



Voter

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Moving Beyond Elections Reflections Elisabeth MacNamara

Each year we seek to reform the process in order to move democracy forward and make sure the act of voting gets easier, not harder. But, this year opened with an unprecedented attack on voting rights. LWVs across the country met this challenge head on. In many states we worked with a wide variety of partners and civil rights leaders to successfully battle back against illegal purges of voter rolls, onerous voter photo ID requirements, and attacks on our longtime independent voter registration drives. These struggles took place in state legislatures, state, district and federal courts, and as ballot initiatives. The culmination of this work came when 11 states’ suppressive laws were stopped in time for Election Day, and **when voters in Minnesota soundly rejected a proposed constitutional amendment requiring voter photo ID in future elections. This victory marked the first time that voters rejected such an initiative.**

Read the entire blog entry
<http://www.lwv.org/blog/moving-beyond-election-reflections>



December Calendar

- December 4, 2012 – 7 pm**
LWV SLP Board Meeting
Location: Judy Cook’s home
- December 12, 2012 – 12:30 pm**
Unit 2 Meeting
Topic: Lively Issues
Location: Parkshore Card Room
- December 20, 2012 – 7 pm**
Unit 3 Meeting
Topic: Lively Issues
Location: SLP City Hall

Upcoming Events

- January 8, 2013 – 7 pm**
LWV SLP Board Meeting
Location: Aggie Leitheiser’s home
- January 9, 2013 – 12:30 pm**
Unit 2 Meeting
Topic: Echo Video
Location: Parkshore Card Room
- January 19, 2013 – 10 am**
CMAL
Topic: tbd
Location: tbd
- January 26, 2013 – 10 am**
Legislative Interviews & Chili Lunch
Location: Union Congregational Church

December Unit Meetings

The December Unit meetings will be a review of the State and Council of Metro Area Leagues (CMAL) positions also known as the Lively Issues discussion. See the materials elsewhere in this *Voter*. This meeting helps us become more familiar with the positions LWV has taken over the years at the state and regional level that support our ongoing policy and advocacy work. This meeting is a chance to identify any issues or positions that need another look and to recommend further study. Its also an opportunity to raise new issues deserving of a study that might lead to a consensus.

Additional information is available on page 4.

President's Message

During this time of Thanksgiving, special thanks to all of you who made the effort to vote by absentee ballot or go to the polls for the 2012 election. Minnesota once again was the nation's leader with about 76 percent of eligible voters casting votes. Closer to home, Hennepin County had an 84% turnout. The Minnesota Secretary of State said almost 3 million Minnesotans cast their ballots – a record number. We should all take a minute to be proud of our state's record. The voter turnout for the country was a disappointing 57.5%. We all still have much work to do to see the numbers for turnout continue to grow.

Special thanks to all the League members who helped with voter registration, candidate forums, and constitutional amendment educational events, displayed signs or distributed voter information, served as election judges or encouraged family and friends to become involved and educated voters. Clearly, our organization is an important part of our citizenship responsibilities to encourage every eligible voter to take advantage of their RIGHT to vote.

Our efforts will continue to be needed to monitor local, state, and federal government activities now that the election is over and the work of governing begins or actually as it continues.

December is traditionally our month to review League positions on issues to determine if they are still relevant, need slight revisions, need considerable updating, or a new issue is in need of study. When a new issue is identified for study, it is brought to the membership at the annual meeting to determine if there is support for more review of background and current status. The study is then reviewed by members at unit meetings for consensus on the recommendations. If there is no consensus on a particular point, then it does not go forward. This same process is used at the regional, state, and national levels. This year we will be reviewing the State and CMAL –Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues. See the current positions elsewhere in this issue of the Voter. We will also take a bit more in-depth look at the position and current issues in gun control. I hope you join us for interesting discussions.

