



Voter

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January Calendar

- February 5, 2013 – 7 pm**
LWV SLP Board Meeting
Location: Barb Person’s home
- February 13, 2013 – 12:30 pm**
Unit 2 Meeting
Topic: Affordable Care Act Update
Location: Parkshore Card Room
- February 21, 2013 – 7 pm**
Unit 3 Meeting
Topic: Affordable Care Act Update
Location: St. Louis Park City Hall
- February 23, 2013 – 9:30 am**
West Metro
Topic: LWV Minnesota Restructuring
Location: Ridgedale Library

Upcoming Events

- March 5, 2013 – 7 pm**
LWV SLP Board Meeting
Location: Carlota’s Home
- March 13, 2013 – 12:30 pm**
Unit 2 Meeting
Topic: Missing & Exploited Children Paper
Location: Parkshore Card Room
- March 16, 2013 – 10 am**
CMAL
Topic: TBD
Location: TBD
- March 21, 2013 – 7 pm**
Unit 3 Meeting
Topic: Missing & Exploited Children Paper
Location: St. Louis Park City Hall

West Metro Meeting Scheduled

LWV Minnesota Proposed Restructuring

At the 2013 Convention, members will be asked to approve changes to the LWV Minnesota bylaws to restructure the work of LWV Minnesota [a 501(c-4) organization] and LWV Minnesota Education Fund [a 501(c-3) organization] into one 501(c-3) organization.

Is the LWV Minnesota an action organization?

Managing two organizations is complex, confusing and expensive.

Come to the West Metro meeting to learn why the LWV Minnesota is considering a restructure. Kathleen Doran Norton is a LWV Minnesota Board member who will speak on this controversial topic.

Review more information
<https://www.lwvmn.org/restructuring>

Affordable Care Act

The topic for the LWV SLP Unit Meetings is on the Affordable Care Act.

A representative from the Department of Health will give us an update. Active participation is encouraged. Bring your questions and concerns.

President's Message

The legislative session for 2013 will be a busy one with lots of new legislators needing to learn the issues and procedures of the legislature. This year is a budget year so there will be hearings and discussions of priorities and funding choices. We are pleased that the January meeting gave us a chance to meet with our local legislators to hear their ideas, share their priorities, and ask questions about issues of concern to members. Thanks to Senator Ron Latz, Representatives Steve Simon and Ryan Winkler for helping us better understand their hopes and expectations for the coming year. Special thanks to everyone who helped make the interviews a success.

February marks the 93rd anniversary of the start of the League of Women Voters. I think it's very appropriate that the organization, which grew out of the women's suffrage movement, began on February 14. Take a moment this upcoming Valentine's Day to remember the sacrifices of these brave women and men who changed the face of this country. It is also a good day to tell someone why the LWV is important to you and to our community.

I hope you bring some tough questions to the February Unit meetings. The two speakers are colleagues of mine from the Minnesota Department of Health and they bring considerable expertise and understanding of the ins and outs of health reform and the Affordable Care Act.

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

Highlights from the January 2013 LWV SLP Board Meeting:

- * We were joined by our membership and leadership coach Kathie Welchel from LWV Anoka, Blaine, Champlin. She gave us feedback on some of our activities, shared highlights from LWV ABC and other MN LWV groups, and gave us some ideas on upcoming activities.
- * Reviewed December meetings on Program/Lively Issues. The Board will review all the feedback at the February meeting for submission to LWVMN and in preparation for the LWV SLP annual meeting.
- * Celebrated the successful gift-wrapping event at Barnes and Noble bookstore.
- * Finalized preparations for legislative interviews for the January 26 meeting
- * Reviewed plans for February and March unit meetings and discussed possible locations for the April Board meeting
- * Appointed Judy Cook to the Nominating Committee to represent the Board and reviewed open seats.
- * Noted that the LWV Minnesota Convention is May 17-19 at the Schwann Center in Blaine



Worth Noting

Important Links

<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

LWV Minnesota Convention Engaging the Voter: Past, Present & Future

Schwann Center
1700 105th Ave NE
Blaine, MN 55449



Empty Bowls March 7 St Louis Park Rec Center

Empty Bowls offers an opportunity to support STEP (St Louis Park Emergency Program). It is also a chance to hear good music and eat delicious soup and bread contributed by local businesses. Lunch is served from 11:00 to 1:30 and dinner from 4:00 - 7:00. The event is free, but contributions to STEP are welcome. LWVSLP has volunteered each year to take care of the donations table and that is once again true. Leaguers are needed during both the lunch and dinner times. Please contact Dorothy Karlson at 952-935-4051 or djkarlso@ties2.net. if you can help.

