



Voter

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February Calendar Black History Month

January 31, 2012 - 7 pm *Rescheduled*

LWV SLP February Board Meeting
Host: Judy Cook

February 15, 2012 - 12:30 pm

LWV SLP Unit 2 Meeting
Topic: Film on Gerrymandering
Location: Parkshore Card Room

February 16, 2012 - 7 pm

LWV SLP Unit 3 Meeting
Topic: "What's So Bad About Photo ID?"
Location: City Hall
Assigned Allyson Sheldrew & Barb Person

Upcoming Events

March 6, 2012 - 7 pm

LWV SLP Board Meeting
Host: Aggie Leitheiser

March 8, 2012

Empty Bowls
St. Louis Park Rec Center

March 14, 2012 - 12:30 pm

LWV SLP Unit 2 Meeting
Topic: Met Council
Location: Parkshore Card Room

March 15, 2012 - 7 pm

LWV SLP Unit 2 Meeting
Topic: Met Council
Location: Aquila Commons Party Room
Assigned Dorothy Karlson

March 17, 2012

CMAL - watch for more information

Precinct Caucuses are February 7 – Resolutions on LWV Minnesota’s website

Precinct caucuses are on Feb. 7, 2012. For more information, visit the LWV Minnesota [website](#) to see [proposed caucus resolutions](#). Members are asked to prioritize resolutions opposing (1) a constitutional amendment requiring photo ID of every voter, and (2) constitutional amendments that restrict the ability to decide budgetary issues by a simple legislative majority.

President's Message

Editors Note: I did not receive Aggie's message before it was time to publish due to technical issues. We'll catch up with her when she returns from a well-deserved vacation in Mexico.

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

Highlights from the LWV St. Louis Park Board meeting:

- Reviewed results from the gift wrapping fund raiser. The funds will be used for the Dollars for Scholars Scholarship.
- Made final preparations for the legislative interview and chili luncheon and reviewed the questions we will ask Senator Latz.
- Started making plans for the Annual Meeting. We are planning to reserve a room at the Minneapolis Golf Club again. Dorothy will be lining up a speaker from another St. Louis Park organization.
- Barbara provided a Nominating Committee report. This year we will be electing the Vice President, Treasurer and two Directors.
- Aggie will be submitting the program planning response to LWVUS.
- The next CMAL is January 21, which conflicts with our legislative interview meeting.
- LWV Minnesota Council will be May 5 at the Arboretum.



Worth Noting

Brennan Center For Justice At New York University School Of Law

[League of Women Voters v. Rokita](#)

- 11/10/09

The League of Women Voters of Indiana and the League of Women Voters of Indianapolis challenged Indiana's Voter ID Law under provisions of the Indiana State Constitution. The Indiana law is the most restrictive ID law in America, and will exclude many eligible voters from participating in our democratic process. On November 9, 2009, various parties filed amicus briefs in support of Plaintiffs. On June 30, 2010, the Supreme Court of the State of Indiana affirmed the decision of the trial court and granted the defendant's motion to dismiss.

TODAY: January 5, 1925 – Nellie Tayloe Ross is inaugurated as the first woman governor in U.S. history (governor of Wyoming)



**Empty Bowls
March 8
St. Louis Park Rec Center**

Mark your calendars for Empty Bowls!

It will be held on Thursday, March 3rd, for both lunch and dinner. The place will be, as always, the Rec Center. **Volunteer** to help at the donations table by calling Dorothy Karlson ([952-935-4051](tel:952-935-4051)). Support STEP by attending this exciting community event.

What is Voter Suppression?

www.wikipedia.org/

Voter suppression is a strategy to influence the outcome of an election by discouraging or preventing people from exercising their [right to vote](#). It is distinguished from [political campaigning](#) in that campaigning attempts to change likely voting behavior by changing the opinions of potential voters through persuasion and organization. Voter suppression instead attempts to reduce the number of voters who might vote against the candidate or proposition advocated by the suppressors.

The tactics of voter suppression can range from minor "dirty tricks" that make voting inconvenient, up to blatantly illegal activities that physically intimidate prospective voters to prevent them from casting ballots. Voter suppression could be particularly effective if a significant amount of voters are intimidated individually because the voter might not consider his or her single vote important.

"The Woman who follows the crowd will usually go no further than the crowd. The Woman who walks alone is likely to find herself in places no one has ever been before."
-Albert Einstein

CONVENTION

Join Us for the LWVUS 50th National Convention! (NEW)

Registration is now open for the LWVUS 50th National Convention on June 8-12, 2012, at the Washington Hilton Hotel in downtown Washington, DC. The Convention registration fee is \$320, which includes all materials, plenary sessions, workshops, caucuses and the Convention banquet. Learn more [here](#). Register online [here](#). Have questions? Contact Natalie Testa, NTesta@lww.org.

