions intended to advance the mission of the League, we are keenly aware that our elected officials on Capitol Hill have failed in their duty to work together to create a better America. What we can see around us are shuttered offices, museums and monuments, but besides frustrated tourists, the government shutdown is impacting millions of families, including those civil servants across the country who work every day ensuring that our government runs smoothly.

The shutdown also demonstrates a breakdown in how our government should function. [The League of Women Voters believes](#) that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government. The inability to fund the government and keep it running fails many of these key tenets.

The League's [position on the role of Congress](#) outlines what a responsive legislative process should look like. **Key to this is the ability for Congress to “make decisions that meet national needs and reconcile conflicting interests and priorities”, as well as “function[ing] in an efficient manner with a minimum of conflict, wasted time and duplication of effort.”** The government shutdown has only illuminated the issues that have riddled Congress in recent years – the impact of huge amounts of outside special interest money in elections, including primary elections, gerrymandered districts, and an inability by Members of Congress to put what’s best for the nation ahead of how an issue is perceived in their home districts.

As voters we can demand that our Representatives end this shut down and get back to work on the issues that matter to the American people. As the members of the League of Women Voters we can redouble our efforts to ensure that government of the people, by the people and for the people truly reflects and includes the voices of all the people. We can **work to eliminate and overcome barriers to registration and voting; we can use this moment to highlight the need for true reform of our redistricting process; we can work for real election reform that focuses on including as many voices as possible; and we can call for public financing of congressional elections.**

Let’s not waste this crisis! The American people deserve better, let’s help them demand it!

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“OBAMACARE” – What It Is, What It Isn’t October 17th Program

It’s Here! Unless your name is Rip Van W., you may have noticed that the roll-out of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (the ACA) began October 1. Most of us have enough general knowledge of the ACA not to buy the myths and misinformation appearing all over our TV screens, but do we really know enough details to combat them or “educate the public”? The misinformation campaign by ACA opponents has been deliberate, extensive, and successful! Polls show a majority of Americans are confused about the ACA; some don’t even know it’s a LAW. People, i.e. family, friends, and neighbors, should be able to depend on Leaguers for information, especially about an issue we have worked so long to achieve.

Here’s Your Chance! Our October program on the ACA features Dr. Ram Krishnamoorthi. Some of us heard him speak at the Palatine Area LWV’s program last fall. Dr. Krishnamoorthi is a teaching and attending physician in Internal Medicine at the Edward Hines Veterans Hospital and Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine in the western suburbs. As a member of Doctors for America, he has been advocating for and explaining the ACA since 2009. He will describe the main provisions of the law, factually debunk the circulating myths, and explain what the law can mean for us as individuals.

This is our BIG fall public education event. Bring friends, relatives, and strangers. Don’t miss the chance to learn what the effects of the ACA will be on your healthcare & on the country.

Thursday, Oct. 17, Arl. Hts. Historical Society
Doors open at 7 pm; program begins at 7:30 pm.

Update on Sept. Program

SPOTLIGHT ON AN ISSUE: GRADUATED RATE INCOME TAX



CALL TO ACTION September 30th - October 4th. League members are being asked to support SJRCA40 and HJRCA33 by making phone calls, sending emails, and even inviting friends to a postcard-writing party– just like we did in support of the ERA. (Some of us are old enough to remember!). The wording of these bills is identical--amending the constitution to allow a fair tax with higher rates on higher incomes and lower rates on lower incomes. You will find all the facts you need at our League website, lwvah.org, where all the LWVIL educational materials are listed with direct links. In the materials, you will find talking points and frequently-asked questions, as well as a comprehensive paper by Ralph Matire.

For over 40 years, Leagues have been advocating for a fair, sustainable, stable, and efficient revenue system. Our League began answering this Call to Action early with our September program. Guest speakers Janet Kitlaus and Jean Pierce explained that Illinois’ money problems stemmed from a “structural deficit” – that is the level of revenue needed to fund the State’s core responsibilities cannot be obtained from current revenue sources. Illinois has cut spending and staffing drastically but even the temporary tax could not eliminate the problem. Illinois does not have a spending problem, but a revenue problem: a regressive flat rate income tax.