Children First Asset #4 My school provides a caring, encouraging environment

Did you know 36% of St. Louis Park young people report their school provides a caring, encouraging environment? What can you do? Get involved! Volunteer at your local school as a caring adult or join a parent/teacher organization. Talk to young people around you. Tell them what it was like when you were in school and ask them how it has changed. Ask them what they would do to improve school climate.



Deb Brinkman and Dorothy Karlson ready to wrap Books at Barnes and Noble.

Why I Joined the League of Women Voters Deb Brinkman

As a recent empty nester, I missed the community interaction that comes with active children. When considering what to do with my 'extra' time I knew I wanted to do something to stay connected to the community and I also wanted to learn more about politics. My interest in politics sparked several years ago after meeting people who knew my great grandmother, Suzie Stageberg. With admiration and conviction, they would point their finger and say, "Do you know how important she was? She was instrumental in getting women the right to vote." While I am proud to be a relative of such rich history, after watching the success of the "Vote No" campaign, I am even more proud of the power and influence we all have when we work together. Through LWV I can continue to work to improve voting rights and stay connected to the local St. Louis Park community. This is a great combination for me.

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.

Affordable Health Care

Health Reform in Minnesota: How's it going?

Are you wondering how health reform is going? What's up with the Affordable Care Act (ACA)? There is lots of news about the health insurance exchange – what exactly is it and what will it do? Will my health insurance coverage change with the start of the ACA? What is the impact on Medicare? Does this mean everyone in my family and all my friends will now have health insurance that covers preventive care as well as medical care?

These and other issues will be the focus of the February Unit meetings. Hear a presentation about implementation of the Affordable Care Act in Minnesota and get your questions answered at the February Unit meetings.

Unit 2 – February 13 12:30 to 1:30 Parkshore Senior Campus

Speaker: Stefan Gildemeister, State Health Economist and Director, Health Economics Program, Minnesota Department of Health.

The Health Economics Program conducts research and applied policy analysis to monitor changes in the health care marketplace; to understand factors influencing health care cost, quality and access; and to provide technical assistance in the development of state health care policy. The program collects data and prepares reports about health care coverage and health costs, trends, and levels of the uninsured. Stefan has an MA in Economics from New School, New York

Unit 3 – February 21 7:00 to 8:30 St. Louis Park City Hall

Speaker: Ellen Benavides, Assistant Commissioner for the Policy, Quality and Compliance Bureau. This bureau includes the Compliance Monitoring Division and the Health Policy Division. Benavides joined the health department from a career as an independent planning and policy consultant for nonprofit organizations and producer of documentary films.

Ellen Benavides previously served as director of Health Policy for Hennepin County. In that position she was responsible for developing the county's health policy agenda and for designing and executing county-based health reform efforts to improve health care access for the uninsured.

Assistant Commissioner Benavides earned a master's degree in hospital and health care administration from the University of Minnesota and a bachelor's degree in physiological psychology from Carleton College.

Metro Blast

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES

In 2012, League members registered over 9,000 new citizens to vote. In addition, after the deadline for early registration, we helped an additional over 800 to fill out their forms to take with them to their polling place on Election Day (and sign and date it in front of an Election Judge).

One of the reasons we are able to do this activity is because we are there, as volunteers, even when it is not a big election year. So, make plans to join us on any of the dates below:

Tuesday, Feb. 19th 10 AM for 11AM Ceremony Macalester College John B. Davis Lecture Hall

Thursday, Feb. 28th 9 AM for 10 AM Ceremony & 1 PM for 2 PM Ceremony Fitzgerald Theater

The official schedule has not been finalized, but more ceremonies will be added when it is!

At a recent small ceremony at St. Paul Academy, the guest speaker was a student's parent who had become a new citizen in September. She told us that she and her husband, both of whom were from Brazil, knew they wanted to vote in the November election. "As we were going to the ceremony, I was thinking that the next thing I needed to do was register to vote. I wasn't sure where to go...but there YOU were (that's us, LWV members!) and we registered and were able to vote. We were very happy."

Our efforts are worth it!

Please let me know when you might be able to help.

Thank you,
Judy Stuthman
651-644-8588

Editors note: I took a vacation day to work one of these ceremonies. It was a great experience. I strongly encourage each of you to at least work one ceremony.....and take a picture with your phone, I will publish it. Or send me a couple of sentences on your favorite part of the ceremony. Or call me and tell me your favorite part of the ceremony.