—Aggie Leitheiser, LWV SLP President, 952-938-6255

Highlights from the November 2012 LWV SLP Board Meeting:

- Reviewed Election Day activities and experiences at the polls.
- Reviewed candidate forums and new format of more questions. General agreement that the forums were very successful.
- Discussed upcoming November unit meetings on Citizens United Briefing paper
- Highlighted West Metro meeting on November 10 on judicial selection.
- Made final arrangements for Phonation on November 27 to raise funds for Dollars for Scholars
- Reviewed plans for gift wrapping at Barnes and Noble to raise funds for Dollars for Scholars
- Discussed upcoming events in December and January
- Gathered materials and reports to complete the Voter Service Grant Final Report
- Raised questions about the proposed change in organizational structure at LWV Minnesota. Will gather more information to be ready for discussion at Convention in 2013.



Worth Noting

Important Links

www.vote411.org/

Find your polling place

View your ballot

<http://www.lwvmn.org/page.aspx>

League of Women Voters Minnesota

<http://www.lwv.org/>

League of Women Voters United States

<http://www.lwvslp.org>

League of Women Voters St. Louis Park

Children First Asset #3 Other Adult Relationships

Did you know 46% of St. Louis Park young people report receiving support from at least three non-parent adults? Are you that caring supportive adult for the youth in your neighborhood and community? Even though they might not say it, our kids need you! Start a conversation and take interest in the young around you today.

Assets In Action Asset #8 - Youth as Resources

If you voted in St. Louis Park, you may have spotted a high school student election judge. On Election Day 48 local students helped at voting sites through out the city. These students were trained to assist the adult election judges with setting-up voting booths, checking the voter ID lists, directing voters to the correct polling station if they are at the wrong place and all the other tasks that make our democratic election system work.

Recycle your printer cartridges and other technical extras. Bring them to any Unit or Board meeting. We can send them in for money. Proceeds will go to support the Dollars for Scholars Scholarship.

Gift Wrapping

LWV members will once again be wrapping gifts at Barnes and Noble in the Ridgedale store prior to Christmas. Volunteers are needed to wrap for shifts of two or three hours.

Please volunteer by contacting Dorothy Karlson for one of these times: December 14, Friday, from 10:00 to 10:00 and December 16, Sunday, from 10:00 to 2:00. Thanks for helping with this fund raising project for our LWV.

Why I Joined the League of Women Voters

Carlota Medus

I joined LWV SLP because I wanted to be more informed and more involved in election related issues, and the political process.

Working on a single candidate's campaign or a single party was unappealing to me - I was more interested in the "bigger picture".

LWV's involvement at the local level, studying current issues before taking a position on those issues, and efforts to provide information to the public from a non-partisan perspective are the reasons I joined.

Editor's Note:

Why did you join the League? Send in a paragraph to me, deb.brinkman@gmail.com. I'll publish a story a month. It will be great information for the profile of our League members.

2012 Changemaker

[Minnesota Women's Press](#) recognizes LWV Minnesota for their work to defeat the Voter Restriction Amendment!

The article appears in this month's issue of the Minnesota Women's Press, available in several newsstand locations around Minnesota and online.

December Unit Meetings

Notice for December meeting

The December Unit meetings will be a review of the State and Council of Metro Area Leagues (CMAL) positions also known as the Lively Issues discussion. See the materials elsewhere in this *Voter*. This meeting is for us to become more familiar with the positions that have been taken over the years at the state and regional level that support our ongoing policy and advocacy work. This meeting is a chance to identify any issues or positions that need another look and to recommend further study. It's also an opportunity to raise new issues deserving of a study that might lead to a consensus.

