



Voter

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October Calendar

- October 2, 2012 - 7 pm**
LWV SLP Board Meeting
Host: Debbie Blake
- October 10, 2012 - 12:30 pm**
LWV SLP Unit 2 Meeting
Topic: Video “That’s a Family”
Location: Parkshore Card Room
- October 18, 2012 – 7 pm**
Unit 3 General Meeting
Topic: Video “That’s a Family”
Location: St. Louis Park City Hall
- October 20, 2012 – 9:30 am**
CMAL Meeting
Topic: The Graying of the Metro Area”
Location: Minnetonka City Hall
- October 23, 2012 – 7 pm**
Candidate Forum – General Election
District 46, Senate and House
Location: St. Louis Park City Hall

Upcoming Events

- November 6, 2012**
Election Day!
- November 7, 2012 – 7 pm**
LWV SLP Board Meeting
Location: Eilseen Knisley
- November 10, 2012 – 9 am**
West Metro
Topic: Appointment or Election of Judges
Location: St. Louis Park City Hall
- November 14, 2012 – 7 pm**
LWV SLP Unit 2 Meeting
Topic: Citizens United Briefing Paper
Location: Parkshore Card Room
- November 15, 2012 – 7 pm**
LWV SLP Unit 3 Meeting
Topic: Citizens United Briefing Paper
Location: St. Louis Park City Hall
- November 27, 2012 – 6 pm**
Dinner and Phonathon
Topic: Citizens United Briefing Paper
Location: Deb Brinkman’s Home

October Unit Meetings

The October Unit meetings will focus on the Marriage Amendment as well as provide a review and history of amendments to the Minnesota Constitution and the Defense of Marriage Act which is current Minnesota Law. We’ll also have some discussion about how the process is different for Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

Unit 2 meeting: October 10, 12:30 Parkshore Senior Campus
Unit 3 meeting: October 18, 7:00 City Hall

Paper Voter Guides Now Available
Candidates on the issues.
In their own words.
LWV General Election Hotline
651-224-5445
800-663-9325

President's Message

September 25th was National Voter Registration Day. LWV St. Louis Park participated by having a registration table at the West End ICON Theater. Thanks to Eilseen Knisely and Carlota Medus for organizing the event and to those who helped register voters or thanked others who are already registered. We registered 18 people at this event. We also distributed the 2012 Voter Guide that includes information on all the state-wide candidates. If you don't have a copy, you can pick one up at Target or give me a call and we'll see that one gets to you.

October Unit meetings will include a discussion of the proposed constitutional amendment on marriage. We'll also bring the current "Defense of Marriage Act" and a little history of other Minnesota Constitutional amendments so there will be some context for this year's proposals.

Are you getting your fill of campaign ads? Hold on because we have over 5 weeks to go. We'll be discussing the impact of the Citizens United Supreme Court ruling on funding of campaigns at the November Unit meetings so start thinking of the issues and questions you have about how that has changed the ways that candidates and parties support campaigns. I also hope you have a big red circle around Voting Day on November 6 OR you've gotten your absentee ballot. They are available at City Hall.

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

Highlights from the September, 2012 LWVSLP Board Meeting:

- Reviewed summer events and plans for September and October Unit meetings
- Discussed arrangements for October 23rd Candidate Forum
- Decided to raise funds for the Dollars for Scholars fund by participating in the LWV Minnesota Phonathon (November 27) and book wrapping at Barnes and Nobles. Reviewed thank you letter from the 2012 scholarship recipient.
- Discussed local activities to provide education about LWV opposition to the Voter ID amendment, including Kiwanis, church events, Menorah Apartment candidate fair. All members are encouraged to continue to discuss with family and friends.
- Scheduled shifts for the voter registration event on September 25 – National Voter Registration Day
- Reviewed input and advice from our State Membership and Leadership Coach. We agreed to write our individual 'story,' about why we joined LWV and what it means to us. We will start with the Board members and move on from there.
- Board members signed up for observer activities at School Board and City Council.
- Distributed lawn signs encouraging people to vote.



Worth Noting

Important Links

www.vote411.org/

Find your polling place

View your ballot

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

League of Women Voters MN

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

League of Women Voters United States

<http://www.lwvslp.org>

League of Women Voters St. Louis Park

Informal Meeting / Discussion on the Voter Amendment hosted by Take Action MN

SLP Library Thursday Oct. 25th at 7 p.m. an informational meeting and discussion on the Voter Amendment.

Additional discussion times can be arranged for senior citizens who may want to get out during day time hours. Contact Joanne Boyer 952-920-0954 or arrange an additional date/time.

Reference information from Advance Placement on page 16 in *The Voter*.

National Voter Registration Day Was September 25

LWV SLP set up a table in the lobby of the West End movie theatre. There was extra movie-theatre traffic due to a movie screening.

We helped 18 people pre-register for voting.

The biggest 'rush' was just as we were preparing to close down.

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.

Take Care When Recycling Batteries

Rechargeable, button and alkaline batteries can catch fire in transport unless you put some clear tape over the terminals or put them in separate plastic bags. This prevents short circuiting. It is probably not very green putting them in plastic bags, but there doesn't seem to be much else for an alternative if you can't get the tape to stay on the terminals.

There are battery drop-off spots all over the county, but the closest for us is at the SLP branch of the library - right in the lobby.

Met Council

Click on this link, to see a presentation on the workings of the Metropolitan Council by our very own representative - Jim Brimeyer. Feel free to share with your friends.

<https://vimeo.com/48960959>

Children First Asset #1 - Family Support

Did you know 69% of St. Louis Park young people report their family life provides high levels of love and support? Have you told your children, niece, nephew or grandchild lately that you care about them? In what ways can you support teens in your family? One of the best ways is to ask.