LWV Minnesota



Educate. Advocate. Reform.™

WELCOME TO THE 2013 CAPITOL LETTER™

On January 8, the first day of the 2013 session, the newly elected legislators were sworn into office. These legislators survived one of the most startling elections in Minnesota history. The DFL took control of state government resulting in single party rule for the first time in more than two decades; Minnesota became the first state to vote down a constitutional amendment banning same sex marriage; and against all predictions, Minnesotans also voted down a constitutional amendment that would require a photo ID to vote.

The first order of business in the new session will be finding a way to “fix” the structural budget deficit. Both parties and the governor say they will find a way to solve the budget crisis without resorting to the gimmicks used in the past; they differ in the approach they would like to take. Right now all eyes are on the governor’s budget proposal released on Jan. 22. His staff raised expectations that the governor’s budget proposal will be a “complete package” with tax reform, new revenues along with cuts. The budget resolution will greatly impact important areas such as education, health and human services and infrastructure, areas that already suffered severe cuts in the last biennium.

While the budget will steal the spotlight this session, we expect to see legislation relating to the Affordable Health Care Act, gun control and election law. LWV Minnesota is recognized as one of the few nonpartisan organizations that focuses on protecting and improving voter rights. We will continue that focus this session by advocating for early voting and online voter registration. We have a large task ahead of us since Gov. Dayton has stated he will approve proposed changes in election law only if they have bipartisan support. LWV Minnesota’s broader goals include redistricting reform and maintaining transparency in campaign funding.

LWV Minnesota members play an important role every legislative session. Call your legislators, write letters to the editor and speak up at town hall meetings to voice your support for LWV Minnesota positions on all of these important issues. Legislators listen to their constituents.

The Capitol Letter™, a bi-weekly report on legislative issues, will provide you with the details of bills and includes web links to legislators, committees and other important information. New bills will be in boldface followed by the name(s) of the author(s) and LWV Minnesota’s position on that bill: Support, Oppose, Support in Part, Oppose in Part, Watch.

During the legislative session, LWV Minnesota’s biweekly E-News to members will provide a link to the latest issue of the Capitol Letter™. There is also a link to the Capitol Letter™ on the home page of the LWV Minnesota website.

Action Alerts go out via email when more immediate action on a certain issue is needed. To sign up to receive Action Alerts, please email Sherri Knuth, Policy and Outreach Manager, at sknuth@lwvmn.org

Jeanne LeFevre and Kathy Tomsich, Action Committee Co-Chairs

Capitol Letter, continued....

ELECTION LAW

LWV US Position: Voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.

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

NEW Report of the Governor's Election Integrity Task Force When Gov. Mark Dayton (DFL) vetoed an election bill in 2011, he also established a Task Force on Election Integrity. The task force included legislators from both major political parties and both legislative bodies, election administrators, and representatives of the Department of Corrections and the judicial branch.

The task force issued its final report on Jan. 15, 2013. (To access the report, go to the Secretary of State's home page, scroll down to Public Meeting Notices, and click on "Second Report and Further Recommendations of the Task Force on Election Integrity.")

The report makes two primary recommendations: (1) the Minnesota legislature should consider, along with other possible solutions, an incarcerated/unincarcerated model to provide long-term election integrity solutions in connection with felon disenfranchisement and re-enfranchisement, and (2) use of an electronic polling place management system would enhance Minnesota's election system while protecting the right to vote.

The second recommendation refers to stand-alone computerized systems that are not connected to the internet. One of the advantages of such a system is to facilitate same-day voter registration, reducing the need for data entry by hand after Election Day. (It should be noted that incorporating photos in the electronic systems was not considered or recommended by the task force.)

With regard to its recommendation on felon voting rights, the task force stated that current Minnesota law and protocols have resulted in "significant confusion to the courts, law enforcement and probation officials, and to individuals convicted of a felony." Task force members who play a role in administering the election process favored the model used by North Dakota: "determination of whether a voter convicted of a felon is disenfranchised is simply a matter of whether or not the felon is incarcerated as of the date of an election."

Because the whole task force did not support the North Dakota model, the task force recommended that the legislature hear from stakeholders and determine whether the model is appropriate for Minnesota. If the legislature declines to adopt that model, the task force recommends consideration of legislation that would improve notification to felons of their voting status.

Legislative Activity: As of the date of this report, the House Elections Committee has met for informational hearings but has not heard any bills. In the Senate, the Rules and Administration Subcommittee on Elections has not yet met.

Sherri Knuth, Policy and Outreach Manager

Capitol Letter, continued

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

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

LWV Minnesota Position on Government Spending: The highest priority areas for state spending are the following: (1) K-12 (regular) education; (2) Health Care; (3) Environmental protection....