In addition to the overview of the issues, this year we are going to take a closer look at the state position on gun control and gun control status in general. Here are a couple facts to start you thinking:

1. Minnesota is among the top 10 states with the lowest gun related deaths
 2. Minnesota ranked 12th out of 50 states based on a 29-point score from the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence – having enacted a modest amount of gun violence prevention laws.
 3. Local governments in Minnesota generally lack authority to regulate firearms or ammunition, and Minnesota generally requires county sheriffs to issue a permit to carry a handgun to any applicant who meets certain basic qualifications.
 4. In 2009, 336 people died from firearm-related injuries in Minnesota. That year Minnesota was a net importer of crime guns — guns originally purchased in another state that were recovered after being used in a crime in Minnesota.
- The Unit 2 meeting will be Wednesday December 12 at 12:30 at the Parkshore Senior Campus Card Room. The meeting is hosted by Barbara Aslakson who will lead the discussion about the program positions/lively issues. The group will be joined by Heather Martens, Executive Director of Protect Minnesota, a group that works to promote education on prevention of gun injuries and deaths and to prevent illegal access to guns.
 - The Unit 3 meeting will be Thursday December 20 at 7:00 in the St. Louis Park City Hall Community Room. The meeting will be hosted by Aggie Leitheiser who will lead the discussion on the program positions/lively issues. Materials and information on Minnesota gun control status and issues will be provided for discussion.

LWV Minnesota



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
MINNESOTA

Educate. Advocate. Reform.™

Judicial Selection

Should the way that Minnesota selects its judges be changed? That was the topic of programs held by three local LWVs in November 2012. The program sponsored by the West Metro Alliance is available for viewing [online](#) and St. Louis Parks Civic Channel Video on Demand, <http://vimeo.com/53636367>. The guest speaker was Sarah Walker, president of the Coalition for Impartial Justice. <http://www.impartialcourts.org/>

LWV Minnesota is a member of the coalition and supports judicial reform. The report of the LWV Minnesota Judicial Selection Study Committee explains our position. You will find the report and other materials on judicial selection on our [website](#).

Legislative Interviews

Each year, members conduct interviews with the legislators in their area. This is an important way for members to create a positive, working relationship with their legislators and to help LWV and its members be more effective voices in Minnesota legislative affairs. Materials for the interviews are posted in the [Member Resources](#) section of the LWV Minnesota website.

We have posted a list of interview assignments. Some assignments have changed as a result of redistricting. *Please contact us if there is an error in the district(s) assigned to your LWV, if you would like to interview a legislator not assigned to you, or if you are unable to interview a legislator.* Contact Sherri Knuth, 651-224-5445 or sknuth@lwvmn.org

Action Committee Seeking Volunteers

The Action Committee meets bi-weekly during the legislative session on Fridays from 11 AM to 1 PM. Teleconferencing is available, so you can join us from anywhere in the state! Our next meeting is Jan. 18.

We particularly need new lobbyists on campaign finance reform, higher education and mental health. Or if there is an issue you are particularly interested in, let us know.

We will help you get started and provide a mentor if you would like one. For more information, please contact the co-chairs, Kathy Tomsich ktomsich@comcast.net 651-490-1809 and Jeanne LeFevre jjlevre@comcast.net 952-545-8696



LWV United States

It's Time to Fix our Fiscal Policy

You are here

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November 30, 2012 | by Jessica Jones | Tags: fiscal cliff, fiscal policy, social safety nets

January 1, 2013 is the deadline for our financial future. At that time, taxes will go up for every American and steep cuts to government programs will happen across the board. This is the so-called "fiscal cliff" that needs to be avoided. While avoiding the "cliff" is important, it is much more important to use this opportunity to set our nation on a new fiscal path that ensures a brighter future for ALL Americans, not just a few.

This new direction has to set our country on a fair and stable financial path. Specifically we must increase revenue, protect the social safety net, reduce defense spending and carefully manage the deficit. While this seems like a tall order, the League believes that Congress and the President can take advantage of the historic opportunity they have been given to provide a long term solution to this financial crisis.

Today, more than 20 million people are in need of full-time work, and unemployment continues to hover around 8 percent. Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and essential services for low-income people must be maintained. Millions of seniors, children, people with disabilities and others depend on these programs and they should not be cut.

With the current state of the economy, our nation must have a truly balanced approach to spending and taxes. Congress must restore a fair and progressive tax system in order to provide needed revenue and ensure social equity. This includes allowing tax cuts that benefit only the richest two percent to expire on schedule.