Since middle-class incomes have remained flat for decades while upper incomes have risen dramatically, the solution, according to local economists, is a graduated income tax. Consider school funding: home values are lower so funding from property taxes are lower – and so is state funding for schools because incomes of most Illinois residents have flattened. Only 6 other states depend on a flat tax system. But the 1970 Constitution was written with a flat tax (over League’s objections), an Amendment is necessary. And, as a revenue item, it must come from the General Assembly, not citizen petition. More at www.lwvil.org/grit-project.html.

Our official League Action began with the September program and continues with the Palatine Area LWV: a legislative interview with Senator Dan Kotowski on Oct. 11. The senator has supported other League positions in the past and we hope to convince him to be a co-sponsor of this legislation. But it’s up to each member to help build support for this much-needed measure – or continue to see our schools, our safety net, and property-tax-paying homeowners suffer.

“Down in the Dumps” on August 10

Observer Corps Report by Trudy Gibbs (LWV Wilmette), Laurie Morse and Roberta Ury (LWV Glencoe), Judith Royal (LWV AH-MP-BG) Organizing group: The Southeast Environmental Task Force, www.setaskforce.org

Daunting and Unsustainable

Sixty participants, speakers, and organizers toured Calumet Water Reclamation Plant, 3 closed landfills, a major solid waste transfer station, and public golf course built on top of a closed landfill. For years, the southeast side of Chicago has been a dumping ground for residential, industrial, and commercial waste from City of Chicago and 125 adjacent communities. Initially, all that wastewater and solid waste ended up in bogs and marshes surrounding E. 130th Street. In recent times, much progress has been made in waste management, but much of what is flushed, run off, and tossed is still processed in southeast Chicago. The work it takes to manage huge volumes of wastewater and mountains of trash is both daunting and, ultimately, unsustainable.

Wastewater and Storm Water

Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's (MWRDGC) 7 treatment plants handle waste & storm water from the greater Chicago area. Upgrades & expansion at the Calumet plant, the oldest in continuous operation, make possible treating up to 354 million gallons of combined wastewater & storm water per day.

Cleanup process begins with a screening system to remove large debris that could damage pumps & other mechanical equipment. From there wastewater is pumped into a series of processing units to remove dissolved & finely dispersed pollutants. Grit is removed by centrifugation. Dissolved and finely dispersed pollutants are removed by special microorganism mixes introduced with & without use of aeration features & digestion chambers. Those steps involve letting the “sludge” settle and siphoning off the salvaged water. The effluent is radiated to “sterilize” the water before it is discharged into the Little Calumet River/Cal-Sag Channel. From there, the effluent flows into the Illinois River, down the Mississippi into Gulf of Mexico. MWRDGC claims to remove 90% of pollutants entering the plant. The plant guide didn't discuss the extent to which effluent is actually tested or how often testing occurs. At issue: Is the 10% residual pollution harmless?

Removal of Sludge or Biosolids

What you call all that sediment depends on your viewpoint. Some see the biosolids that settles during the water reclamation process as something to get rid of (sludge); others see the sludge as potential profit. Whatever you call it, the next step is to “age” and “dewatered” it; i.e., dry out the material for shipping to distant landfills or processing plants. Our guide gave no indication of just how much toxic material is contained in the sediment and exactly where it is disposed.

Trash

Chicago no longer allows any landfill operations within its borders due to pressure from SE Task Force & others. Abuses of acceptable landfill practices were rampant; it was clearly time to close them down. Where does all the trash from Chicagoland residents & industry actually end up? Solid waste goes to transfer stations; recyclables are separated from true trash. Trash from the plant is compacted & loaded onto huge trucks for a trip to landfills near small towns in Indiana.

Closed landfills are not dormant; they emit methane and exude leachate (i.e., garbage juice). Some methane is captured and used to generate electricity. The leachate at the landfills we visited is pumped to nearby Calumet MWRDGC plant, entering the system at the start of the processing network. Clearly some of this organic-rich but toxic material leaches into Cal-Sag Channel; additional barriers need to be installed, per to our guide.