Criteria for Limiting Spending... (1) State subsidies for sports teams, convention centers and similar projects should be among the first items to be curtailed....

The November forecast from Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) in even-numbered years marks the traditional start of the biennial budget discussion. This year, the November forecast predicted a \$1.095 billion shortfall for the 2014-15 biennium on total spending of \$36.866 billion. The November forecast also reported a \$1.33 billion budget surplus for the 2012-13 biennium. However, this amount must, by law, go to partially repay the school aid shift used to "balance" the 2012-13 budget, leaving \$1.1 billion dollars of school aid still unpaid and needing to be addressed in the 2014-15 budget.

As of the November forecast, there remained a great deal of uncertainty with regard to the potential effect on the state of the so-called "fiscal cliff" at the federal level. By the time of MMB's January Economic Update, some of that uncertainty had been removed. Actual tax receipts were higher in November and December of 2012 than had been predicted in the November forecast; however, MMB does not believe that these increases will carry forward into 2014-15. This is due in part to MMB's prediction of a weaker economic outlook, and in part to its sense that many taxpayers accelerated capital gains recognition into 2012 to avoid possible increases in capital gains tax rates.

So what's next? The Governor's proposed budget will be announced on January 22, 2012. Governor Dayton and his staff have indicated that his budget will rely on new revenue as well as spending cuts, and that it is intended to be a place to start the tax and budget discussion with the legislature and not as the final word. (We will have more coverage of the proposed budget in the next Capitol Letter™.)

LWV Minnesota has had a very positive reception from the Governor's office on issues related to the tax and budget discussion, and we will continue to work with them and with members of the legislature as the discussion moves forward.

Jeanne LeFevre, volunteer lobbyist

Capitol Letter, continued....

EDUCATION

LWV US Position: The League of Women Voters believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12. A quality public education is essential for a strong, viable and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right.

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.

So far this session, the education committees primarily have been receiving reports. Tom Melcher, Finance Director at the Minnesota Department of Education, reported to both House and Senate committees on the work of the Education Finance Working Group appointed by Gov. Mark Dayton (DFL). The working group's Recommendations and Report, issued in November 2012, can be found online.

People are wondering how many of the recommendations will be included in Gov. Dayton's state budget proposal, due to be released on January 22. On January 23, the House Education Finance Committee and the Senate Education Finance Committee (E-12) will hold a joint meeting to review the governor's proposals.

NEW HF 1 Relating to shift in education aid payments. Rep. Yvonne Selcer (DFL-Minnetonka) (Support) This is the only bill of note that has been introduced. The resolution to the budget difficulties in the 2011 session resulted in the state borrowing money from schools. SF 1 pays back \$500 million of the debt owed to school districts more quickly than under the provisions of the 2011 budget. It increases the aid payment shift percentage to 90, the original ratio, instead of 60, thereby accelerating the repayment of the money. There is no additional funding nor does this represent any reform in financing education. SF 1 was referred to the Education Finance Committee.

A newly formed committee in the House, Early Childhood and Youth Development, will be interesting to watch. That committee started hearings with a focus on mental health.

For more detail on educational issues, two good sources are Schools for Equity in Education (SEE) and Parents United.

Lonni Skrentner, Volunteer Lobbyist

Capitol Letter, continued....

ENVIRONMENT

LWVUS Position: Natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem and to protect public health.

As we slog through another remarkable winter, with temperatures dropping from 40 degrees to 10 below overnight, climate change comes to mind. And speaking of climate change, there has been a genuine shift in the climate for scientific information in the House Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee since last year. The first two meetings of the committee were joint hearings with the Capital Investment and the Legacy Committees to hear from University of Minnesota and other scientists on the subjects of climate change and ground water sustainability.

On Jan. 15, climatologist Dr. Mark Seeley was joined by Drs. Harvey Thorleifson (Geological Survey), Peter Reich (Forest Resources), Nicholas Jordan (Agronomy and Plant Genetics) and others in making sobering presentations on the changes which have already begun. They noted the several 1000-year floods we have endured in the last decade and other extreme weather events. Increased temperatures have led to diverse negative effects, including increased drought, a retreating boreal forest, and more invasive plants and insects.

On Jan 17, the committees heard from a panel of experts on groundwater sustainability, which means using water now without causing water problems in the future, according to Jim Stark, director of water science for the U.S. Geological Survey in Minnesota. He called White Bear Lake a poster child for sustainability concerns. Session Daily, Jan. 17, 2013. Some metro area observation wells are showing a drop of one foot per year since monitoring began, according to the Metropolitan Council's water supply manager Ali Elhassen, while Jim Sehl, groundwater specialist at the DNR, said that the city of Marshall uses about 1 billion gallons of water a year and has seen the head on its aquifer drop 50 feet since 1990. The city is spending \$10 million to bring water in from wells 13 miles north of the city. Session Daily, Jan. 17, 2013.