Securing substantial new revenue from those with the greatest ability to contribute will allow our nation to meet reasonable deficit reduction goals, invest in education and infrastructure and protect the programs that meet basic human needs. If we balance our spending with our revenue, America can get back on the path to strong and stable financial security.



TAKE ACTION

WARNING – FINANCIAL CRISIS AHEAD! With a January 1 deadline fast approaching, when steep and unsustainable spending and tax cuts will harm the economy, the time has come for our leaders to come together and move our country forward with a new direction for federal fiscal policy.

Congress has an historic opportunity to support a new direction for federal fiscal policy. [Tell Congress to fix the "Fiscal Cliff."](#)

The League of Women Voters supports a federal fiscal policy that recognizes the importance of a fair tax system, that provides for social needs, and that will carefully manage the deficit and the economy.

It's time to recognize we need change and to take things in a new direction. [Join us in telling Congress to support a new direction for federal fiscal policy.](#)

More than 20 million people are in need of full-time work, and unemployment continues to hover around 8 percent. But budget "hawks" are pushing for huge spending cuts that will harm the economy. At the same time, the top two percent of taxpayers are not paying their fair share. Millions of seniors, children, people with disabilities, and others are depending on social programs to get by. Our fiscal policy must support people in need, while carefully balancing the deficit with the needs of the economy.

America is facing a financial crisis. [Tell Congress to provide a long-term solution by increasing revenue, protecting the social safety net, reducing defense spending, and carefully managing the deficit.](#)

Thank you for taking action and supporting a responsible fiscal policy.

**League of Women Voters
1730 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036**

LWV Positions For the December Lively Issues Discussion

Please bring this to the December Unit Meetings.

The full 18-page report is available from the LWV Minnesota website,
<http://www.lwvmn.org/document.doc?id=266>

1. GOVERNMENT

Election Laws

LWV Minnesota Position: Support improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections.

Alternative Voting Systems

LWV Minnesota Position: Support the option to use Instant Runoff Voting to elect State or Local Officials in single seat elections. LWV Minnesota also supports the continued use of the plurality voting system in our elections. The LWV Minnesota Board reserves the right to decide the appropriateness of legislation proposing to replace the plurality voting system with the Instant Runoff System at the state level.

LWV Minnesota Position: Support the right of local governments and municipalities to choose Instant Runoff Voting for their own local elections. Voters need to understand how votes in an election are tabulated and how a candidate actually wins an election. If a change in elections systems occurs, LWV Minnesota supports adequate voter education. LWV Minnesota does not support Approval, Borda Count, or Condorcet as alternative voting systems. (2005)

Election Process: Apportionment

LWV Minnesota Position: Support timely redistricting based substantially on population and affecting all state and local governmental bodies.

Campaign Finance

LWV Minnesota Position: Support improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

Citizens Rights, Open Meetings, and Open Records

LWV Minnesota Position: Democratic government depends on informed and active participation at all levels of government. Governmental bodies must protect the citizens' right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible, (Principles, 1974, 1982)

Individual Liberties and Reproductive Choice

LWV Minnesota Position: Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. (1983)

Positions, continued,

Organization of government

LWV Minnesota Position: Support improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and executive branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support timely redistricting based substantially on population and affecting all state and local government districts. Oppose unicameral state legislature.

Initiative, Referendum and Recall

LWV Minnesota Position: Support the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments; oppose most forms of voter initiative and referendum on statutes; opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

Financing State Government

LWV Minnesota Position: Support a balanced and diversified revenue system that is equitable, competitive with other states, progressive and reliable. Support long-term financial management, projections and a budget reserve. (1995)

2. JUDICIARY

LWV Minnesota Position: Support a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

Selection of Judges

LWV Minnesota Position: Initial appointment of judgeship by the governor, choosing from list forwarded by nominating commission

- End-of-term evaluation of judges' performance by an evaluation commission; results made available to the public
- Retention election: voters choose to retain or not retain the judge (2008)

Corrections

LWV Minnesota Position: Support a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. **LWV Minnesota Position:** Support sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

Death Penalty

LWV Minnesota Position: Support of abolition of the death penalty; Opposition to its reinstatement in Minnesota.

Positions, continued

3. NATURAL RESOURCES

Air Quality

LWV Minnesota Position: Support measures to reduce air pollution from vehicular and stationary sources.

Transportation

LWV Minnesota Position: Government Spending: support maintaining "a viable statewide transportation system, including public transit".

Land Use

LWV Minnesota Position: Support an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local level, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

Water Resources

LWV Minnesota: Support a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs.

Solid Waste

LWV Minnesota: Support measures to reduce generation of solid waste and ensure safe treatment, storage and disposal of all wastes.

Agriculture

LWV Minnesota Position: Support a system of sustainable agricultural production which provides safe, healthful food and which preserves and protects the state's human and natural agricultural resources and enhances the environment; research and technical assistance in farming practices and rural economies that improve the economic viability of family farms, environmental health, and the quality of life of family farmers and their communities.

Hazardous Waste

History of state action

LWV Minnesota supported the adoption by the state Legislature of the Waste Management Act of 1980, and has continued to support citizen action as the Waste Management Board seeks to site waste facilities.

Positions, continued

4. SOCIAL POLICY

Equal Opportunity

LWV Minnesota: Support policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

Housing

LWV Minnesota: All people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing.

Immigration

LWV Minnesota Position: support incorporating immigrants into our communities by providing access to education, by endorsing the development of secure identification documents, and by respecting the right of law enforcement personnel to perform their duties without the burden of interpreting federal immigration policies. Oppose residents with legal immigrant status running for local office.

Child Health

LWV Minnesota: Support access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care. (1987)

Teenage Pregnancy

LWV Minnesota: Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. (1988)

Alcohol and Tobacco Use

LWV Minnesota Position: support educational programs that advance improved chemical health.

Mental Health

LWV Minnesota Position: Support a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents. Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services. (1989)

Prevention of Violence

LWV Minnesota Position: Support violence prevention programs in our community.

Firearms

LWV Minnesota: Support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota.

Child Care

LWV Minnesota Position: Support coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state.

Child Support

LWV Minnesota Position: Support stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

Child Protection

LWV Minnesota Position: Support adequate staffing and resources for child protection services. (1986)

Family Violence

LWV Minnesota Position: Support improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence. Support improved services for the victims.

Positions, continued

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

LWV Minnesota Position:

- * Support increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance. Support equal access to education, employment and housing.
- * Support policies to ensure equal opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons.

Financing of Education

LWV Minnesota Position: All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

Collective Bargaining and Tenure

LWV Minnesota Position: Support improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

Library Funding

LWV Minnesota Position: Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

CMAL POSITIONS AT A GLANCE

Metropolitan Council

Supports the Metropolitan Council as the decision-making body for metropolitan needs in accordance with these criteria: efficiency and economy, equitable financing, flexibility, citizen control and responsiveness to the electorate. CMAL supports provision for coordinated metropolitan services focused through the Metropolitan Council, and supports retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council with greater use of existing powers. (1969, 1976, 1993, 2001)

Funding/Financing

CMAL supports area-wide sharing of fiscal resources to move towards the solution of problems created by fiscal disparities and to finance services which benefit the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole or affect the lives of all its citizens. (1970, 1997)

Financing Metropolitan Services

CMAL supports operating and maintaining the metropolitan systems and services with a mix of funding sources specific to each service (federal, state and local funds and user fees). If a supplemental fund is created, CMAL supports additional user fees, new or increased, appropriate to the service. (1985)

Environment

CMAL supports a requirement that local governments adopt implementation ordinances for protection of environmental quality for review and approval by the Metropolitan Council.