New and Improved!

www.VOTE411.org website

Metro Blast

Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) QUARTERLY MEETING
Saturday, Oct. 20, 2012
9:30 - 12:00 pm

Shady Oak Room, Minnetonka City Hall
146 Minnetonka Blvd, Minnetonka, MN 55345

You're invited to come for coffee, mini-orientation, information, sharing and discussion

Program: The Graying of the Metropolitan area: What's Ahead for Everyone

With speaker: LaRhae Knatterud, Director, Aging Transformation for the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), where she has worked for 15 years. She is chief staff for Aging 2030, a project to prepare the state for a permanent shift in the age of the population, beginning with the large baby boom generation that started turning 65 in 2011. Ms. Knatterud coordinates DHS efforts on long-term financing reform. She has authored several legislative reports on matters such as long-term care and more recently preparing Minnesota for attending to clients with Alzheimer's disease.

CMAL was created in 1962 with the goal of increasing knowledge and effectiveness of metropolitan area Leagues and the public in addressing metropolitan governmental issues and problems.

All members of local Leagues in the seven county metro area are automatically members of CMAL and are encouraged to attend Quarterly meetings. The public is invited.

For Information: Geneva MacMillan, 952-934-3000, meandmao2@aol.com

12 hours To Master the Affordable Care Act

<http://www.mnbudgetproject.org/events>

Do you find the Affordable Care Act a little daunting?

Are you wondering what it will mean for your organization and the people you serve?

Over the course of 12 lunch hours, you can get the information you need to make sure that Minnesota makes health care reform decisions that are in the best interest of your community. This lunch hour series gives you the opportunity to hear experts talk about the Affordable Care Act – and ask your questions.

Come for one hour; come for them all, to learn how you can make a difference!

All lunch hour discussions are held from noon to 1 pm at the
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
2314 University Avenue West, Saint Paul

Events are free – bring your own lunch!
Please RSVP to cwessel@mnbudgetproject.org.



Press Release

Contact: Aggie Leitheiser, President
(952) 938-6255

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August, 2012
LWV SLP And Children First Build Partnership

Representing the LWV SLP, Deb Brinkman recently participated in the Children First Asset Champion training conducted by Karen Atkinson of the St. Louis Park Children First program.

Deb Brinkman is an active member of LWV SLP, serving as Vice President and Voter Editor. She also helped found the LWV SLP Scholarship program through the Dollars for Scholars program at St. Louis Park High School.

The Children First program was initiated after Carl Holmstrom's "It Takes A Village" speech to the Rotary Club. For generating community activity, Carl and community leaders did not dictate what needed to be done, but asked "What can you do?" Carl's speech inspired the community to focus their efforts on making a difference to youth in our community.

Funded through donations, the Children First program contracted with Search Institute that determined that the more 'Assets' a child has, the more likely the child is to succeed. The Search Institute developed 40 assets targeting school-aged children. These assets are communicated, supported and applied through school, after school and faith-based youth programs.

In the four hour training session, attendees were briefed on the inception of the Children First initiative, reviewed several statistics as they related to St. Louis Park children and were introduced to the 40 assets. Many of us already apply behaviors to support assets. Trainers encouraged us to intentionally apply these behaviors. Supplementing the assets is the SPARK concept. SPARK encourages an individual, child or adult, to actively engage in an activity related to their passion.

Commenting on the Children First program, Deb said, "The Children First initiative's continued success is driven by acceptance and application by the entire St. Louis Park community. It has become part of the St. Louis Park culture – unlike a project that has a defined start and a defined end."

Asset Champion training is encouraged for anyone who engages with St. Louis Park youth. To become a Children's First Asset Champion, contact Karen Atkinson. There is no charge for the training.

LWV is 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. Membership in LWV is open to men and women of all ages. With more than 90 years of experience and 800 local and state affiliates, LWV is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

LWV Minnesota

Protect voting rights

Ensuring that every eligible citizen is able to exercise their right to vote is a priority for LWV Minnesota. Our agenda for voting rights in the 21st century includes

- Opposing photo ID requirements for voters
- Establishing early voting in Minnesota
- Modernizing our voter registration system.

Opposing Photo ID requirements for voters

Things are not always what they seem, and that is the case with calls to require photo ID from voters, including those already registered. Efforts to require photo ID in elections play on people's fears about voting fraud without the evidence to back up the claims. Proponents often rely on misinformation and flawed data about voter fraud and election administration, as well as exaggerated claims about the security a photo ID requirement can provide. In the mean time, approximately 10% of eligible voters do not have photo IDs and would have significant barriers to getting one in order to vote.

Establishing early voting in Minnesota

Early voting allows voters the opportunity to cast their ballot in-person prior to Election Day on the same voting equipment as those used on Election Day rather than using an absentee ballot. Currently, 32 states have some form of early voting. Rather than having to wait until Election Day, those voters are able to find a date in the window of time available before Election Day to vote without having to worry about unanticipated health issues, irregular and uncertain work schedules, or any other complications that arise in modern life that may make it difficult to get to the polls. Minnesota does not yet allow for early voting. LWV Minnesota believes that doing so would help many eligible voters exercise their rights and be a step forward for voting rights.

Modernizing our voter registration system

Our voting rosters are the backbone of our election system. The accuracy of the lists of registered voters is critical for ensuring the integrity of the system, as well as making sure that citizens who have registered to vote are able to do so, hassle-free, on Election Day. Our current system that relies on paper voter registration cards, handwritten information, and manual data-entry would be improved by using technology that is currently available to permit online registration, as well as automatic registration for eligible citizens when they apply for or renew their driver's license or state ID card. In states that have moved to these kind of systems, the error rate has gone down while participation among young people - who are currently underrepresented at the polls - has gone up.