On Jan. 22, the Environment Finance and Legacy Committees will learn about ground water pollution.

What does all this mean for legislative decisions? The Star Tribune editorialized that money for research and for breathing new life into the University's Extension Service would be a place to start. Infrastructure investments should also keep the climate in mind. Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul), Chair of the Capital Investment Committee, proposed that for every \$1 spent on flood mitigation, \$1 should be spent on wetland restoration. Note that between 2000 and 2012, Minnesota issued \$355 million in bonds to pay for flood mitigation projects, according to the Star Tribune editorial.

Gwen Myers, volunteer lobbyist

Capitol Letter, continued....

HEALTH CARE REFORM

LWV US position: A basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents. Other policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care..."

NEW Companion Bills SF 1 and HF 5 Minnesota Insurance Marketplace Act. Sen. Tony Lourey (DFL-Kerrick) and Rep. Joe Atkins (DFL - Inver Grove Heights). (Support) These bills establish the health exchange required by the federal Affordable Care Act and will help families and small business owners who buy their own coverage shop for private health insurance in a new, competitive marketplace. According to Session Daily, Rep. Atkins said, "Minnesotans could be able to purchase health insurance after they see multiple policies in an 'apples to apples' comparison over the Internet beginning Jan. 1, 2014. Public Internet access and human support staff are part of the planning."

The companion bills call for a public-private governing board and fund operation of the exchange by charging health insurance companies a 3.5 percent surcharge on premiums of the health plans purchased through the exchange.

Committee hearings are beginning and, pursuant to the Affordable Care Act, the bills must be passed by March 31. Enrollment in the Minnesota Health Insurance Exchange begins October 1, 2013, with plan coverage starting January 1, 2014.

SF 1 was heard in the State and Local Government Committee and was passed 7-5 on a party line vote on January 17. The committee examined the governance structure, board makeup, and powers of the board, among other issues. The committee also adopted several amendments. The bill was referred to the Judiciary Committee.

HF 5 will be heard in the House Commerce and Consumer Protection Finance and Policy Committee on January 22.

>Action Please contact your senators and representatives to urge them to support language in the bills that will support small businesses. Ask them to include strong conflict of interest language for the board that will run the marketplace/exchange.

Glenda Larson, Volunteer Lobbyist

Captiol Letter, continued...

IMMIGRATION

LWV Minnesota Position: LWV Minnesota supports incorporating immigrants into our communities by providing access to education... (Details) All Minnesota residents, regardless of their immigration status, should be eligible for in-state tuition at state colleges and universities under the same conditions, such as one year's state residency or graduation from a Minnesota high school. (2003)

In early 2005, HF 566 and SF 627, commonly known as the Minnesota Dream Act, were introduced with bipartisan support from legislators. Eventually, they became part of the Higher Education Omnibus Bill. But late in the session, this specific part of the omnibus bill was withdrawn following a meeting between bill authors and former Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R). The former governor threatened to veto the entire Higher Ed bill if this specific section was not removed. In less than 24 hours, the dreams of many undocumented students who had bravely come forward to promote the bill's passage were dashed. Supporters hope that the time is right for a new Dream Act bill to be passed in the 2013 Session.

LWV Minnesota and LWVUS support Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR). (Click to view the full LWVUS position.) Since the Nov. 2012 election, both political parties seem to be ready to take a serious look at how this can be accomplished. The growing Hispanic vote encourages this possibility.

The DREAM ACT (which stands for Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) could be a part of comprehensive federal reform. If it is included in federal legislation, this will give states permission to allow undocumented students to attend higher education at in-state tuition rates. This means a state like Minnesota could enact its own Dream Act. If passed, Minnesota would join twelve other states that have already passed similar bills.

A bill in the Minnesota legislature would likely allow students to pay in-state tuition rates regardless of their immigration status if they have attended a Minnesota high school for 2 or 3 years, graduated or achieved the equivalent, and have been accepted into a state college or university. These immigrant students came to America and to Minnesota as infants or children. Coming was not their decision. They came with their parents who were hired by Minnesota companies, parents who pay taxes and pay into Social Security (even though they will not be able to collect it later).

Federal laws do not prevent these high school graduates from going to public college, but since 1996 Minnesota has required, with few exceptions, that they pay the higher nonresident tuition rates, which are approximately double the in-state rates. (Exceptions occur if they attend a state two-year college in Minnesota that has a flat tuition rate.) All communities benefit from preparing a well-educated workforce; it provides social and economic benefits and deters high school dropouts.