Health

CMAL supports the continuation of health planning and coordination at the metropolitan level with state and/or regional funds, if federal funds are reduced (1981)

Housing

CMAL supports the Metropolitan Council as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority acting as an administrative agency providing technical assistance to communities requesting service. CMAL opposes an independent regional body separate from the Council to own and operate subsidized housing. (1981)

Housing/Health Care for The Aging

CMAL supports local planning for the housing and service needs for the elderly and disabled in the community, and the preparation of a local "Blueprint for Action". CMAL supports local ordinances which allow for the provision of housing and services necessary to meet the needs of the aging. (1989)

Land Use and Environmental Quality

CMAL recognizes that increased pressures for development in the entire Twin Cities area indicate the need for a strong public voice in land-use decisions. CMAL supports metropolitan-level planning, programs and policies directed toward channeling development in ways that will: (1) preserve and enhance the natural environment, (2) use public investment to the best advantages, and (3) provide area residents with diversity in choice of facilities and amenities. (1972)

School Integration/Desegregation

CMAL supports the following measures to achieve school integration/desegregation in the metropolitan area: (1991)

- Mandatory participation by school districts
- Voluntary participation by students
- A combination of student exchanges, magnets and incentives
- A combination of incentive plans for school districts and individuals funded by state money
- Redrawing of school district lines (as necessary)

CMAL positions, continued....

Transportation

CMAL supports the Metropolitan Council as the single metropolitan agency to plan and coordinate a diverse transportation system, meeting varied needs, and to have approval authority over this system's major capital expenditures. New funding sources should be service related. (1983) (Also see LWWUS position)

Solid Waste

CMAL supports the establishment by the Metropolitan Council of a system for controlling the flow of solid waste for recycling and resource recovery. (1981)

Water Supply

CMAL supports the Metropolitan Council as the agency to plan and coordinate the water supply needs of the region. (1995)

County Government

CMAL supports measures to ensure accountability and visibility of county government. Also, CMAL supports measures to improve cooperation and communication between the Metropolitan Council and county government within the metropolitan area. (1975)

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Citizenship Ceremonies Submitted by Deb Brinkman

Citizenship Ceremonies were held at Hamline University in St. Paul on Friday, November 16. There were 2 ceremonies. The first ceremony had 149 new citizens from 41 countries. The second ceremony also had approximately 150 new citizens. Judge Frank presided over each ceremony. A half hour before the ceremony, LWV members encourage each perspective citizen to complete their voter registration form. We hand out pens, explain which boxes to check, help many write their 'new' name. After the ceremony, we collect the Voter Registration forms. We are one of the few states where the LWV is allowed to participate in the preparation of the Citizen Ceremonies.

Judge Frank commented on the commitment of these new citizens. "You have worked much harder to be a citizen than I did, which makes your citizenship a much richer experience... We honor your sacrifice.... We are a better country with you than without you."

To the sponsors and others who are already United States citizens he asked that we read the oath and use this as an opportunity to renew our citizenship. He also reminded everyone that the diversity of our country is a core strength of our country.

The ceremony closed with a video of President Obama addressing the new citizens and reminding them of their responsibilities of being a citizen and finished with a video playing "Proud to be American". I know I felt a little prouder.



Shirley Bierma and Bonnie Skelton
received instructions before the ceremony.



Taking The Oath

"Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can."

-John Wesley



HealthCare

Elizabeth Lienesch, Saying Yes to a Healthier Minnesota
Posted on November 14, 2012

Health Care Leader Abby Schanfield gets out the vote to defeat the Voter Restriction Amendment.

Throughout the summer and fall, TakeAction health care team members pounded the pavement and called thousands of voters, asking them to vote no on November 6th. Last week, we saw the result of all that work as two hateful amendments were defeated in our state. Saying no to those amendments felt great. And seeing them both defeated felt even better.

But now, a week later, we're ready to say goodbye to no and move on to yes. And as we look to the health care work TakeAction Minnesota will be doing this legislative session, we feel a sense of that "yes" most clearly in the opportunity we have to improve and expand our MinnesotaCare program.

This session, our newly elected legislature will have the chance to make major and long lasting changes to our state's health care system through the creation of what's called a Basic Health Plan. A key part of the Affordable Care Act, the Basic Health Plan would mean maintaining, improving and expanding the current MinnesotaCare program in our state.