LWV United States

Using Facebook to GOTV (NEW)

A recent study has gotten a lot of media attention and we want to draw your attention to it! According to the study, "About 340,000 more people turned out to the polls on Election Day in 2010 because of a single message to 60 million Facebook users." It reveals that users who saw messages in their Facebook newsfeeds from friends who had voted were more likely to vote than those who saw no such message, i.e., those who saw pictures of friends that they were deemed to be closer to, based on the amount they interacted with each other on Facebook, were more likely to be influenced positively. Imagine the kind of cascading effect you might launch among your friends on Election Day! The takeaway for us is how valuable Facebook and the personal ask can be in all aspects of League activity - so take a picture of yourself at your polling place when you vote and share it with your friends, asking them to vote, too.

Promote Truth in Campaign Advertising in Your Community! (NEW)

Non-candidate (3rd Party) TV ads are flooding our airwaves, threatening to spread misinformation, and leaving voters confused and disgusted. To educate citizens about the facts of such ads, the LWV is partnering with the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania on a Truth in Campaign Advertising project. Kathleen Hall Jamieson created this special video in appreciation of all League members who are joining this effort and represent the trusted local citizen voice. You also may listen to the recording of a web conference call we had on this subject last week.

Opportunity to Inspire and Educate Youth

Looking for a great way to educate high school and college students about the requirements to be President of the United States and how primaries, caucuses, general elections and the Electoral College work? LWVUS is partnering with the Office of Citizen Services and Innovative Technologies of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) to add our logo to the winning entry of the Kids.gov poster contest. We will be sending your League a full-color poster to display at events, local libraries and schools along with a letter on how to order more posters at no cost to you. Look for these in the mail. Together we can Power the Vote! For more information, contact Pam Sterner (psterner@lwv.org).



**With 6 Weeks to Go,
Thousands of Minnesotans Gather
for 300 House Parties Across State
to Defeat Amendment**

Friday, September 21, 2012

"One Day United" to Bring 20,000 People to More Than 300 House Parties Across State To Spark Conversations About Voting 'No' on Freedom-Limiting Marriage Amendment

MEDIA ADVISORY

Contact: Kate Brickman, Press Secretary
Phone Number: 612-460-1219

September 21, 2012 – Saint Paul, MN – Capitalizing on unprecedented energy and momentum, more than 20,000 people are expected to come together Sunday, September 23, for an historic 300 house parties aimed at defeating the hurtful, freedom-limiting marriage amendment. These house parties, happening with just over 40 days until Election Day, will bring people together across the state to spark conversations with their friends and family about what marriage means and why they are voting no on November 6.

With parties planned across the state, including Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Duluth, Mankato, Rochester, Moorhead, and more, Sunday promises to engage thousands of Minnesotans in the efforts to defeat the amendment that would limit the freedom to marry for committed gay and lesbian couples in this state.



Volunteer Opportunity

Tuesday, September 25, 2012
October 2, October 9, October 16, October 23, October 29
MN United Conversation Drive – St. Louis Park

Sign up to participate in a conversation drive with Minnesotans United For All Families!

We are canvassing to talk to either known supporters or undecided voters. Our talks with supporters are to invite them to a conversation drive in order to build the largest grassroots campaign in Minnesota history. We talk to undecided voters to have conversations with them about why marriage matters and ask them questions about where they stand on the issue. This is a voter conversation drive unlike any you've ever done before! Each conversation drive includes training on how to talk to either supporters or undecided voters, and ends with a group debrief.

This is the most important work you can be doing at this point!

To sign up, contact Skyler@mnunited.org or call 507-219-9940.

Location:

Union Congregational UCC
3700 Alabama Ave.
St. Louis Park, MN, 55416

Start time: 6:30 P.M

End time: 9:30 P.M

Hosted by: Minnesotans United For All Families

Civility in Public Discourse Submitted by Aggie Leitheiser

Topic: Civility and Arrogance in Public Discourse. Speaker Elizabeth Nordland - with Minnesotans United for All Families.

Elizabeth Norland has a degree from St.Thomas/St. Catherine's in social work. She became involved when she observed that the legislative discussion last session wasn't civil or respectful and she wanted to make a difference. She is currently working for MN United for All Families against the marriage amendment. The conversation covered primarily the marriage amendment issues and how that is being addressed. We also discussed the relationship to the Voter ID/Voter Suppression proposed amendment.

The evening started with a discussion about what came to mind when we heard the words "civic discourse". Some of the audience suggestions were: respect, conflict, misinterpretation, negative words, no advantage to the truth, talking past each other. The world has gotten more polarized making a discussion of issues more difficult at the individual and policy maker level. There are some techniques that can make our individual conversations more comfortable and more productive in sharing our views and maybe having an impact on the other person.

Conversations matter when you are discussing an issue. You need to make an emotional connection - not just talk about facts. It is important to share why you are passionate about an issue and to talk from the heart. If you are getting angry when the other person doesn't agree - rethink whether the goal of the conversation is to change their minds or to share with the other persons and to both listen and talk. It's best to identify triggers that make you angry before the conversation so you can either avoid those triggers or be ready to manage your emotions. You should also know that the other person may have triggers too so be careful of strong words like "discrimination" that may be seen as an insult to their beliefs.

When people are convinced of something that may not be based in truth but they truly believe an "untruth", you also need to be careful of the words you use. Don't label them or make fun of them or put them down. Rather, listen carefully and acknowledge their feelings and respond with why you feel the way you do - not just facts.

The media often use messages that are fear driven and use sound bites that don't give adequate details- whether in ads, news, or You Tube type postings. Be aware of what is behind the way the message is being delivered as well as what the message really says. We discussed several campaign fact-checking options to be able to check whether what is being said is based in facts. We also discussed that many campaign ads are emotionally based, not factually driven and how that may influence how you respond to the message.

When discussing an issue with someone, develop a personal connection, open a conversation and invite the person to share and ask how they feel. It's important to listen to them (not just be thinking about what you want to say). Reassure that you heard how they feel. Respond with your feelings and why you are involved in the issue - not just the facts. You may not change their mind but you may have opened their eyes to another way to think about things. Always be respectful. Thinking through a difficult issue takes time and is a journey. Don't write them off just because they didn't agree with your point of view right away.