The federal government is responsible for immigration policy, so only federal legislation could provide a path to citizenship for these students. Some additional points, however, should be addressed in any state bill:

Would the bill allow for access to financial aid and scholarships?

Would it allow for purchase of student health insurance?

Would it be for all undocumented students or only for those who have received deferred action?

Would these students be able to obtain a legal drivers license so they can drive to class?

CIR will be addressed soon at the federal level. Will it be done as one large piece of legislation or broken into smaller pieces? Smaller pieces (such as the DREAM ACT, seasonal worker programs, and skilled worker access) may pass more easily, but could miss the overall goal of CIR that addresses the labor needs of our country, status of the undocumented, and unification of families.

Judv Stuthman. Volunteer Lobbvist



LWV United States

League Urges Obama Action on Climate Change (NEW)

On Saturday, January 5, 2013, the League ran a full page, color ad in the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, urging President Obama to set tough standards for new and existing power plants under the Clean Air Act. The ad is part of a broader push by LWV for executive action on climate change and is a follow up to [a letter](#) sent to The White House in December. The full text and image of the ad can be seen [on our website](#).

League Urges Senate to Ratify CEDAW (NEW)

The League joined over 100 organizations in sending [a letter](#) to the U.S. Senate urging ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW is a landmark international agreement that affirms principles of fundamental human rights and equality for women around the world.

Request Form for Federal Action (NEW)

The 113th Congress was sworn in on January 3rd. A state or local League wishing to work on a federal issue or on an issue at the national level that has not been the subject of an LWVUS Action Alert must consult with the LWVUS about the intended action. This includes any effort aimed at influencing a decision on a federal issue, such as communicating with an elected or appointed official, joining a coalition, taking part in a press conference or rally, or writing a letter-to-the-editor. Please help us maintain our effective lobbying strategy by completing the [Federal Action Request Form](#) to take action on federal issues.

U.S. Department of State Thanks the League (NEW)

We were pleased this week to receive two letters of thanks for our ten months of hard work on the [BMENA Initiative – 9th Forum for the Future](#) from U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Deputy Assistant Secretary Nazanin Ash. “The League of Women Voters was selected as the U.S. government’s civil society partner based on its record of citizen education and empowerment, nonpartisan advocacy, and its focus on the equal political participation of women. Throughout this year’s BMENA process, your team exemplified its dedication to making our common vision a reality. Please know I am proud of the accomplishments we achieved together this year,” said Secretary Clinton.

High School Voter Registration: Now’s the Time (NEW)

Is your League interested in conducting high school voter registration? If so, the League’s research shows that the spring is the best time to do it! To get started, [download our handy high school voter registration training manual](#) (Updated version coming soon!)

North Carolina Photo ID Law Could Impact 613,000 Voters (NEW)

As State Legislators in North Carolina make a renewed push to pass a voter ID law, a new report from the State Board of Elections suggests that nearly one in ten voters lack state-issued photo identification: Read more [here](#). Some key politicians, including [the Governor Pat McCrory and House Speaker Thom Tillis, are now saying they are willing to include non-photo identification in the legislation](#).

MLD Tips: Grow Your League at Your Annual Meeting! (NEW)

Check out how these [MLD](#) tips can give your League a boost. Annual meetings should not just be about “League business”. Have some FUN at your annual meeting by celebrating the League’s accomplishments from the past year and recognizing League volunteers for their great work. Invite the community to hear a speaker on a hot topic, reach out to the media, and encourage every League member to bring a friend. Make sure there is some time for socializing and ASK attendees to join the League! [Click here](#) for simple, easy add-ons that can make a big difference.

Communities For A Lifetime

CMAL February, 2013

Submitted by Deb Brinkman

We learned at our last meeting the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area is experiencing a shift in demographics to the graying of the area.

The CMAL speakers were Beth Wiggins who works with the DARTS Program which is primarily focused in Dakota County, and Jess Luce who works for Dakota County. Jess reviewed Communities for a Lifetime challenges and talked about their progress.

Working as an advocate for Communities for a Lifetime, DART engaged resources to create a report was created outlining some of the changes that communities need to make to accommodate the changing demographics. Then DART took a community engagement approach to bring the report to life. DART initiated the program using a grassroots approach. It was exciting to see people from multiple generations collaborating together for a common cause. The planning stage was scheduled to run for 3 years. One of the challenges with a grassroots approach is that the energy can be unpredictable and will affect the pace. After the planning phase Dakota county picked up the initiative.