It would mean saying yes to a healthier Minnesota – the Basic Health Plan will provide affordable, high-quality health care to 120,000 people in our state, some of whom are currently on MinnesotaCare and some of whom would be newly covered.

It would mean saying yes to a more stable state budget – the Basic Health Plan draws down more federal dollars than we've had access to before, making it a good deal for our state budget.

It means saying yes to a stronger public health care system in our state in both the near term and the longer term – the Basic Health Plan allows us to build new and improved health care infrastructure, the kind of infrastructure we need as we envision a state where EVERYONE has access to affordable coverage.

This session, TakeAction Minnesota, along with allies from around the state, will be asking our newly elected representatives to vote yes to create a Basic Health Plan in our state. And as happy as we were to be part of the vote no movement during this past election cycle, we're even more excited about moving forward and saying "yes" to the health of our state.

Elizabeth Lienesch

Elizabeth is TakeAction Minnesota's Deputy Training & Organizing Director. She is leading our work to protect and expand MinnesotaCare in 2013.



Ask President Obama to help keep Asian Carp out of Minnesota Waters
Take Action Today

Photo courtesy T. Lawrence, Great Lakes Fisheries Commission

Asian Carp are voracious eaters which grow faster and compete better than native fish species, thus toppling the food chain and disrupting ecosystems – they are also on our doorstep. Asian carp were caught at the mouth of the St. Croix River, near Hastings, Minnesota, this past April.

In order to protect Minnesota's waters we have to stop, slow and control their progress. This means stopping their spread above the Twin Cities, slowing their entry into Minnesota along the Mississippi River while continuing to develop effective long-term control measures. We can do this but the time is short.

President Obama can play a key role in this effort. He has placed a high priority on keeping Asian carp out of the Great Lakes and significant progress has been made there. However, in order to protect Minnesota's waters we have to keep an eye on all fronts. Ask President Obama to provide regional coordination, agency prioritization and sufficient funding to keep Asian carp out of Minnesota.

Take Action: Contact President Obama

http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2155/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=10657

Dear President Obama,

Thank you for protecting the Great Lakes from invasive carp! Unfortunately, Minnesota waters are threatened by Asian carp from multiple directions. We also need focus on the Upper Mississippi River and Upper Missouri River in addition to the Great Lakes. We can't leave any door open to these unwanted invaders. Our Minnesota economy and heritage depend on preventing the introduction of these pests.

Please provide regional coordination, agency prioritization and sufficient funding to keep Asian carp out of Minnesota. The Council for Environmental Quality has provided critical leadership in efforts to keep the invasive carp from the Great Lakes. Similar regional coordination is needed here to manage the efforts of multiple states and federal agencies. The Army Corps of Engineers and US Fish and Wildlife Service also need to make it a priority to cooperate with state agencies and the public in efforts to do as much as possible to halt and slow the progress of Asian carp. Finally, additional funding is necessary to support control efforts and research. In the short term, as much funding as possible from current agency budgets should be directed to these efforts. Down the road, additional funding needs to be included in your budget requests.

As has become abundantly clear, when dealing with invasive carp, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Thank you for your consideration.



Observer Reports

Observer Coordinator: Dorothy Karlson 952-935-4051

Dorothy Karlson is coordinating the 2012 – 2013 Observer Reports. If you can attend a City Council Meeting or School Board meeting and type up a brief review of the meeting, please contact Dorothy at 952-935-4051. Remember to wear your pin at the meetings – our presence at the meetings is noted and appreciated.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
Making Democracy Work®

Your source for voting information: <http://vote411.org/>

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Membership Dues (Dues and subscriptions are not tax deductible.)

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- Supporting/Member-at-Large \$50.00
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- Add me to The Voter eMail Distribution List (free)

Make checks payable to LWV SLP

Send your check and this form to:

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

LWV Mission Statement

LWV, 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. www.lwvslp.org