Metro Blast

"How U.S. Chemical Policy is Failing Our Health, Environment and Future Generations"

**Speaker: Kim LaBo
Program Organizer with Clean Water Action**

9:30-11:00AM

Saturday, February 11, 2012

Free and Open to the Public

City Council Chambers

14600 Minnetonka Blvd, Minnetonka, MN 55345

(Exit I-494 at Minnetonka Blvd; go West 1/4 mile and turn right onto Williston Rd. Use Community Center Entrance.)

Kim LaBo is a program organizer with Clean Water Action, the largest environmental organization in Minnesota. In 2006, Clean Water Action co-founded the Healthy Legacy Coalition, a statewide public health coalition of 34 organizations, including the League of Women Voters. Kim leads Healthy Legacy's organizing work and has 18 years of organizing experience in a variety of fields.

Learn about federal and state chemical policies and the agencies responsible for enforcing these policies. How effective are these policies in protecting public health and the health of our environment? Find out what changes you can make in your daily life to better protect the health of your family and our environment from exposure to harmful chemicals.

The "LWV Metro Blast" is a way for Metro Area LWVs to invite members of other Metro Area LWVs to timely, informative events. If your LWV will be hosting an event that you would like to invite other Metro Area Leagues to, please email meland@lwvmn.org

Ten African American Women Who Changed the World

Ten African American Women Who Changed the World

By: Vicki Santillano

Black History Month dates back to 1976, when “Negro History Week” was extended to the month of February. That year doesn’t seem so long ago, but when we stop to consider where we are in 2009, it’s shocking to see how far we’ve come. Along with celebrating black history, we’re also celebrating the fact that the NAACP will celebrate its 100th anniversary on February 12. We’re rejoicing that a man of color now occupies the most powerful position in the country. It might seem like social change happens slowly, but witnessing such momentous events in our lifetime makes its occurrence undeniable.

Though Obama’s election ignited a nation with optimism, it is just as inspirational that a woman came so close to the presidency. We have much to be grateful for this month, and it seems essential to recognize the achievements of some of the many amazing African American women whose pioneering efforts made this groundbreaking election possible.

1. Sojourner Truth

Sojourner was born into slavery with the name Isabella Baumfree. She changed her name after escaping from her owner and became a Christian preacher while living with a family in New York. After the state’s Emancipation Act was passed, she became a vehement and vocal supporter of abolition and women’s rights. She traveled the country giving speeches, including a famous one entitled *Ain’t I a Woman?* that emphasized the strength and power of women and the need for equality between the sexes.

2. Harriet Tubman

Like Sojourner, Harriet was born into slavery and found a means of escape with the help of her abolitionist neighbors. In 1849, she fled her slave life in Maryland and found respite in Philadelphia. There she formulated a plan to liberate the rest of her family by way of the Underground Railroad, a system that involved moving slaves from one safe house to another under rigid secrecy. She was able to free her family and numerous other slaves throughout the years, taking them as far as Canada and helping them find safe jobs. Later, she worked as a nurse during the Civil War and was a proponent of both women’s suffrage and the abolitionist movement.

Ten African American Women, continued ...**3. Maya Angelou**

Before she was celebrated for her poems and autobiographical texts like *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya was a nightclub singer and dancer who toured Europe. She settled in New York and became part of the burgeoning black writing scene in Harlem. After moving to Ghana to teach at the University of Ghana's School of Music and Drama, she met Malcolm X and collaborated with him on bringing equality and unity to America. She returned to the U.S. and was involved with the Civil Rights Movement, working closely with Martin Luther King Jr. She continues to inspire others and promote change through her writing and public speaking.

4. Oprah Winfrey

Early in her career, Oprah was the protégée of Maya Angelou; they are open about their close bond, likening it in one article to a "sister-mother-daughter-friendship." Now Oprah is one of the richest and most powerful people in America. Her vast influence on the women in this country is remarkable and a testament to the strength and kindness of her character. She uses her resources and celebrity to enact positive change in communities worldwide, such as fostering literacy through her book club, building a school in Africa, encouraging others to perform good deeds, and campaigning tirelessly for Obama.

5. Mary McLeod Bethune

In 1906, a teacher named Mary Bethune built the Daytona Literacy and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls in Florida. Initially a one-woman operation, she enlisted the help of a few community members and sold baked goods to help raise funds for supplies and maintenance. After getting funding from one of the founders of Proctor and Gamble, the school joined forces with an all-boys school in Jacksonville and it became the Bethune-Cookman College. Later, she went on to found the National Council of Negro Women and worked with FDR on minority issues and youth policies.

6. Mae Jemison

A physician who volunteered with the Peace Corps and the first female African American astronaut, Mae was also the first black woman to go into space. After her 1992 expedition on the *Endeavor* shuttle, she left NASA and founded the Dorothy Jemison Foundation for Excellence (which sponsors science camps for kids), as well as companies involved in scientific and technological research. Currently, she is a professor at Cornell University and strongly involved in the science community.

Ten African American Women, continued ...**7. Zora Neale Hurston**

Zora was a boisterous writer who was part of the Harlem Renaissance, a social and cultural movement that explored the experiences of black people in America during the 1920s. She used her background in anthropology at Barnard College to write short stories and essays about African American folklore. Her most famous novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, was published in 1937. Because some people disagreed with the way she wrote African American dialogue, her works were not initially as popular as they later became. Now, there is no question of her influence on black female writers like Alice Walker, who wrote an essay about her in 1975.

8. Shirley Chisholm

In 1968, Shirley became the first black Congresswoman and in 1972, she became the first black woman to contend for the presidential office. She used her time in Congress and on the campaign trail to voice her opinions on women's and civil rights, giving a public voice to many of the grassroots campaigns she was involved in prior to her election.

9. Angela Davis

Angela has worn many hats in her lifetime—university professor, writer, public speaker—but she is best known for her political activism with the Black Panthers, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Community, and the Civil Rights Movement. She ran into legal trouble when it was suspected she helped Black Panther George Jackson escape from prison, but was eventually released from jail when the evidence against her failed to prove her involvement. She continues to lecture and write about human rights and equality. Currently, she is a professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

10. Rosa Parks

This list wouldn't be complete without including Rosa Parks, the woman who refused to give up her bus seat in 1955 and sparked a movement that led to the end of segregation. Her courageous act fueled the Civil Rights Movement and inspired Martin Luther King, Jr. to get involved. Along with MLK, Jr., she continues to inspire those who still fight for equality.

Anybody who thinks her dreams are impossible or that society can't be changed by one person's efforts need only look to these women as role models. Their bravery and determination acted as catalysts for profound change in the world, and each had only one thing in common—the belief that she could make it happen. Yes they could, and yes we can too.

A Message From Elisabeth MacNamara, President LWV of the United States

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear LWV Leader:

If the first three weeks are any indication, 2012 is going to be even more interesting and opportunity-filled for the LWV than we imagined. In some cases, LWV has already been in the spotlight in ways that we could not have anticipated.

Last week, the President released an [ad](#) in several states touting his own record on ethics and the environment. In that ad, he quoted several sources, including a [joint press statement sent in April of 2009](#) by LWV, Common Cause and other good government groups commending the then new Administration's ethics policies. Use of the statement was not authorized by LWV. The ad, but not LWV, has been criticized in the media. State presidents were [alerted to the ad](#) last Friday.

In addition, as you know, the environmental community, including the League, engaged in issue advertising throughout 2011. This work focused on protecting the Clean Air Act and the EPA by highlighting votes in Congress. This week, Sen. Scott Brown, now a candidate for re-election to the Senate from Massachusetts, and Elizabeth Warren, a possible Democratic opponent, entered into an agreement designed to ban independent advertising in that race. So far, the only independent ads have been from the right and aimed at Warren. To balance their stories, several news outlets ([Time](#), [NY Times](#)) mentioned LWV and the League of Conservation Voters as independent groups aiming attacks at Scott Brown. Several of the stories were inaccurate and those reporters have been contacted. Every news outlet that contacted the LWVUS for comment on the agreement received a [response](#) that corrected the timeline and the notion that LWV has any interest in the current Massachusetts Senate race.

Taken objectively, there are many positive aspects to the recent spate of visibility. LWV voice matters, and candidates, elected officials and reporters think our opinions are newsworthy. LWV has a long and proud history of speaking to our elected officials about issues that matter to us. In this political environment, we must be prepared to have our words, positive and negative, used by politicians and the media for purposes that we never intended. We can take two approaches to this new environment. We can stop speaking out on issues and make sure that candidates have no new fodder for their campaigns or we can honor our traditions and celebrate the visibility and effectiveness that controversy brings.

Our research shows that taking stands and speaking out on issues is positive for LWV and keeps us in the public eye in a manner that reinforces our role as a source of information and an advocate for voters. That research also suggests that we should appreciate this kind of visibility. The Obama ad refers to us as an 'independent government watchdog group,' and the clear inference is that we have enough credibility and name recognition for the president to think that our opinion matters and should be shared. Politics is not for the fainthearted, but we know our hearts are strong and our message matters.

To clarify our position, we have added [some language](#) in several places on our website stating clearly that the "LWV never supports or opposes candidates for office, or political parties, and any use of the LWV name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by LWV." We encourage you to add similar language to your websites in this important election year.