Dakota County is creating Theme Teams. They will have one year to form their plan and two years for plan execution.

Theme Teams Include:

- Education for "Mapping Your Retirement".
- Working with the Senior Centers to get ready for increased residency.
- Housing resource guide that promotes 'visitability'
- Services group developed for Living Longer and Stronger

Their next step is to hold "World Cafes", which are small conversations. While the agenda has not been defined yet, they plan to start with a quick demographic overview.

In 2013 Dakota County is planning to pass resolutions for a Communities for a Lifetime Advisory Board.

Other cities are beginning to engage in community services and programs.

- Edina has a transportation volunteer program where you can donate your car as a credit for rides.
- West St. Paul has a Living Longer and Stronger initiative.
- Carver County has a program promoting mother-in-law apartments.

Communities for a Lifetime, continued....

The Dakota County website has a lot of additional information:

<http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Government/publiccommittees/CFL/Pages/default.aspx>

The Dakota County Communities for a Lifetime initiative brings together residents, local businesses, community organizations, cities, and county staff to create networks of vital, accessible communities.

A "Community for a Lifetime" is

- A good place to grow up and grow older.
- A community for people of all ages and abilities that supports health and vitality.
- A neighborhood with easy access to grocery stores, clinics, shops, and cultural activities.
- A community that has transportation options to help keep residents mobile and independent.
- A community that is walkable with sidewalks and paths for getting around and exercise.
- A community with a full range of affordable housing options as needs change.
- A community that has accessible and quality services that support older adults and caregivers in home and community settings.
- A community that offers flexible and supportive employment and volunteer opportunities, including intergenerational activities.
- A community that has effective technology to help and connect people.

An aging County

- The "age wave" will have a large impact in Dakota County:
- In 2010, 39,816 people were age 65 and older, 10 percent of the population.
- From 2010 to 2030, the number of people age 65 and older in Dakota County is projected by the Minnesota Department of Human Services to more than double.
- In 2030, it is projected that people age 65 and older will make up 24 percent of the population.

Communities for a Lifetime, continued....

Issues	Key Challenges	Action Steps
Housing	Affordable housing options are limited.	Encourage development of full range of housing options (apts., condos – single level units).
Housing	Peter Pan HousingII home and building design is tailored to narrow range of physical abilities.	* Institute home modification and repair programs * Encourage universal design, "visitability" in new housing
Housing	Housing and services are not coordinated.	Build partnerships with housing and service providers.
Planning & Zoning	Lack of public support for community design that supports aging in place/community.	Engage Boomers/older adults in planning process (asset mapping); create focus groups.
Planning & Zoning	Zoning regulations discourage a broad range of age-appropriate housing options.	Incorporate accessory dwelling units; update zoning codes.
Transportation	Road design makes walking difficult.	Use walkability audits to identify and prioritize pedestrian improvements.
Transportation	Many older drivers experience specific difficulties related to the driving environment.	* Improve signage and road design. * Provide safety programs and driving refresher courses (ex. Car Fit).
Transportation	Customer-oriented community transportation options are lacking.	* Make transit more flexible and responsive. * Support volunteer driver programs. * Support a circulator bus model.
Health & Supportive Services	Community information on available services is dispersed across agencies and providers. Some people don't know what's available.	* Promote Senior LinkAge Line/One Stop, www.MinnesotaHelp.info, DARTS hotline * Create an (online; easily updated, printable) directory of local service providers
Health & Supportive Services	Home-based services are often provided piecemeal.	Encourage providers to integrate home-based services.
Health & Supportive Services	Lack of transportation to hospitals, doctors' offices affects access to health care.	Improve access to medical transportation.
Cultures & Lifelong Learning	Few arts and cultural programs are offered to older adults.	Provide opportunities for intergenerational learning around arts and cultural activities.
Cultures & Lifelong Learning	Few opportunities for older adults to stay up-to-date on technology.	Increase technology trainings (ex., classes pairing older adults and youth).
Strengthen Neighborhoods & Public Safety	Connections and safety could be improved in some neighborhoods.	* Encourage Neighborhood Watch programs. * Create Neighbor to Neighbor networks to strengthen connections and support.
Civic Engagement Opportunities	Civic engagement options are limited in many communities.	Provide more options; community education classes in schools, and programs linking older adults and youth.

Additional issues include:

- Pets are often not allowed in housing
- Employment opportunities
- Green spaces
- End of Life Planning

Whom to Contact at the League of Women Voters Minnesota State Office

The LWV Minnesota state office staff works to support our local leagues and state-wide efforts throughout the year. If you are wondering whom to call about what, refer to the chart below. And if you can't find your exact question or subject in the chart – please contact the office at the general information number of 651-224-5445 or email of info@lwvmn.org and your question will get forwarded to the correct person as quickly as possible.