Civility in Public Discourse, continued

Other ideas include - make it your goal that the conversation goes well - and be prepared to offer opportunities for the other person to learn more. They may be ready for more facts about an issue after your discussion.



Elizabeth Norland, United for all Families

Editors Note:

You will also see our article published in the LWV Minnesota Newsletter!

Who is Paying the Parties?

Elisabeth Macnamara Huffington Post Blog

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elisabeth-macnamara/special-interest-money_b_1857891.html

The growing influence of money in politics threatens to corrupt our representative form of government, where the people -- through their votes -- are supposed to make the decisions. With the Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United, we seem to be headed toward recognizing only the most explicit forms of corruption, where a candidate agrees with a donor to vote a certain way when elected, to justify limits on big-money in campaigns. But special interests that seek and receive special access, special consideration and special treatment once the candidate is elected to office also corrupt our politics and distort the democratic process where the voter is meant to come first.

As the Republicans convene in Tampa and the Democrats in Charlotte, it is a good time to reflect on the impact special interest money has, not just in elections, but on the political parties through their national conventions. Both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions have a history of corporate and lobbyist contributions. For example, lavish parties at the national conventions highlighting Members of Congress and sponsored by lobbyists and lobbying organizations in order to gain favor or influence have been staples of convention activities for decades. The influence lobbyists and their organizations can have over elected officials has been well documented, and the League of Women Voters (LWV) has been at the forefront in seeking to limit this influence.

LWV recently joined with our coalition partners in a letter asking members of the U.S. House to honor new congressional ethics rules prohibiting Representatives from participating in parties at the national conventions that are paid for by lobbyists or lobbying organizations and are held to "honor" them. The new rule was put into place to limit the favor and influence lobbyists and lobbying organizations gain by holding these parties.

For the convention itself, the Republicans openly accept direct corporate donations and display corporate sponsorship from the likes of Chevron, Coca-Cola, Google, and Ford on their host committee website.

This year for the first time, Democrats proudly proclaimed that they would not accept corporate donations to provide the sizable financial backing needed to host their national convention. However, a new group, the New American City Inc., is accepting big-money, corporate donations to pay for convention-related activities for the Democrats.

Last month, Dan Murrey, the executive director of the Democratic National Convention's host committee, Charlotte in 2012, explained:

I guess it comes down to how you define 'the convention.' The distinction we've drawn is that there are official convention activities that are in the program, that are gavel-to-gavel, have minutes, the whole bit. And then there is all the stuff that happens outside of that.

At the League, we aren't so sure it is so easy to draw boundaries between the 'official' business at the conventions and the other events and activities happening in Charlotte and Tampa during the conventions.

While the two major political parties are showing different sensitivities to big-money, corporate and special interest donations, there's clearly a flood of money coming to both conventions in some manner, with the special interest influence that won't be far behind. These special interests are betting big money not only with the conventions, but also on the elections -- and spending huge sums to attempt to ensure the outcome they desire.

We know the best and only response to the flood of money is a flood of voters. Those voters are deciders in the race for president and for every election race from the top of the ticket to the bottom. Empowering those voters to show up at the polls is a job the League has always welcomed and has always done well!

This election season, LWV is doing everything we can to ensure voters have all of the information they need to cast their ballots. We recently launched a new and improved VOTE411.org, a website that provides voters with a personalized voting guide containing up-to-date information needed to cast a ballot. Since 2006, VOTE411.org has provided millions of voters with information, including absentee and early voting options, registration deadlines, ID requirements, the candidates' vision for America's future, and other important updates regarding any changes you can expect to see at the polls this year.

In addition to turning out a flood of voters on Election Day, we are also working towards solutions to limit the influence of money in politics. We've joined with our coalition partners to urge President Obama to fix the broken Federal Elections Commission which is tasked with policing money in elections. Short of stemming the tide of unlimited money flowing into politics, we are strong advocates for disclosure requirements so that voters know where the money is coming from. And we are committed to educating the public on these issues and providing the information they need to make informed decisions.

We may not know the outcome of the election in November, but we already know it is one of the most important elections of our lifetime. Voters this November will be voting on the issues that most directly impact them and their communities. They'll be voting on the economy, jobs, health care, the environment, and education, to name just a few. They'll be voting because it is important to them, their neighbors and their community and because voting is one of the few ways we have to take control on these critical issues facing our nation.

For more than 90 years, the League of Women Voters has been fighting to make democracy work. We continue to work to create an equal, open and honest election process and to maximize citizen participation.

This post is part of the HuffPost Shadow Conventions 2012, a series spotlighting three issues that are not being discussed at the national GOP and Democratic conventions: The Drug War, Poverty in America, and Money in Politics.

BRENNAN CENTER
FOR JUSTICE

at New York University School of Law

Empowering Small Donors in Federal Elections

By Adam Skaggs and Fred Wertheimer

08/22/12

The breakthroughs in small donor fundraising that have occurred in presidential campaigns demonstrate the potential that exists for greatly increasing the role of small contributions in federal elections by magnifying their importance with multiple matching funds. The future of campaign finance reform must include an effort to bolster the power of small donors by amplifying their political voice. Congress can do that by adopting a small donor empowerment program for federal elections. The report is the first to show how a small donor matching fund model — used successfully in New York City, and elsewhere — could work for Congressional elections.

Download the Report (PDF) http://brennan.3cdn.net/b71b1ef6391b3a4813_5jm6bwz6j.pdf

Executive Summary

Our government is broken. Partisan gridlock and armies of special interest lobbyists prevent Congress from acting to solve the serious problems facing the nation. On the issues that matter most to Americans, Congress often does nothing. And when Congress does act, it is all too often on issues that favor narrow interest groups that funnel millions of dollars to elect our representatives.