On a positive note, Land of Lakes runs a pilot composting program on top of one closed landfill. Land of Lakes composts food wastes collected from Jewel Stores throughout the metro area. The waste is mixed with grass clippings from local landscapers & leaf pick up from surrounding communities. With the aid of mechanical turning equipment, program operators churn waste into fresh compost for resale--a process that takes about 3 months. Managers claim heat generated from the composting process breaks down harmful chemicals & destroys weed seeds. The Harborside International Golf Center sits on top of a closed landfill overlooking Lake Calumet. This is not unlike the new golf course on a landfill on Willow Road.

Bottom Line: The places we visited were well-run; however, the task of decontaminating & disposing of huge amounts of waste is so complex that it is difficult to say with certainty whether the processes are truly effective.

The Affordable Care Act: Background Information

By Cathy Duoba



The two best sources of facts and details about the Affordable Care Act (ACA) are
The renowned Kaiser Family Foundation website at www.kff.org
"Understand the impact of the Affordable Care Act with KFF's consumer resources: educational animated video, premium and subsidy calculator, FAQs, and more..."

The federal government's own website at healthcare.gov
"The Health Insurance Marketplace is Open! Want to Learn More First? Start here."
I found the particularly helpful lists of the free preventive services available to adults in general, to children, and those services specific to women, but much other info is available.

Important: the law's real name: The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

For most League members who have employer-based insurance or Medicare, it is the patient protection parts that have already begun to benefit us the most: no differential premiums for women, maternity and mental health coverage mandatory, no annual or lifetime caps on benefits, no rescissions (cancelling coverage when you get sick), rebates if the insurer does not spend 80% of customer premiums on health benefits, pre-existing condition coverage, and the right to appeal the insurer's decision to third-party review. The marketplaces are mainly aimed at the uninsured and those not currently on a group plan (persons who are self-employed or whose employer does not offer health insurance). But other ACA provisions help everybody: free preventive services, young adult coverage on parent's plan until age 27, and the gradual elimination of senior's "donut hole" for drugs.

The ACA in Illinois

As mentioned previously, Illinois is partnering with the federal government to run the "marketplace" for the first year since the General Assembly did not pass enabling legislation. For information about ACA in Illinois and "Your Guide to Health Care Reform," check the **Campaign for Better Health Care** (see website below).

The following comes from Campaign for Better Health Care, a coalition with which the LWVIL works. The Affordable Care Act's (ACA) provisions expand access to more than one million uninsured individuals in Illinois. In addition to being the gateway for people to purchase subsidized health insurance, if an exchange is designed well it will also help to organize insurance markets, promote robust competition among health plans, and keep rates affordable for consumers and small businesses.

The Quinn Administration submitted a Blueprint to the Department of HHS stating that Illinois will implement a State Exchange in 2015. For this to occur, the Illinois General Assembly must enact legislation to establish a State Exchange. HB3227 meets this requirement and embraces the principles of a fair and balanced approach in designing an exchange that is both pro-consumer and pro-small business.

Implementation of Obamacare: Springfield Update, May 30, 2013

State-Based Health Insurance Marketplace: Senate Passes HB 3227 – House Blocks Vote. HB3227 was the first Marketplace bill to see any movement in our state. We made real strides this session towards establishing a consumer-friendly state-based Marketplace in Illinois. Our work will continue in the fall veto session.

Advocacy Materials, Briefing Documents at <http://www.cbhconline.org/action/health-insurance-marketplace/>

Myths, Mischief, and Misinformation

There is insufficient room here to do justice to this deliberate campaign of misinformation but there will be handouts at the meeting to elaborate. Meanwhile, here are some sources on the most prevalent. But first: there are NO death panels. Fears raised about this caused Congress to **drop the provision** that would have paid for time spent with your doctor discussing end-of-life decisions like Living Wills and hospice care. Second, the law does not allow the government to get between you and your doctor; instead it prevents the current practice of your insurance company getting between you and your doctor and making decisions on services allowed.

Wendell Potter, the ex-Cigna Exec wrote two articles debunking stories about soaring insurance rates (<http://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/08/12/13158/opinion-reality-check-affordable-care-act>) and <http://www.publicintegrity.org/2013/05/13/12651/opinion-obamacare-myths-and-realities>

Mark Zandi of Moody's Analytics and former Bush economic advisor (and other referenced economists) debunk the myth that the ACA is increasing part-time unemployment in <http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2013/08/20/small-business-hiring/2662407/> and <http://mediamatters.org/blog/2013/09/05/economist-mark-zandi-debunks-myth-that-obamacar/195739>, while <http://www.businessinsider.com/obamacare-is-causing-reduced-hours-for-workers-2013-9> starts by arguing the "intuitive" argument for increased part-time, it ends with "no empirical evidence" and "the jury's still out."

As to opponents' claims that "Obamacare is not 'FAIR' to young, healthy persons" whose premiums are subsidizing older, sicker people. The Washington Post article http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/matt-miller-the-gops-obamacare-youth-hoax/2013/08/21/39a5a3a2-0a5a-11e3-8974-f97ab3b3c677_story.html notes most young people have employer-based insurance. "And at virtually every company, young people pay the same premiums as employees who are much older than they are and who get more expensively sick than they do. In other words, the evil cross-subsidy... already exists, at a vastly larger scale, in corporate America."

Finally, unions do not want to "deep six Obamacare", they are "concerned that [their] members will be taxed for insurance plans already negotiated and locked in" during wage cuts that may be penalized as too "Cadillac."

The Morality & Money of Farm Subsidies & Food Stamps

By Cathy Duoba

By now you know that the House, not satisfied with their previous \$20B cut to the Supplemental Food Stamp Program (SNAP) voted 217 to 210 (with 15 Republicans and all Democrats voting NAY), for a \$39.8 billion cut to food stamps, thereby kicking 3.8 million people (17,000 of them vets) out of the program by 2014, and even more in following years. Though a recent audit found only 1% fraud, proponents righteously proclaimed the cut was a reform to eliminate waste and fraud. They made a 10% cut to eliminate 1% fraud! The vote was "seen as an act of supreme indifference." www.nytimes.com/2013/09/20/opinion/another-insult-to-the-poor.html



But do you know these interesting facts? A Government Accounting Office 2012 Report found that recipients at 2,300 "farms" had grown no crops at all for the past 5 years. Romney won 213 of the 254 counties where the number of food stamp recipients doubled in the last 5 years (Bloomberg News). The SNAP benefit averages \$1.50 per meal per person. The House raised farm aid for crop insurance from 75% to 80%. There were no public hearings on the bill.

Rep. Huelskamp (R-Kansas): Recipients should "Go pick up trash in a road ditch"

His parents' farm received \$1.1 million in subsidies from 1995-2009

His brother's farm received \$1.6 million in subsidies from 1995-2011

Rep. Steve Fincher (R-Tennessee): It is not "Christian...for Washington to steal money from these citizens and give it to others" His own farm got **\$3.48 million** in subsidies from 1999-2012.

Others who voted to cut SNAP but received sizable farm subsidies: Reps. Vicki Hartzler (R-MO), Kristi Norm (R-SD), Martin Stutzman (R-IN)..each received thousands of dollars. In fact, at least 13 who voted AYE have collectively taken millions in subsidies. In the Judicial Branch, judges are required to recuse themselves from taking cases where they have any financial interest. Not so for Congressmen when they take a vote

Meanwhile, since the Bush Administration, we call hungry kids "food insecure." In this bad economy, families are so strapped that SNAP benefits are no longer "supplemental" but a mainstay for many families' food supply. But average farm income is now 15% higher than the average non-farm income.

Military families redeem \$100 million/year in SNAP benefits.

76% of SNAP households contain children, seniors, or disabled persons

58% of SNAP households with an able-bodied adult are the **working poor**

And, even in an economy where there are 3 unemployed for every 1 new job:

In 82% of SNAP households, the adult worked during the previous or following year.

This outrageous vote elicited articles at many websites, from Bloomberg News to the Huffington Post – just Bing/Google it. There is an interesting interactive map on Feeding America, showing where food stamp families live.

Ongoing Impact of 2010 Election

Why League Works To Increase Voter Participation in Mid-term Elections

By Cathy Duoba

Low voter turnout in mid-term elections usually results in the election of candidates with high-intensity, cause-oriented loyalists. The 2010 election was a prime example of this. Besides the passage of state laws restricting women's rights and suppressing voters covered in earlier bulletins, the 2010 election results have impacted the economy through repeated fiscal crises, brought us the sequester and a government shutdown.



Fiscal Crises: due to short-term continuing resolutions used when no budget agreement; cause uncertainty for business and weaken economy

Legislators sworn in on January 1, 2011

#1 First government shut-down threat, 3 months later, April 2011

#2 First-ever debt ceiling crisis, July 2011

#3 Second government shutdown threat, September 2011

#4 Third government shutdown threat, April 2012

#5 Fiscal cliff combination threat, December 2012

#6 Second debt ceiling crisis, January 2013

#7 Fourth government shutdown threat results in shutdown, September 2013

Until one totes up the list, it is hard to realize how harmful these election results and fiscal tactics have been: Not one appropriation bill (must originate in House) has been passed and Fiscal Year ended Sept 30

House has failed to pass their own complete Farm bill or a Transportation bill, and refused to call the bipartisan Senate versions of the Farm, Transportation, and Immigration bills for a vote.

House passed a 2014 budget with further sequester cuts but the Republican Chair of House Appropriations, Rep. Hal Rogers, says that the sequester "must be brought to an end." Rep Rogers is the one who has to squeeze the House budget into the appropriations bills and he says publicly it just "doesn't work."

The Senate also passed a 2014 budget – different version. Under "proper legislative order," both houses select representatives to a Conference Committee to negotiate a compromise budget from the two versions. For the last 6 months, House Speaker Boehner has ignored 18 requests from the Senate Budget Chair, Sen. Patti Murphy, to name the House's conferees and schedule a Conference meeting. FY2014 began Oct 1. Not one single piece of major legislation has passed the House – with the exception of 46 bills to repeal, defund, or mutilate the Affordable Care Act.

Impact of the Sequester

In August, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office reported that if the sequester was ended, we'd see an additional 900,000 jobs by the third quarter of next year. Previous bulletins have listed various impacts on the safety net, e.g. Head Start, Meals on Wheels. But what about 140,000 families losing housing assistance, 500 fire fighters cut from the Forest Service in fire season, the loss of 44,000 public health workers, \$9 million cut from the WIC nutritional program, and \$1.5 billion cut from National Institutes of Health? Also MSNBC The Cycle's Ari Melber has done several reports on impacts to FBI, public defenders, etc.

The Government Shutdown: origins, impact

Is it still a democracy when a small minority rules?

80 House members signed the August letter threatening a shutdown unless Obamacare was repealed.

All eighty come from redistricted "safe" districts.

The combined populations of these 80 districts represent 15% of the US population!

Government Shutdown: The Role of Congress and Honoring Federal Employees

By: Elisabeth MacNamara 10/02/2013 (excerpted from lww.org home page)

The shutdown of the federal government means important business isn't getting done and Congress is failing in one of its primary tasks – to work together to create a better America. As a result, it means that many Americans are having their lives disrupted as important and normally routine government services grind to a halt. In addition, the shutdown is also taking a very real toll on the millions of families whose livelihoods are impacted by the furloughs of the federal workforce [both the workers themselves, neighboring businesses, etc.].

CLEAN AIR



LWVUS PRAISES SIGNIFICANT STEP AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE Carbon Pollution Standard for New Power Plants is a Life-Saving Measure Excerpts from LWVUS press release 9-20-2013

The Obama Administration's EPA proposed a carbon pollution standard for new power plants, an important step in the fight against climate change that the President foreshadowed in a critical speech a few months ago. The President has taken the necessary steps to confront the greatest challenge of our lifetime: climate change. Power plants are the largest emitters of life-threatening carbon pollution in our country and the leading cause of climate change. Reducing the amount of carbon pollution from power plants is a life-saving measure that will protect our children, our nation and the world from the devastating effects of climate change.

Last spring, League helped garner over three million comments to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in support of regulations to cut carbon pollution from power plants. The public is strongly in favor of reducing the deadly effects that carbon pollution has on the health of our children and our environment. Carbon pollution comes at a high cost to all of us, contributing to more frequent and deadly weather that results in billions of dollars of recovery for communities and the federal government each year.

CLEAN WATER

As we learned from representatives of the Lake Michigan LWV at our annual picnic, all eight Great Lakes League of Women Voters states have voted to adopt the League of Women Voters of Michigan Ecosystem Position. We can now act as a unified region when responding to Great Lakes issues as they arise. This is a landmark event in the history of LWVUS and we are eager to establish a system whereby we can implement this newly acquired leverage!

GREAT LAKES ECOSYSTEM POSITION

Adopted 1974, 1981; title amended 1985; Great Lakes Diversions & Consumptive Uses Position and Great Lakes System Position combined 1988; revised 2005

The League of Women Voters of Michigan supports preserving and enhancing the environmental integrity and quality of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Ecosystem. We support the attainment and maintenance of high water quality standards throughout the Great Lakes Basin, with emphasis on water pollution prevention. Water conservation should be a high priority of all governments in the Basin.

The position goes to include specific goals on the issues of Protective Measures, Threats to the Ecosystem, Public Participation, and the Role of Government. Full position at <http://lakemichiganlww.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/mi-natresources-greatlakes-position.pdf>

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

(graphic from Mayors Against Illegal Guns)



According to the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence at <http://smartgunlaws.org/domestic-violence-and-firearms-statistics/>, guns increase the probability of death in incidents of domestic violence. Firearms were used to kill more than two-thirds of spouse and ex-spouse homicide victims between 1990 and 2005. Domestic violence assaults involving a firearm are 12 times more likely to result in death than those involving other weapons or bodily force. Abused women are five times more likely to be killed by their abuser if the abuser owns a firearm. A recent survey of female domestic violence shelter residents in California found that more than one third (36.7%) reported having been threatened or harmed with a firearm. In nearly two thirds (64.5%) of the households that contained a firearm, the intimate partner had used the firearm against the victim, usually threatening to shoot or kill the victim.



Supreme Court and Campaign Financing AGAIN! Excerpts from LWVUS blog by Jessica Jones 09/11/2013

<http://www.lwv.org/blog/supreme-court-preview-mccutcheon-v-federal-election-commission>

The U.S. Supreme Court is set to begin hearing a case that has been labeled the “[next Citizens United](#)”. The case, [McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission \(FEC\)](#), challenges aggregate spending limits that are imposed on individual donors in order to prevent corruption and the appearance of corruption. To understand the full effect that this case could have on campaign finance, it’s important to understand what limits are currently placed on individual donor contributions.

In the 1970s, Congress passed and amended the [Federal Election Campaign Act \(FECA\)](#) following the corruption of the 1972 election season. FECA established contribution limits for individuals and disclosure requirements for federal candidates, political parties and political action committees as well as contributors. The League has advocated that limits to the size and type of contributions from all sources are essential to combat undue influence and corruption in the election and governing processes, lobbied for the FECA, and defended it in the courts.

Individuals can donate \$2,600 per election to a federal candidate, \$32,400 to a national party committee and up to \$5,000 to a non-party political action committee (PAC). But in addition, there is [an aggregate contribution limit](#) of \$123,200 on the total amount that an individual can donate to candidates and party or non-party political committees over a two year period. Removing the aggregate limits on contributions would allow an unlimited amount of money to be contributed by one person to federal candidates. And it would allow an office holder or candidate to solicit an unlimited contribution for distribution to a number of candidates who would become beholden to the office holder when elected. The *McCutcheon v. FEC* case will have a large impact even though it deals with a technical and arcane matter of campaign finance law.

The League has joined [an amicus brief](#) in this case. The brief argues two basic points. First, overturning the aggregate limit would ignore the real world effects that abolishing the limits would have. Second, abolishing aggregate limits would allow the party and PAC systems to become a funnel for candidates across the country and circumvent the other existing limits.

Check out our work on [Money in Politics](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding this case and other actions being taken on campaign finance issue at <http://www.lwv.org/issues/reforming-money-politics>



LWVUS and Elections

LWVUS Statement to the Presidential Commission on Election Administration

The League submitted a statement to the Presidential Commission on Election Administration outlining the five key suggestions the League proposes for improving the polling place experience for voters, including

1. Secure Online Voter Registration
2. Permanent and Portable Statewide Voter Registration
3. Expanded Early Voting
4. Improved Polling Place Management
5. Electronic Streamlining

The League of Women Voters believes these five important steps would accomplish major improvements in election administration that would let voters know that they are the central actors in our nation’s democratic system, just as customers are central to any business enterprise.

On election night, referring to long lines and other problems, President Obama said “We have to fix that.” Subsequently, President Obama established this Commission, co-chaired by the chief legal advisors of the Obama and Romney campaigns. Full statement and more information at <http://www.lwv.org/files/VOTE%20Presidential%20Commission%20on%20Election%20Administration%20LWVUS%20.pdf>



NEWS FROM LWVIL

CHARTER SCHOOLS Ann Courter, from the Oak Park/River Forest League, has agreed to chair the LWVIL Charter Position Update Committee. The first meeting of the committee will be Friday, September 27 in the League office (332 S. Michigan, Rm. 525, Chicago) from 2-4 pm. Please contact issues@lwwil.org.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION On August 19th, Governor Quinn signed HB1189 (sponsored by Senator Kwame Raoul and Representative Michael Zalewski) into law. A background check on the sale of all guns in Illinois is now required as is the reporting to law enforcement of all lost or stolen firearms.



NEWS FROM LWVUS

NC League Applauds DOJ Lawsuit against North Carolina Voter Suppression Law [LWV of NC applauded the U.S. Department of Justice's](#) decision to sue to block implementation of North Carolina's voter suppression law, which voting rights advocates have called the most restrictive voting measures passed since before the civil rights era. The LWV of NC [filed suit](#) against the NC law in August.

Leagues Takes the Lead on the Affordable Care Act State and local Leagues throughout the country have been working to get the word out on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and its pivotal impact on people's lives. Leagues have also been at the forefront of efforts to assure that state governments work with, not against, the ACA in bringing health care coverage to all, especially through Medicaid Expansion.

EPA Announces new Carbon Pollution Regulations On September 20, the Environmental Protection Agency announced the updated regulations on carbon pollution for new power plants, a life-saving measure that will protect our children, our nation and the world from the devastating effects of climate change. Read [our statement](#) praising the administration's steps to control carbon pollution.

League UN Observer Reports on United Nations General Assembly The 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly opened on September 24, 2013. [LWV UN](#) Alternate Observer Margery Cohen filed [a report](#) this week on the work of the General Assembly. In addition, October 1-11, the United Nations will be observing Eleven Days of Action leading up to International Day of the Girl (IDOG) on October 11.

LWVUS statement to Presidential Commission on Election Administration Last week, the LWVUS [submitted a statement](#) to the Presidential Commission on Election Administration outlining the five key suggestions the League proposes for improving the polling place experience for voters. These suggestions include Secure Online Voter Registration, Permanent and Portable Statewide Voter Registration, Expanded Early Voting, Improved Polling Place Management and Electronic Streamlining. The League believes these 5 important steps would accomplish major improvements in election administration & let voters know they are the central actors in our nation's democratic system, just as customers are central to any business enterprise.

League lobbies U.S. Senate on Voting Rights Act & Risks to Climate Change Progress [A letter](#) was sent to the U.S. Senate asking Senators to act to repair and restore the Voting Rights Act to its full effectiveness following the recent Supreme Court decision in *Shelby v. Holder*. Members of the grassroots Lobby Corps will also deliver this message to Senators on the Hill. **Take Action:** Progress on a comprehensive carbon control plan is now being threatened in the Senate. [Tell your Senators to reject bad environmental amendments that will put the health and safety of our children and our future at risk.](#)

Supreme Court Preview: McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission On the second day of arguments in the US Supreme Court's new term, a case that has been labeled the "next *Citizens United*" will be heard by the Justices. [Read our blog](#) to get an overview on *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission*.



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See You October 17th for “Obamacare”

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