Staff Member	Title	Contact email	Description of duties	Issues for contact
Beth Johnson	Development and Membership Manager	ejohnson@lwvmn.org	Beth coordinates the development activities for LWV Minnesota including fundraising, grant writing, communications and events. She also maintains the membership rosters and is the contact for general membership information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy Luncheon • Fundraising questions • Communications and social media questions • Development committee support • Communication committee support • Membership rosters and new member information packets • General membership information
Sherri Knuth	Public Policy and Outreach Manager	sknuth@lwvmn.org	Sherri is LWV Minnesota's staff lobbyist and works to further the efforts of the Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) program throughout the state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about LWV Minnesota's legislative agenda • Questions about Photo ID • Action Committee support • State of Democracy Committee support • Questions about State of Democracy Grants • Public policy questions • Action Alerts • Program support for local Leagues • Membership and Leadership Development Program
Katie Rodriquez	Bookkeeper	krodriquez@lwvmn.org	Katie works on the financial statements bills for the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoices and bill payment for the state office • Preparation of monthly financial reports for the Board of Directors • Support for Board Treasurer • Questions about dues and per-member-payments (PMP)
Mary Santi	Development Asst	msanti@lwvmn.org	Mary is the main point of contact for local LWV phone-a-thons and local LWV Education Funds, including how to apply for funds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Education Fund Grant Applications • Local Education Fund status • Phone-a-thons • Fundraising
Laura Fredrick Wang	Executive Director	lwang@lwvmn.org	Laura oversees all aspects of the organization. She also works on Voter Service, LOTT, and Fundraising.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors support • Press Relations • Staff management • Questions regarding Voter Service Grants • Questions about becoming a LOTT Mentor or Fellow



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
Making Democracy Work®

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.

City Council January 7, 2013, – Barb Person, observer

All Council Members except for Sue Santa were present.

Public Hearing:

First reading of Liquor Ordinance Amendment – Culinary Classes On-Sale License: Minnesota Statutes were amended in 2006 to allow for a limited on-sale liquor license specifically for culinary classes, but a corresponding ordinance has not yet been considered by the City. Byerly's requested that Council enact this limited license so that they can serve a 6 oz. serving of wine to their class participants. Staff recommended an annual liquor license fee of \$100, based on fees charged by the cities of Duluth, Mankato, Minnetonka and Waconia.

A unanimous vote of approval followed the discussion. A second reading will be held later in January.

Resolutions, Ordinances, Motions & Discussion Items:

1. Dakota Park Ball Field Naming. A motion was presented to adopt a resolution approving the naming of the baseball field at Dakota Park as "Derrick Keller Field".

Approximately 50 young men, parents and coaches filled the Council Chambers. Two of Keller's friends spoke of the passion Keller felt for the sport and the amount of time he had spent mentoring young players. Derrick's father spoke of his son's commitment to the sport and the loss many felt at his son's passing. It was a very emotional presentation.

As a part of the naming of the ball field, individual donations were offered in the amount of \$18,000 for a new scoreboard.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. Conditional Use Permit for Life Time Fitness Parking Ramp, 5525 Cedar Lake Road.

Lifetime Fitness is planning to construct a 4-level parking ramp to help solve their long term parking problem. The ramp will be built on the west property line near the lot entrance, increasing the total number of spaces to 380. The process will begin in April with 10-12 weeks of construction and an anticipated completion by Sept. 1.

Following a presentation and discussion of the construction a resolution was unanimously approved.

3. Designating 2013 Mayor Pro Tem. Council Member Sanger was approved for 2013.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

LWV SLP OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2011-2012

OFFICERS:

President: Aggie Leitheiser
Vice President: Deb Brinkman
Secretary: Allyson Hammer
Treasurer/W. Metro: Barb Person
Observer: Dorothy Karlson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Voter Service: Eilseen Knisley
Voter Service: Carlota Medus
Membership: Judy Cook
CMAL: Debbie Blake
Voter Editor/Web: Deb Brinkman

YES! I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ST. LOUIS PARK

Name (Family Member #1): _____

Name (Family Member #2): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

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

- First Year Introduction Special \$25.00**
- Voter Subscription Only \$10.00
- Single Active Attending Member \$45.00
- Supporting/Member-at-Large \$50.00
- Family Membership (household) \$70.00
- Add me to The Voter eMail Distribution List (free)

Make checks payable to LWV SLP

Send your check and this form to:

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



4327 Alabama Avenue, South
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED