



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

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December 2014

Volume 60, 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
Mon, Dec 1		Public Comment period ends for EPA's proposal to set the first-ever limits on carbon pollution from existing power plants. Reminder: Tell FEC "What to do about <i>Citizen's United</i> " at lwv.org
Wed, Dec 10	6:30-8:00pm	LWVIL sponsors National Vigil to End Gun Violence in Chicago Roosevelt University, 430 South Michigan Avenue
Tue, Jan 6	6:30pm	Board Meeting, Connie's House Members Welcome
Thu, Jan 8		51 st Anniversary of the War on Poverty
Fri, Jan 9		Birthday of Founder & First LWVUS Pres. Carrie Chapman Catt
Thu, Jan 15	Doors open 1:30pm Study Materials 1:45pm Video 2:00pm	Rev. M. L. King Commemorative Program – MKL's Birthday Charter School Update, Panel Discussion Video AH Historical Society, 110 W. Fremont, IL
Mon, Jan 19		Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Thu, Jan 22		42 nd Anniversary of <i>Roe v. Wade</i> , established a constitutional privacy protection for women's right to make reproductive decisions and to access reproductive services
Tue, Jan 27	7pm	Board Meeting, Connie's House Members Welcome
Thu, Feb 19	Pizza 7:00pm Program begins 7:30pm	Feb Program "Hot Pizza, Hot Topics" Take Consensus on Charter School Update Study AH Historical Society, 110 W. Fremont, IL
Sat, Mar 7	8:30am – 3:00pm	LWVIL Annual Issues Briefing. SAVE THE DATE THE informative meeting of the year University Center, 525 South State Street

CHARTER SCHOOL UPDATE STUDY



The 2013 State Convention delegates approved a study to update the League's position on charter schools which was adopted in 2001. Given the proliferation of charter schools—particularly in Chicago—this is an issue upon which the League needs to take an informed position.

Since the original 2001 position, there have been many new developments the position does not address:

- the creation of the state Commission on Charter Schools;
- the development of virtual charters;
- the emphasis of governmental policy-makers on promoting charter schools;
- the rapid increase in number of charter campuses: from 19 charters with close to 40 campuses in 2001, to 64 charters with over 140 campuses in 2014;
- the countless studies conducted by educational researchers examining effects of charter schools.

Overview of the Study

One rationale for creating charter schools has been to test whether schools could achieve better results for students if the schools were free from state mandates and the rigid bureaucracy that governs large traditional public school districts, particularly in Chicago. However, recent events in Illinois suggest that more oversight and accountability may be needed to prevent abuses of charter schools' freedom from the transparency and reporting requirements that apply to traditional public schools.

This study is **not** about whether charter schools or traditional public schools achieve better student outcomes or offer more to families. Every school should be considered individually. When describing problems that have afflicted certain charter schools, it is not meant as an indictment of all charter schools. Rather, the primary question guiding this study is whether steps should be taken to tighten the school code so that such problems do not continue to arise.

Because charter schools are publicly funded, the study asks whether they should be held to standards of accountability and transparency which are at least as rigorous as those of traditional public schools.

Concerns have been expressed that focusing attention on charter schools will distract us from working on a critical problem in the state – the serious lack of funding for public education. We urge you to continue to advocate for adequate and equitable school funding even as you proceed with this study.

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MLK Commemoration Program

Thursday **AFTERNOON**

Jan. 15, MLK's Birthday

Charter School Update Panel Discussion

Doors open 1:30 pm, Study materials discussed 1:45pm

Video of panel discussion starts 2 pm

Because problems and issues involving charter schools have become a cause of discussion and unrest, especially in the Black neighborhoods of Chicago, the LWVIL charter schools update study is a particularly appropriate topic for our annual MLK commemoration. This study is **not** about whether charter schools or traditional public schools achieve better student outcomes or offer more to families. Rather the study focuses on questions of transparency and accountability. (See p.2 of this bulletin.)

Since cold and snow can hinder members' ability to attend winter meetings, January was chosen as an afternoon meeting. We will meet in the smaller, front room first since we cannot access the video-viewing room until about 2pm. Both refreshments and study materials will be available for "consumption" before we go to watch the panel discussion. Study materials are also available at <http://www.lwvil.org/charter-schools.html>

The discussion of charter schools can often shed more heat than light.