The surge of unlimited, often secretive spending in the wake of Citizens United threatens to make this situation even worse. Our money-drenched campaign finance system prevents Congress from working in the public interest. Moreover, as history has shown, unlimited and secret money in politics leads to scandal and corruption.

At the same time, recent years have seen the beginning of a far more positive trend: breakthroughs in the rise of small donors in presidential elections. Beginning a dozen years ago, and spurred on by Internet tools that make political giving easier, small donors began to play an important role in some presidential campaigns. Candidates from John McCain in 2000 and Howard Dean and John Kerry in 2004 to Ron Paul and Barack Obama in 2008 were lifted by small donors.

But even as Obama raised unprecedented amounts of small donations in 2008, he still was raising substantial amounts in large gifts from traditional sources. And Members of Congress continue to raise funds the traditional way, heavily from lobbyists and PACs.

There can be no doubt that small donors — of both major parties, of all ideologies, from all over the country — can play a new, positive role in our politics. Citizens must be engaged as an alternative source of funding to the role being played by influence-seeking donors.

The breakthroughs in small donor fundraising that have occurred in presidential campaigns demonstrate the potential that exists for greatly increasing the role of small contributions in federal elections by magnifying their importance with multiple matching funds. The future of campaign finance reform must include an effort to bolster the power of small donors by amplifying their political voice. Congress can do that by adopting a small donor empowerment program for federal elections.

Empowering Small Business, continued...

A system in which small donations to federal candidates are matched with public funds at a multiple ratio would increase the importance of small donations and increase the incentive for a broader base of voters to participate in funding elections. Such a system could transform political candidates into agents of civic participation who focus on mobilizing their constituents, instead of lining up special interest fundraisers. Financial involvement in elections, even in small amounts, serves as a “gateway” to other forms of engagement in the political process — like displaying lawn signs, volunteering for campaigns, canvassing voters, and passing out campaign literature — and studies show that small donors are more likely to engage in this kind of participation.

The system would be strictly voluntary: candidates could opt to participate — and thus to be eligible for public matching funds — in exchange for agreeing to lower contribution limits, limits on the use of their personal wealth, and new reporting requirements. Other candidates could choose to forgo public funds and continue to finance their campaigns in the traditional manner.

The digital age we live in holds great promise for magnifying the role and importance of small donors. Technological breakthroughs in raising and giving small donations through the Internet and social media in combination with a system of multiple matching funds for small contributions could have a revolutionary impact in the way campaigns are financed in our country.

While the transformative power of a small donor matching program would be profound, the design of such a system is comparatively simple. The following components are derived from years of experience with, and analysis of, public funding systems — including the highly successful program developed in New York City. This proposal contemplates a small donor matching program that would be available for primary and general election campaigns, and would include the following elements as the core of a small donor empowerment program to fix federal elections:

- A 5-to-1 match on in-state contributions up to \$250. Donors could give larger contributions, but only the first \$250 would be matched. A \$100 donation would yield an additional \$500 in matching funds; a \$250 donation would yield an additional \$1,250 in matching funds.
- Reducing contribution limits by half for participating candidates. The existing limit of \$2,500 per individual contributor (per election) would continue to apply to candidates who chose not to participate in the small donor matching program. For candidates who did participate, the maximum individual contribution would be reduced by 50 percent, to \$1,250 per election.
- A cap on public funds available per race — \$2 million for a House candidate and \$10 million for a Senate candidate — but no expenditure limits for candidates. Spending limits are not viable in the post Citizens United world of outside spending groups. Subject to the cap, the amount of public funds a candidate received would depend on the number of small donations the candidate raised. Even after receiving the maximum public funds, candidates would be able to raise (and spend) additional funds privately — subject to the contribution limits applicable to participating candidates.

Empowering Small Business, continued

- A qualifying threshold to ensure that public funds were not disbursed to uncompetitive or marginal candidates. Before becoming eligible for public funds, House candidates would need to raise \$40,000 from at least 400 donors, and Senate candidates would need to raise the same amounts times the number of congressional districts in their states. These contributions would need to be in amounts of \$250 or less per donor from in-state residents.
- Unlimited coordinated party expenditures in support of candidates, but only from funds the parties raised from contributions limited to no more than \$1,250 per donor per year. This would strengthen the ability to respond to outside spending groups.
- Effective disclosure and enforcement to ensure the program was effectively and efficiently administered, and to ensure that the program is not defrauded.
- An adequate and reliable funding stream to ensure sufficient matching funds and guarantee that the program remains solvent.

Voter ID Responses Advancement Project

Responses to Supporters of Voter Restrictions & New Ways of Talking about Voting

What supporters of voter restrictions say

- True the Vote says they are "equipping citizens to take a stand for free and fair elections". Minnesota Majority wants to clean up the voter rolls by removing ineligible voters from the lists.
- Carol Aichele, Pennsylvania's Secretary of the Commonwealth "Claims that our law makes it difficult for people to get IDs, which are free for voting, or will prevent anyone from voting, are simply wrong."
- USA Today Op-Ed: Pennsylvania law prevents voter fraud

Our Response to True the Vote

- There are already laws on the book to protect the integrity of our election system. Intimidating eligible voters at their polling place and denying them their right to vote is wrong.

Our Response to Minnesota Majority

- It is wrong and Un-American for politicians to create flawed lists of eligible citizens to purge from voter lists.

Our Response to Pennsylvania's Secretary of the Commonwealth

- The politicians who support restrictive new laws are manipulating the system for their own gain.
- As a result of the new Pennsylvania Voter ID Law – about 758,000 Pennsylvania voters just don't have the government mandated ID they now need to vote.
- It's seniors, veterans, first time voters, African Americans, Latinos and people with disabilities who risk being denied their right to vote.

Changing the way we talk about voting

OLD WAY

Leading voting rights advocate: "This law, like other state laws enacted across the U.S., has the potential to suppress thousands of votes in the Commonwealth during this election."

NEW WAY

"This law, like other state laws enacted across the U.S., makes it harder for thousands of voters to participate in our democracy during this election."

Voter ID Responses, continued

OLD WAY

Washington Post Columnist: "Instances of voter fraud are almost nonexistent, but the right-wing media's harping on the issue has given Republican politicians cover to push these laws through statehouse after statehouse."

NEW WAY

"It's important to protect the integrity of our nation's voting system but it's wrong for politicians to enact restrictive laws that make it harder for millions of Americans to vote."

OLD WAY

New York Times Columnist: "Let's bring it all together: There is no problem with in-person voter fraud in Pennsylvania, or really anywhere else (and remember that IDs have no impact on people who vote improperly by absentee ballot)"

NEW WAY

"Voter fraud is something some Americans are concerned about, but these restrictive laws don't fix the problem - instead they take away voting rights from millions of eligible voters and make it harder for them to vote."

OLD WAY

Leading Entrepreneur: "There's no real need for Voter ID Laws. It's just those bad actors trying to stop people they don't want voting from doing so."

NEW WAY

"It's important for Americans to prove their identity at the polling place, but strict laws that require one specific type of government-issued ID that more than twenty million American voters don't have will deny eligible voters the right to vote."

Why Reduce Toxics?

www.mpca.org

Chemicals are part of our lives. We treat illnesses, paint our houses, and even clothe ourselves with products that have been developed through chemical research. However, there are reasons to be cautious about our exposure to some chemicals.

Why reduce toxics?

From the foods we eat to how we maintain our yards and clean our homes, we can be exposed to chemicals in many ways. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), only a fraction of the more than 75,000 registered chemicals have gone through complete testing for human health concerns. Some chemicals have immediate toxic effects. Others are toxic to our bodies only after repeated, long-term exposure.

Children are especially susceptible to the negative effects of chemicals, warns the EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection. Pound for pound, children breathe more air, drink more water, and eat more food, and when they play, they crawl and put things in their mouths. As a result, children have an increased chance of exposure to potential pollutants, and because children's bodies are still developing, they may process these pollutants differently from adults. Nursing mothers and women who are pregnant or plan to become pregnant should also take precautions.

A good principle to follow is always to look for ways to reduce or eliminate the use of toxic chemicals as we go about our daily lives, to keep our homes safe for our children, our pets, and us.

What you can do

Simple changes in our everyday routines can reduce our long-term exposures to low levels of potentially harmful substances—changes in how we choose the products we buy, or the ways we clean our houses and take care of the yard. These changes will not only make our homes safer, they may also save us money.

Consider these helpful ideas for reducing toxic exposures in your home.

Reducing toxics inside your house

Until recently, indoor air pollution has been largely ignored as a source of exposure to toxicity. But studies have shown that levels of harmful chemicals in indoor air may exceed the standards set by the EPA to protect us from harmful chemicals. You can avoid such levels in your home by buying and using products that are free of toxic chemicals whenever possible. Choosing the products you buy

Whenever possible, buy products that are free of toxic chemicals. Alternatives are available. The market for non-toxic household products is growing in response to customer demand.

Ingredient lists don't always tell you everything that is in a product but they can offer clues to the toxicity.

Why reduce toxics, continued ...

When purchasing products, take a minute to carefully read the label. Look for products that appear to disclose all their ingredients. "Signal words" will help you spot ingredients that are harmful: caution, warning, danger, and poison ("caution" is least hazardous and "danger" is most hazardous; extremely toxic products must also include the word "poison."). Choose the least-hazardous product to do the job.

Before you use a product, carefully read the directions and follow the instructions. Be sure to use the correct amount of a product. Remember, you won't get twice the results by using twice as much. Select products (cleaners, shampoos, etc.) made from plant-based materials, such as oils made from citrus, seed, vegetable or pine. By doing so, you are selecting products that are biodegradable and generally less toxic. These products also provide the additional benefit of being made from renewable resources. Ask for plant-based products at your local grocery or retail store.

Choose pump spray containers instead of aerosols. Pressurized aerosol products often produce a finer mist that is more easily inhaled. Aerosols also put unnecessary volatile organic chemicals into your indoor air when you use them.

Ask for unbleached paper products or products bleached with hydrogen peroxide or oxygen, which produce less pollution during papermaking.

For yourself: Bath, beauty and hygiene products

Avoid using antibacterial soaps. Antibacterial agents, while not directly harmful to you, contribute to the growing problem we face when bacteria mutate to strains that are more drug-resistant.

Remember, however, that hand washing with any soap is still vital to maintaining good health.

Purchase a mercury-free fever thermometer. Many effective alternatives are on the shelves at your local pharmacy. Broken mercury fever thermometers can be a source of toxic mercury levels in your home and discarded products containing mercury contribute to higher levels in the environment.

consult your county house-hold hazardous waste program manager to learn where to take your old thermometer. (For information, see www.swmcb.org or www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/.)

Use eye drops, contact lens solutions, and nasal sprays and drops that are free of thimerosal or other mercury-containing preservatives.

Look for unscented and natural dyes in products to avoid potential allergic reactions.

Recipes for personal care products using natural ingredients— baking soda, lemon juice, etc.—can be found online: www.care2.com/channels/solutions/self/114.

Keeping your house clean

Remove your shoes when you enter your house. Your shoes can track in harmful amounts of pesticides, lead, cadmium and other chemicals. Keeping a floor mat at your doors for people to wipe their feet on when they enter will also help.

Vacuum carpets and floors regularly. Children playing on your carpet may actually be more exposed to pesticides lodged in the carpet than from the outside, because pesticides break down less readily indoors than outdoors in the sunlight. Use a fine particulate filter, such as a HEPA filter, in your vacuum cleaner, if possible. Otherwise, the dust vacuumed up is redistributed into the air where it can be inhaled.

Why reduce toxics, continued ...

By cleaning with products like these, you can save money and avoid exposure to toxic chemicals.

Single-ingredient, common household materials such as baking soda, vinegar, or plant-based soaps and detergents can often do the job on your carpet or other surfaces. Soap and water has been shown to keep surfaces as free of bacteria as antibacterial soaps do. If your carpet needs professional cleaning, enlist a carpet service that uses less-toxic cleaners that are low in VOCs and irritants.

Baking soda works well to clean sinks, tubs and toilets, and it freshens drains as well.

Vegetable oil with a little lemon juice works wonders on wood furniture. Simmer a mixture of cloves and cinnamon or use vinegar and water as a safe and environmentally friendly air freshener. Consider how you can eliminate odor problems rather than just covering them up.

Use vinegar and water in a pump spray bottle for cleaning mirrors and shining chrome. Vinegar or soap and water with drying rags or a squeegee also work well for cleaning windows. Use reusable unbleached cotton towels, rags, and non-scratch scrubbing sponges for all-purpose cleaning instead of bleached disposable paper products.

Use dishwasher detergents that are free of chlorine bleach and lowest in phosphates. Use bathroom cleaners that are free of aerosol propellants and antibacterial agents.

What you eat

Choose organic fruits and vegetables for your family whenever possible. They have been shown to have less pesticide residue.

Rinse all fruits and vegetables thoroughly to remove fertilizer residues.

Don't microwave foods in plastic containers. Chemicals from the plastic container can become absorbed by food during microwaving. Cover with waxed paper or paper towel instead of plastic wrap to keep food from spattering.

Controlling pests

In order to survive, pests need food, water and living space. Remove all food sources through good sanitation and storage habits (i.e., screw-cap jars, zip-lock bags, garbage pails with tight-fitting lids). Block pest entrances to your kitchen by caulking holes, using door sweeps on the bottom of doors, and keeping window screens in good repair. Avoid placing chemical pesticides around your kitchen to kill indoor insect and rodent pests.

Avoid using no-pest strips. They contain pesticides that are released to the air in your home. When storing winter clothing, use cedar blocks or bags of cedar chips hung with your clothes. Avoid mothballs that contain p-dichloro benzene or naphthalene, which are very toxic and also contribute to respiratory problems.

Consult your veterinarian for non-toxic pest control products for use on pet pests such as fleas and ticks. Use non-toxic head lice treatments, including combing, enzyme-based treatments and mayonnaise or oil. See www.headlice.org for more information.

For more information on controlling pests without the use of chemical pesticides, go to [Reducing waste in the home](#) and [Growing a Healthy, No-waste Lawn and Garden](#).

Why reduce toxics, continued

Doing the laundry

Try simple ingredients like Borax, non-chlorine bleach and washing soda.

Instead of more complicated detergents, try using a combination of washing soda and borax in your machine. These are usually as effective as more complex formulas and are also usually cheaper.

Avoid bleach when possible. If whitening is needed, use non-chlorine bleach, which is oxygen based and often highly effective.

Buy clothes that don't need dry cleaning or use an alternative called "wet cleaning." Clothes that have been dry cleaned emit perchlorethylene, a chemical that can cause cancer. The wet cleaning process uses water so there are no harmful gases emitted from the cleaned clothing. MnTAP maintains a list of cleaners that use the wet cleaning process:

<http://mntap.umn.edu/drycl/consumer.htm> .

Clotheslines: A healthy hang-up

Don't rely on dryer sheets for freshening your laundry. Clotheslines are a great way to keep clothes, sheets and towels smelling clean. Fabrics will last longer if they're not tumbled around—after all, isn't dryer lint made up entirely of material from your clothes?

When possible, hang clothes to dry outside to avoid using the dryer, which uses energy and depletes resources. In winter, fluff the clothes in the dryer, and then hang to dry indoors. You get the added benefit of increased humidity.

Reducing toxics in the yard

Mowing your grass to a height of about 3½ inches is the most important thing you can do to improve the health of your lawn. By keeping grass length longer, the roots grow deeper and can reach more water during dry periods. Longer grass also creates shade, making it harder for weeds to get established.

If you use a lawn service, consider a service provider that uses less-toxic alternatives. Test the soil to see what your soil needs. Apply only as much fertilizer as is needed. Soil test kits can be purchased at a lawn and garden store or through University of Minnesota Extension: www.extension.umn.edu.

Dig into the root of the problem. Hand and foot-powered weeding tools.

If your grass grows in heavy clay soil, aeration can be very beneficial. Aeration decreases compaction and allows air and water to get to the roots.

Weeds such as dandelions can be removed easily by digging them up with a fishtail weeder when the soil is damp.

Top dressing your lawn with a compost-soil mix will reduce your lawn's water needs and make it more resistant to drought and disease. You will need to fertilize less often, and when you do, you can use less fertilizer.

Why Reduce Toxics, continued....

Consider replacing parts of your yard with native perennials that lower maintenance and lessen the need for water and chemicals.

Ask at your garden store for less-toxic alternatives to chemical pesticides to control pests.

Find out a LOT more: Look at [reduce.org](#) for more information on [Growing a Healthy, No-waste Lawn and Garden](#). Phosphorus and Minnesota lawns.

Fertilizers, leaves, and grass clippings from lawns contribute to phosphorus problems in our lakes and rivers. Homeowners can protect water quality by using lawn fertilizers that do not contain phosphorus—look for a middle number of zero—and sweeping up grass clippings from streets and sidewalks after mowing and trimming.

Restricting the use of phosphorus

Routine phosphorus use on lawns is now restricted statewide. Starting in 2005, by law, Minnesota homeowners cannot use fertilizer containing phosphorus, with exemptions when establishing new lawns or when a soil test indicates a need.

Minnesota soils are naturally high in phosphorus, so our lawns usually don't need any extra.

Minnesota law bans the use of phosphorus fertilizer on most lawns. When shopping for your turf needs, be sure to buy a brand that has a middle number of zero.

Building and remodeling

When building or remodeling your home, ask for building materials and supplies that have the least amount of formaldehyde and other volatile organic compounds. VOCs have been shown to cause cancer or developmental problems. Toxic fumes can come from unexpected sources like new carpet and cabinets.

Choose no- and low-VOC paints and varnishes when finishing walls, floors and furniture. Make sure you have proper ventilation.

Ask for carpeting that meets standards for indoor air quality established by the [Carpet and Rug Institute](#). Once a carpet is installed, thoroughly air out the house for at least 48 hours. For decks and playground equipment, use reclaimed cedar or redwood, which is naturally resistant to fungus and insects. Or use recycled plastic lumber. Ask about these products at your home improvement store.

Avoid using "green-treated" lumber, which is treated with the toxic compound copper chromium arsenate (CCA). In particular, don't use it for eating surfaces on picnic tables or children's play equipment. Clean up all scrap treated wood and sawdust and dispose of it properly—it should go to a lined landfill or licensed waste incinerator. Treated wood should not be burned at home for bonfires or stoves/fireplaces.

Find out a LOT more

Learn more about [alternatives to treated lumber](#) and the [voluntary ban on CCA-treated lumber](#) that went into effect in January 2004.

Observer Reports

Observer Coordinator: Dorothy Karlson **952-935-4051**

St Louis Park School Board

September 24, 2012

Dorothy Karlson, Observer

The St. Louis Park Theatre Department and Pit Orchestra Participants were in the Spotlight at the beginning of the School Board meeting. Students were recognized for taking part in the Hennepin Theatre Trust Musical Theatre Program with their production of "Little House of Horrors." Marilyn Nelson from SLP Adult Basic Education was also honored for her service to the Wayside House.

Park Spanish Immersion (PSI) Principal, Cory Maslowski, and District Student Data Specialist Lynda Stanley presented information on the district's efforts of equalize the number of PSI students receiving free lunch, live in poverty, or have special needs with the students with similar demographics in other schools. In 2000-2001, 4.8% students received free or reduced lunch, and in 2012, 14.5% of students received free and reduced lunch. Aquila has 50% of these students so a gap continues to exist. Good progress in closing the gap is made in most areas, but more effort will be made to encourage black students to attend.

Chuck Corless from the Center for Efficient School Operations presented a report to the School Board in regard to its Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) recommissioning projects. He said that there is now 15 feet of fresh air per student in each classroom. All classrooms meet the minimum fresh air required by the State of MN.

Andy Ewald, Director of District Athletics, gave an update on participation in athletic participation in the High School. Total participation is slightly up from last year - 397 last year and 405 this year. He said that the new turf field is working well and encourages more teams to make use of the field. The new "School News" magazine will be sent to every SLP resident in October. It contains data from the 2011-2012 Annual Report on Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Achievement. Prachee Mukhejee presented data on measures of academic progress.

The board spent a great deal of time on policy issues. This included a first reading of eight policies, the second reading of 11 policies, and the approval of 11 policies.

The board is taking applications for a board member to replace a board member who resigned.

Observer Reports, Continued ...

**City Council Meeting
September 24, 2012**

Aggie Leitheiser, Observer

Call to Order at 7:30 with all present.

The 2012 Evergreen Award is presented each year in recognition of properties that are uniquely designed, landscaped and well maintained with an emphasis on landscaping that is visible to the passerby. Winners were:

- **4038 Quentin** – Randall Olson (Minikahda-Vista Neighborhood)
- **4151 Ottawa** – James & Barbara Jacobs (Minikahda-Vista Neighborhood)
- **3804 Rhode Island** – Adrienne Fleming; Stephanie and Ron Byland (South Oak Hill Neighborhood)

Mike Dobesh was recognized for 14 years of service as the Assistant Fire Chief. He is moving to Richfield Fire Department.

Public Hearing on Breck School Bond Sale. Golden Valley has exceeded their legal limit for tax-exempt bonds so St. Louis Park and Minnetonka have agreed to issue bonds for \$6.5 million each on their behalf through a Joint Powers Agreement. No liability to the SLP. This has been done in the past but is only done for non-profits. There will be a fee from Breck School. No public comments. Passed unanimously.

Resolution for \$1.29 million taxable GO Housing Improvement Area Bonds for Greensboro Square. The City portion is 1/3 of the total funds. The lowest bid was 2.258% for a 20 year bond. Motion passed with Ross abstaining.

First reading of the Ordinance amending the Outdoor Lighting regulations. Second reading will be October 15. Sue Sanger spoke against the changes which would weaken the current requirements. Would like more work on this to do a better balance between home owners and athletic field users. Discussion of enforcement, that some fields have been updated with different fixtures but many would be grandfathered in and not need to be replaced until their useful life is over – so could be as much as 15 years. Discussion of the number of fields – approximately 10 and that many events are over by 10 (new ordinance specifies 11 as lights out time). Some fields are primarily used by children; teenage games may go until 10:30. Sue Sanger moved to send back to include a provision that all fields must be retrofit by date certain. No second. Steve Hallfin moved to approve first reading with further discussion of time and shielding in a study session. Motion passed with Sanger opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

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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 - Family Membership (household) \$70.00
- (Dues and subscriptions are not tax deductible.)

Make checks payable to LWV SLP and send check & this form to:

Judy Cook
4010 Highwood Road
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
Jcook422@comcast.net
(952-928-9846)



4327 Alabama Avenue, South
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Aggie Leitheiser, President
(952) 938-6255
aggieleit@comcast.net

Judy Cook, Membership
(952) 928-9846
Jcook42@comcast.net

Deb Brinkman, Editor
(612) 803-6142
deb.brinkman@gmail.com

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