Our study focuses on questions and problems regarding accountability and transparency.

Join us for a program full of bright light on a cold day.

AH Historical Society – Thursday AFTERNOON – Jan 15



MANNA Cards: Last minute ideas for Christmas

Help yourself while you help the League

Our Manna cards program is up & running again. Let it help you finish your holiday preparations.



Giving gift cards? Use ones from the MANNA list on Mannaexpress.net
Last minute shopping? Another chance to use MANNA cards
And don't forget you can use MANNA cards to buy your holiday groceries

The MANNA company has a new method of ordering. Now choices for manna cards are found on the web under Mannaexpress.net. Choose the alphabetical forms to look at your choices. If interested in a choice, make note of the particular business and the amount.

When you have finished making your choices, total the amount owed and make out a check to LWV AH BG MP. Drop your check in my secured mailbox by Dec. 15.

Questions?? Call Rosemary

(Her address and phone number are on League Membership Roster)

You can pick the cards up at Rosemary's house after Friday, December 19

LWV Fall Finance Drive – Thanks to the 2 Pat L.'s

By Pat Lindner

Our fall finance drive resulted in \$260.00 for our League treasury, from six community donors, including a new donor: the Moorings of Arlington Heights.



The other faithful contributors are Michael Schroeder, DDS; John Cavers, DDS; Friedrichs Funeral Home, Inc; Drost, Kivlahan, McMahon & O'Connor, LLC; and Weissman & Associates, LTD. Craig Weissman is Connie's husband and both Connie and Craig have spent many hours this fall straightening out our League's financial situation. Lastly, a reminder that all the printing and mailing of our bulletin every month is generously donated by the Horner Group, LTD. We sincerely thank our contributors and appreciate their support very much. We encourage our members to patronize our contributors if possible.

A big thank you to Pat Lind for preparing the solicitation letters, at a difficult time in her life.
And another big thank you to Pat Lindner for sending out the letters and following up on replies.



Update of Sept Program: Policing Practices League Positions: Criminal Justice

By Cathy Duoba

The *Salt Lake Tribune*: [Killings by Utah police outpacing gang, drug, child abuse homicides](#)
Cleveland.com: [Cleveland Police Officer shoots 12 yr-old boy carrying BB gun \[Ohio is open-carry state\]](#)
Headlines like these have sparked protests against policing practices nationwide. People are realizing that it's not just the courts and prisons of our criminal justice system that exhibit racially-disparate behavior/results.

The police response. After the aggressive response of a police association to the “hands-up” gesture by some football players, sports columnist Sally Jenkins wrote in the *Washington Post*: “the person in danger of abusing the First Amendment here is not the football player with the edgy gesture in a public stadium or the NFL owner who might want to tell them to shut up to protect advertising, it is the government agent, like say, a cop, who seeks to punish someone for expressing certain views...[because] the First Amendment protects free speech only from government action” – not private backlash.

Libertarian Nick Gillespie (Reason Magazine.com): “What the police spokesman doesn't seem to understand is that he is the one constrained by the First Amendment in this circumstance...[this and police military reaction to peaceful demonstrators] show they don't understand their function in law enforcement.

Justice Dept. efforts under the radar. While Attorney General Holder has been talking publicly about the need to reform of our criminal justice laws and sentencing, the Dept. of Justice (DOJ), with very little fanfare, has been aggressively investigating and enforcing reforms of police departments across the nation.

From DOJ's 2013 **“Civil Rights Investigations of Local Police: Lessons Learned”**

“During the first decade in which the DOJ possessed legal authority to monitor local police departments [1994-2004], 15 city governments entered into consent decrees or memorandums of agreement to address systemic policing issues. **Since 2010, the DOJ has opened investigations into more than 15 police departments.**”

Cities already operating under court enforced settlements with agreed-to reforms and a court monitor, include Albuquerque, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Detroit, **Highland Park IL**, Las Vegas, **Mt. Prospect IL**, New Jersey State Police, New Orleans, Portland, Oakland, Orange County FL Sheriff's Office, Seattle, etc.

Mt. Prospect, Highland Park? Who knew?

Only days after the killing of 12-yr-old Tamir Rice, AG Eric Holder announced that an investigation of the Cleveland PD (requested by the Police Chief) found a “pattern and practice” of civil rights violations: unnecessary and excessive use of deadly force-- unnecessary, excessive, or retaliatory use of less lethal force-- excessive force against persons who are mentally ill or in crisis-- use of poor or dangerous tactics that place officers in situations where avoidable force becomes inevitable. AG Eric Holder: “As a result, the Police Dept. and DOJ have signed an agreement...” enforced by a court and with a court-appointed monitor. Most of these DOJ investigations have resulted in findings similar to those in Cleveland.

It seems progress can be both raucously noisy and quietly purposeful.

Rules of the Road – For Police

There has been an addition to last month's court ruling of guidance to police affirming the rights of citizens to assemble and peacefully protest. MCNBC.com “A federal judge ruled that police can no longer use tear gas on protesters without declaring an illegal assembly, giving them fair warning and time to vacate the area. Meanwhile, Congress just passed a law that requires police to report any deaths in custody to the DOJ. [Remember, the NRA got a law passed saying data on deaths by firearms could not be collected by the feds.]

Real-life lessons re proposed solutions:

One proposed solution: independent prosecutors. In Wisconsin in 2004, Michael Ball, Jr was shot point-blank during a traffic stop. In 48 hours, the officer was cleared. Later, the completed lab reports and autopsy told a different story. Michael Ball, Sr. won a lawsuit for \$1.75M. Using that money, he won a decade-long fight for a new state law. Now in Wisconsin, when a person dies in police custody, the investigation of that death must involve at least 2 investigators from outside the PD and one of the outsiders must lead the investigation.

Another proposal is body cameras: But Jeralynn Blueford recounts that the police officer who killed her son had a lapel camera, but he turned it off when he began to chase her son. When her son fell, he stood over him and shot him 3 times “center mass.” The officer admitted later that he suffered from traumatic stress disorder. She feels that if an officer turns off his camera in these instances, there should be a mandatory jail sentence.

League Positions in the News

NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll, mid-Nov. “What do you want the new Congress to do?” The top 5 policies (listed 1-5): **Lower cost of student loans**, increase spending on infrastructure, raise the minimum wage, emergency funding to deal with Ebola in W. Africa, **limit carbon emissions**. Unfortunately, the top 5 answers were all things that just-elected conservatives are opposed to. Another post-election poll found 64% of Americans want to let illegal immigrants stay here. 59% think the government should limit greenhouse gases. And 61% think Congress should improve Obamacare, not repeal it. Keep talking to others, it’s working!

Early Childhood Education President Obama promised to expand access to Early Childhood Education. Last week, he announced a \$1 Billion public/private investment in early learning programs: “There is no better investment than developing America’s youngest minds. For every dollar invested now, we can save \$8 later on by boosting graduation rates, increasing earnings, and reducing violent crime.” Valerie Jarrett. Obama’s senior advisor says the President still hopes Congress will answer his 2-year-old call to pass funding for every child to receive early learning, but in the meantime, he has worked with Governors and 34 states have agreed to increase early childhood education funding, and now \$330M from private foundations will be leveraged with \$750M from the government to expand early learning programs.



Environment: General News, Looking Good!

EPA Regs. The President’s Climate Action Plan is still moving forward. Here are some upcoming climate regulation actions from Obama Administration due in next month (source: Politico):

Dec 1: EPA proposal to tighten limits on smog-causing ozone

Dec 19: Final rule on toxic coal-ash disposal

Jan 1 Start date of Supreme Court approved rule prohibiting states from polluting the air of downwind states

Jan 8 Deadline for final rule restricting greenhouse gas emissions from future power plants

Commentary on the President’s Climate Action Plan by Chris Hayes, MSNBC commentator

“This is to Obama what Israel/Palestine was to Bill Clinton. In Clinton’s last two years he got very close with Arafat and Rubin, but it didn’t finally happen. Will we have enough put in place in the next two years that the trajectory in the fight against climate change is permanently altered?”

BP/Gulf Spill Reuters: [US Supreme Court rejects BP challenge to Gulf Spill settlement.](#)

Decision on Dec 8. “BP signed a 2012 settlement agreement to compensate businesses claiming financial losses due to the spill. But BP has since argued the agreement has been interpreted improperly by Patrick Juneau, the settlement fund’s court-appointed administrator... The settlement process is separate from other spill-related proceedings. BP has settled U.S. criminal charges, agreeing to pay \$4.5 billion in fines. BP is preparing for a January trial over whether it should pay up to \$18 billion in Clean Water Act penalties. It has put aside \$43 billion to resolve all claims.”



US/China Climate Agreement. Interview with EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy regarding comments by Sen. Inhofe, likely chair of Senate Environment and Public Works Cmte. in January & climate change denier.

Washington Post: [Inhofe denounces US/China Climate deal, calls it ‘hollow’ and a ‘charade’](#)

Sen. Inhofe: “This deal is a non-binding charade.”

Ms. McCarthy: Recognize that China will have to put real economic and social changes in place to achieve these kind of large reductions in emissions in 2030...20% of China’s energy production coming from renewables. 20% of China’s energy production is so large an amount that the US would have to go 100% renewables to equal it. The investment that they need to make...is staggering and will change the way China delivers energy from that point forward. These are big steps forward. Are they the final answer? No. Are they great commitments? Absolutely.

Sen. Inhofe: “I will do everything in my power to reign in and shed light on the EPA’s unchecked regulations.”

Ms. McCarthy: We know we must take action on climate change, one of the biggest threats not just to our environment, but also to our economy. The President’s Climate Action Plan is a great path forward to take action on executive authority – in fact, the EPA’s responsibility is to act against carbon pollution as a threat to public health [affirmed by Supreme Court]. We will work with Senator Inhofe as best we can, **but we are going to fulfill our responsibility** and do what the American people want: to deliver the protection they need for their kids to have a secure future. [“bold” is editor’s addition].

Climate Change

Looking to the Future in Lima, Peru

New York Times: Optimism Faces Grave Realities at Climate Talks

Right now, delegates for >190 countries are gathered in Lima, Peru, to hammer out a draft agreement on GHG emissions that will form the basis of a binding treaty to be signed by world leaders in Paris in Dec 2015. The mood is described as energetic and optimistic.



This mood is important because the work of this group is critical. UN scientists warn that at its current pace, the earth will get 7.2 degrees Fahrenheit hotter by 2100, and much of the damage is inevitable. Even if all fossil fuel emissions were halted today, the temperature would still rise by 3.6 degrees. The choice in Lima is not between today's world and a better one, but "between a newly unpleasant world and an uninhabitable one."

January Temps in November, Climate Change? You bet!

To the extent that climate change is causing hurricanes/typhoons to "super-size," you could have told your crazy, climate-change-denying uncle at Thanksgiving that the freezing cold in Chicago and the lake-effect blizzards in Buffalo were evidence of global warming when he insisted they proved it was a hoax.

7online.com/weather: Super typhoon and the polar vortex: Why it's about to get so cold in much of the country



"WABC –New York. While it might be easy to look north and blame Canada for sending the polar vortex down into the United States, the real cause behind it is happening thousands of miles to the west. The remnants of Super Typhoon Nuri have made their way from the western Pacific Ocean east of the Philippines, up to the Bering Sea between Alaska and Russia. The storm is expected to bring stinging winds and huge waves to the area and may become one of the largest storms to hit Alaska since the 1970s, according to AccuWeather.com.

A Bering Sea super storm may not seem like it would impact temperatures in Chicago and Minneapolis, but a storm of that size has the ability to push the jet stream out of position, forcing arctic air that normally sits much farther north down into the U.S. And that is exactly what's expected to happen this weekend."

Ed. Note: It turns out there are 7 waves in the Arctic jet stream. Nuri was so strong that the effect on the wave it hit lasted until the wave came around again a week later, sending a second polar vortex down to the Mid-west. The bitter cold hit so early that the waters of Lake Erie (already warmer than a decade ago due to global warming) still held their summer heat. Warmer water evaporates faster; and that equals blizzards – twice.



Fracking/Keystone XL

Future hopeful for opponents of fossil fuels, lffy for alternative energy

Research and editing by Cathy Duoba

Two new factors. The sharp decrease in the price of oil has changed the whole economy of oil and energy production. And well-funded opponents of clean energy, like ALEC (the American Legislative Exchange Council), the Koch Brothers, and their allies, have organized an assault on alternative energy.

TV Interview with David Cay Johnston (*Free Lunch*) economist, columnist

Oil production in the US stands at 8.9M barrels/day, up 80% since 2008 (Saudi Arabia produces 9.6M).

The cost of crude oil/barrel peaked in June at >\$100/barrel, but now has dropped 40% to \$60/barrel. The glut of oil on the market is two years old yet prices stayed high. But lately hedge funds and investment bank managers, who speculated in oil and drove up oil prices, have left the oil market – and prices plummeted quickly. What does this mean for opponents of fossil fuels? For the marketability of alternative energies?

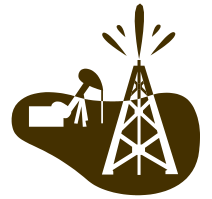
Some Good News

In November, the Keystone Approval vote failed 59 to 41 (60 votes needed). And opposition to the pipeline is growing. A PEW Research poll taken in November showed 59% in support, still a majority, but decreasing. As the economy continues to grow, the "jobs" argument diminishes. The 42,000 temporary jobs listed in the State Dept. report are only 13% of the jobs created in the US in the one month of November alone. Plus, media is investigating some of the supporters' claims.

For example, Washington Post: The Keystone XL pipeline isn't about lowering your gas prices.

Currently there is no legal route through both South Dakota and Nebraska. Opponents of Keystone XL are still waiting for the Nebraska Supreme Court to concur with a lower court decision that the state's decision on the route was unconstitutional. In South Dakota, the construction permit has expired.

TV Interview with David Cay Johnston (*Free Lunch*) economist, columnist
Saudi oil production costs run about \$5/barrel. So, even at these prices, they profit. That's why they opposed the OPEC attempt to limit production in order to increase prices. If the Saudis succeed in keeping oil prices down, it makes it less likely we will see even more expansion of tar sands oil production in Alberta or of fracking in the US.



Fracking in North Dakota is right at the point where production costs equal oil prices. In Alberta, production costs run \$50-\$80/barrel. No Keystone pipeline, so producers must add more expensive rail transport costs. See another aspect of N Dakota fracking in the *New York Times*: [The Downside of the Boom](#)

And Some Bad News

Lower gas prices benefit the low- and middle-income families like a tax cut, but cheaper gas makes alternative energies less attractive, less marketable. AND, there is an organized, coordinated push by conservatives at the state level to eliminate current, or to ban any future, **renewal portfolio standards**. These standards (now in 36 states) require utility companies to use alternative energy to produce a certain percentage of their power by a certain year (depending on the provisions in the state's law). At the federal level, conservatives are working to stop the renewal of current **alternative energy tax credits**. Arguing that Congress shouldn't pick winners and losers, they claim to want a level playing field, but refuse to eliminate subsidies to oil companies. (The large oil companies made \$93B last year, or \$177,000/second.)

The League and its coalition partners are alerting their members to these under-the-radar campaigns, and urging them to monitor their state legislatures for possible needed action. These campaigns are not usually making the mainstream news outlets; one has to go to local newspapers or environmentalist websites to learn what is happening.

TBO.com [the *Tampa Tribune*]: [Deck stacked against renewable energy in Florida, environmentalists say](#)
"...the Public Service Commission's decision last week to dramatically lower conservation goals for Florida's four major utility companies. Programs that offer rebates for installing solar panels...cost companies such as Duke Energy millions of dollars each year." The Duke Energy (of coal-ash spill infamy) goal was lowered from 333 gigawatt-hours to 21. Florida also terminated solar rebate programs as of 2015.
See also nrdc.org: [Renewable Energy in Florida](#)



Additionally, in some states like Arizona, Oklahoma, and Florida, the efforts of ALEC, the Koch Bros, and their allies have convinced conservative-controlled state legislatures to pass laws requiring **alternative energy** users to pay a **monthly fee** to the power companies or to eliminate renewable energy portfolio standards. Next stop? Kansas: The *Wichita Eagle*: [Next legislative session could be end for Kansas' renewable energy standard](#)

LA *Times*: [Koch brothers, big utilities attack solar, green energy policies](#)

"In Arizona, a major utility and a tangle of secret donors and operatives with ties to ALEC and the Kochs invested millions to persuade state regulators to impose a monthly fee of \$50 to \$100 on net-metering [solar] customers." They ran an ad referencing Solyndra and claiming taxpayer dollars were being given to solar energy companies "in California-style corporate welfare." (Under backlash, fee dropped to \$5/month).

Bloomberg Business Week: [Arizona's New Fee Puts a Dent in Rooftop Solar Economics](#)

thinkprogress.org/climate: [Oklahoma Will Charge Customers Who Install Their Own Solar Panels](#)

"Oklahoma residents who produce their own energy through solar panels or small wind turbines on their property will now be charged an additional fee, the result of a new bill passed by the state legislature... after no debate...attached to another bill.

"[power companies] said the surcharge is needed to recover some of the infrastructure costs to send excess electricity safely from distributed generation [solar panels, wind turbines] back to the grid. **But distributed energy sources also provide a clear value to utility companies.** Solar generates during peak hours, when a utility has to provide electricity to more people than at other times during the day and energy costs are at their highest. Solar panels actually feed excess energy back to the grid, helping to alleviate the pressure during peak demand. In addition, because less electricity is being transmitted to customers through transmission lines, it saves utilities on the wear and tear to the lines and cost of replacing them with new ones."



Reaction to Pres. Obama’s executive order on Immigration VERY POSITIVE!!

Dailykos.com: [New CNN poll: Americans overwhelmingly support Obama's action on immigration](#)

Contrary to conservative warnings, “Americans are very positive on the idea of immigration reform. So it’s no surprise that a new poll from CNN/ORC of adult Americans confirms exactly that, finding strong support for the plan Barack Obama announced last week to halt deportations of undocumented immigrants.”

[After explaining who gets deferred deportation, the poll asked]

“Do you think that plan goes too far, does not go far enough, or is about right?”

Too far: 26 About Right: 50 Not far enough: 22 Undecided: 1

That’s a bare majority who outright favor Obama’s move, plus another 22 % who presumably are on board but would like to see him do more. In other words, adult Americans back the president by an overwhelming 72-26 margin.

Republicans are fighting the wrong battle in trying to oppose this.” (Download poll from dailykos.com)

Pres. Obama’s executive order – Lawless tyranny or Statutorial discretion?

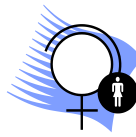
Julian Epstein, former House Judiciary Cmte. Counsel: “The President is on very solid legal ground because the immigration statute makes it expressly clear, in Sec. 274, that the Secretary of Homeland Security not only has the discretion for ‘deferred action,’ but also has the discretion to issue work permits. This discretion has been validated and acknowledged by the Supreme Court a number of times.” As to precedent, Mr. Epstein noted the best example is Bush 41, who deferred action for 1.4 million undocumented individuals because they had a family member who was legalized.

The Old Gives Way to the New

As one Congress/state legislature ends and another begins, what is the future for League priority issues?

Immigration. House Republicans have pushed back by funding the Dept. of Homeland Security only until Feb 27, but the deferred action program is self-funding through fees/fines. Sadly, the majority of undocumented persons cannot be helped by executive order, including the parents of “dreamers.” They remain living under the threat of discovery and deportation. Both the League and the general public (see several polls) want them legalized, but the hard-fought, bi-partisan Senate bill dies with the 113th Congress and newly-elected Republicans are even more conservative and anti-immigrant than their re-elected colleagues.

Women’s rights. “Heartbeat” bills, which ban **abortion** at as early as 6 weeks, are gaining support in several conservative states, most recently in Ohio. *Columbus Dispatch*: [Heartbeat bill passes committee.](#)

 On **sexual assault in the military**, a recent Rand Corp. study at the military’s request found assaults increased by 8% in 2014 (to 20,000/yr), yet the number of confirmed complaints decreased. Victims are still afraid to come forward since 62% of women queried, who had filed complaints, reported they were subjected to social/professional retaliation. US Rep. Jackie Spiers (D-CA), House Armed Services Cmte:

“Our amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act to have sexual assault cases taken out of the chain of command was ruled out of order by the House Rules Cmte. We will continue the fight next year. We have gained support from some Republicans who realize you shouldn’t have those who are not trained in the law making decisions about whether or not to hold a court martial.”

Campaign Finance Reform. [opensecrets.org: Money won on Tuesday, but Rules of the Game changed](#)

“The real story of the election’s campaign finance chapter was not which side had more resources, but that **such a large chunk of the cost was paid for by a small group of ultra-wealthy donors** using outside groups to bury voters with an avalanche of spending. Both sides had plenty of support from outside spenders, but Republican and conservative outside groups outpaced the spending of Democratic and liberal ones.”



Politico: [Inside the Koch data mine.](#) It seems the Kochs have poured “...10’s of millions of dollars into a data company that is developing detailed, state-of-the-art profiles of 250M Americans...linked to consumer data from credit bureaus...social networks...TV viewing...brand of car. [They have] developed in-house expertise in polling, message-testing, fact-checking, advertising, media buying, dial groups, and donor maintenance.”

Gun Safety. Sunday, Dec.14, 2nd Anniversary of Sandy Hook massacre of 20 children, 6 teachers. Since then, US schools average 1 shooting/wk for a total of 94, per new *Everytown* report. Total inaction by Congress has shifted focus to state legislatures. Even so, Rep. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) sees bipartisan support for a federal mental health bill which better coordinates resources for families in need (Lanza family had problems getting proper resources for the shooter). Rep. Murphy: “The NRA spent two decades building up a political infrastructure; we must learn from them and do the same.”

Civil Liberties: Senate Intel Cmte Report Attacking the Messenger OR Discussing the Message

Researched and edited by Cathy Duoba



The Senate Intelligence Committee's Report on the CIA Interrogation and Detention Program began as a bi-partisan effort with a united vote because tapes of interrogations had been destroyed by the CIA. Over time, concern over the tapes faded; the country's partisan divide widened. The final study vote was along party lines.

Two different issues are being debated: (1) the Enhanced Interrogation Techniques (EITs) "saved lives" and were both necessary in our time of crisis and effective in producing accurate and actionable information, and (2) the only valid issue is that EITs are torture in anybody's estimation and torture is illegal, violating both our own laws and our international treaty obligations, and therefore must never be done again. Besides which, study of the CIA's own 20 examples prove information solicited through EITs was often inaccurate, wasted time and resources, did not "save lives," and reliable information was available through other means.

Important Points

Make a distinction between information that came from the "detention program" as a whole and information from "detainees undergoing enhanced interrogation."

Recent State Dept. Statement: The laws against torture apply to US officials acting overseas in areas under the jurisdiction of the US government including military bases [areas under other governments? "black sites"?)

Under torture, the terrorist al Libi told the CIA that Iraq was conspiring with al Qaeda. This information was widely broadcast during the push for war against Iraq.

Thoughtful Comments

Alberto Mora, fmr General Counsel of the Navy, wrote a 2002 memo to Defense Dept., fought for and won an end to abusive interrogation practices by the military, in 2006 he received the JFK "Profiles in Courage" award "Every military lawyer I've spoken with after 9-11 and every 3 or 4 star general, including combatant commanders, have felt the use of torture...was damaging to the US effort in the war on terror and a strategic mistake... Once we committed to torture, we were locked into a narrative that torture was legal, necessary, effective. We couldn't even admit that these methods were torture. Activities took place, the narrative was established, and for credibility it had to continue and mistakes could not be admitted...the most troublesome aspect of the Senate report: the CIA sought to circumvent Congressional Oversight and deliberately misled their own Inspector General, the Justice Dept., the Defense Dept., the Sec. of State, & the general public."

Sen. John McCain: "The most important lead we got in the search for bin Laden came from conventional interrogation methods. I think it's an insult to the many intelligence officers who acquired good intel, without hurting or degrading prisoners, to assert that we can't win this war without such methods. We can and we will. ...This is not about our enemies. it's about us."

Glenn Greenwald, The Intercept, First Look Media

"If nobody is prosecuted, we turn the whole issue into a policy debate where Republicans say it was necessary for national security and Democrats say it wasn't. But torture is not just a policy debate, it's a crime. A crime under our statutes and our treaties and I wish it had been treated as such."

Ari Melber, fmr Counsel, US House Judiciary Cmte.

"The question of legal authorization is very important because it goes to whether this program was rightfully authorized at the time or whether there was misinformation and deceit to obtain the sign-off. Simple example: If you get clearance from your lawyer to build a three-story addition to your house and then you go back and build a skyscraper, you can't go back and cite your lawyer's memo to say you had clearance."

Sen. Angus King (I-Maine): "For years the CIA made all these assertions about how well it worked and saved lives. When we gave them our report to review [with the 20 examples discredited], their assertions changed to: 'whether or not it worked was unknowable.' It migrated from certainty to unknowable, which speaks volumes...When defenders say: It works, it works, in effect they are saying we should do it again in the future."

ACLU Exec. Dir. Anthony Romero: "No one has been held accountable and no one's been charged with a crime...It is almost inevitable that these arguments for torture will be resurrected the next time there's a crisis."

CIA Dir. John Brennan: "We CIA are not [now] in the detention program." BUT "I defer to the policy-makers in future times when there is going to be the need to ensure that the country stays safe if we face a similar type of crisis." [Words from State Dept. and from CIA indicate this WILL be done again].

NEWS FROM LWVUS



TIME FOR ACTION

The Federal Election Commission (FEC), the federal agency in charge of our nation's campaign finance laws, is now receiving public comment about steps they should take "to address corruption in the political process." The FEC can do something to stop the secret money polluting our elections and end coordinated expenditures by outside groups. Take action now at lwv.org to tell the FEC to act. We really need you to respond!

Thank You for Supporting the EPA's Clean Power Plan! League members and supporters collected over 48,000 comments in support of the EPA's Clean Power Plan! The EPA will now work to finalize the regulation by June 2015. Afterwards, states will be tasked with drafting plans to implement the regulation in 2016.

League supports President's Executive Order on Immigration. The League supports a system for such immigrants to earn legal status, and the League does not support deporting such immigrants with no history of criminal activity until such a path to legal status is achieved. The President's executive order is an exercise of discretion that the League position clearly anticipates.

League Encouraged by U.S. Senate Vote on Keystone XL Pipeline The U.S. Senate voted on Tuesday to defeat S. 2280, a bill that would have approved the Keystone XL Pipeline. It was a close, 59-41 vote, that the League called "a decision that puts the health and safety of Americans ahead of blind reliance on fossil fuels."

League Urges Congress to Fund CHIP The League joined 1,200 leading national, state, tribal, and local organizations urging Congressional leaders to provide continued funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Congressional action is needed in the lame duck session to ensure state programs continue.

The Constitutional Amendment Study & the Money in Politics webpages can now be found on the LWVUS's Member Resources website. These two webpages include information on the scope of the study and review.

NEWS FROM LWVIL



TIME FOR ACTION

As the Illinois General Assembly returns to Springfield for the final days of the 2014 Veto Session, these are **three** (3) pieces of legislation on which we encourage you to add your voice in **SUPPORT**:

- Election Day Registration (SB172, Amendment 1)
- Illinois State-Based Health Insurance Marketplace (SB636, Amendment 5)
- Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution (SJRC0075)

LWVIL urges you to voice **OPPOSITION** to

- House Bill 3796 is a bill that reduces government transparency by limiting the ability of citizens to seek public records under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Fair Funding for Schools, SB 16, does include a weighting system; it is not adequate to ensure equity for Illinois schools. Urge postpone a House vote until further public hearings are held.

The Annual Issues Briefing will be **Saturday, March 7, 2015** at University Center Conference Chicago.

LWV Cook County

LWVCC sent a letter to President Preckwinkle and Commissioners Daley and Suffredin asking that they consider carefully:

- 1) What Board committees are needed to assist the Board in its role as both policy-maker and as budget-overseer, and
- 2) Who should chair these committees to ensure they fulfill their role.

Our Budget and Structure Committee decided in the spring of 2014 to review the Board of Commissioner's committee structure and operations and provide suggestions, knowing that these are reviewed and revised every four years following the election when all the Commissioner positions are on the ballot.

LAKE MICHIGAN LWV

Lake Michigan LWV participated in the public comment period regarding an important rules clarification on the historic Clean Water Act, which the League of Women Voters helped to pass.

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<p>James R. Murray Jr. Manager</p>  <p>Lauterburg & Oehler Funeral Home 2000 E. Northwest Highway Arlington Heights, IL 60004 847-253-5423 Fax 847-253-9532 Cell 847-910-8230 jim.murray@sci-us.com</p>	<p>Be Inspired.</p> <p>THE MOORINGS OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS A @Presbyterian Homes Community</p> <p>Independent Living, Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing & Memory Care</p> <p>Call (847) 956-4304 or visit www.presbyterianhomes.org</p>

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Connie Weissman
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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