Speaking Out in LWV,

Elisabeth

LWV Minnesota

Join us February 28 for the LOTT Leadership Series event – Mission Possible

LOTT is preparing to host its first Leadership Series event. Instead of LOTT hosting its annual conference this year, we have decided to take the idea of a "breakout session" and host it on a weeknight. In doing this, we are able to draw in more attendees who may not be able to attend the conference, as well as draw more interest from younger members of the community.

The first Leadership Series event is entitled "*Mission Possible: Don't Let Insecurities Sabotage Your Job Search.*" This will be held on **Tuesday, February 28, 2012** from **7:00-8:30 pm** at **Joule, 1200 Washington Ave South in Minneapolis.** Please note the date has changed from January 24, 2012. Attendees will be given the opportunity to hear from employment experts and receive advice on how to overcome their insecurities and make a great impression. The information from this panel is applicable to anyone in their career field, whether they are just beginning their job search or transitioning to a new position.



Educate. Advocate. Reform.

LWV United States

ADVOCACY

Sign the Petition to Put SuperPacs Out of Business (NEW)

Let's [fight back against the big money](#) pouring into political campaigns this year. [Sign the petition](#) on The White House website urging President Obama to appoint new commissioners to the Federal Election Commission (FEC). NOTE: To successfully sign the petition, you need to create an account on WhiteHouse.gov and respond to a confirmation email. Use [our helpful step-by-step guide](#) to do this. We need at least 25,000 signatures of support by February 10, 2012, to get a response from The White House. Don't just sign it yourself; post the [petition](#) on Facebook, Tweet about it and forward to all of your friends.

Lobby Corps Action in January (NEW)

This month the Lobby Corps is urging Senators to oppose efforts in the Senate to overturn Administration initiatives that protect public health and the environment. These initiatives include the new mercury and air toxics rule and the recent decision to block the Keystone XL pipeline. [More here.](#)

U.S. Supreme Court Blocks Texas Redistricting Plans (NEW)

"LWV is disappointed by the Supreme Court's decision to block the San Antonio federal court's maps, and urges the federal court to ensure that any new redistricting plans provide the fair representation that Texans deserve," said LWVUS president Elisabeth MacNamara. "We are, however, encouraged that the Supreme Court decision avoids the worst possible outcome—implementation of the state legislature's original, discriminatory redistricting plans, which clearly violate both sections 2 and 5 of the Voting Rights Act." [Read more.](#)

Legislative Interview With Senator Ron Latz



January 21, 2012

Union Congregational Church Library

3700 Alabama Avenue South St. Louis Park, 952.929.8566

1. What are the biggest adjustments at the legislature as a result of the changes to **legislative Leadership**?
 - New leadership in the legislature at Senate. New majority leader – Senator Senjem is a more moderate than Senator Koch, which is a change from how things were last year. There are many potentially divisive issues on calendar for this session, but it is unclear which issues will get pushed forward by Senator Senjem.

2. Do you support any of the bills proposing **a constitutional amendment on budgeting?** (requiring a 3/5 vote of the members of each house; limiting general fund spending to the amount collected in the prior biennium; and limiting budgeted spending to 98% of the amount forecasted to be collected in the biennium.)
 - Senator Latz does not support any of the bills proposing a constitutional amendment. He feels that these bills would make it much more difficult for legislators to adjust to the state of our community depending on the current financial situation. He feels that putting these types of constitutional amendments regarding budgeting into our constitution is bad public policy.

3. What is needed to stimulate **job creation** in the state? What amount of bonding would you support this year and for what types of projects?
 - In the long term, we need to make sure we have a solid educational system to ensure that we have competent workers for that workforce. Senator Latz is a big proponent of early childhood education – this is where he would spend money rather than on all day kindergarten. We need to strengthen our transportation systems to allow for freer movement in the long term. He would support a bonding bill for the construction industry. Now is the time to work on bonding projects – less expensive labor, materials, etc. He would support \$775 million dollar bonding bill, specifically focusing on building efforts at the university and the transit system in the west metro.

4. Do you expect a proposal for a constitutional amendment on **Voter ID** (Voter suppression) to pass this session?
 - He expects that it will be brought up, and that it will pass. Senator Latz opposes this bill. He feels this will disproportionately affect Democratic voters and seniors. Political wedge issue – the only people opposing it are Democrats.

Legislative Interview, continued ...

- Photo ID "lite" bill – less restrictive than the amendment currently proposed. Senator Latz has not heard about this option – he doesn't think this will be proposed as a statute, rather than a constitutional amendment.
- 5. What are your personal top priorities for the session – where do you plan to focus your efforts?**
- He feels this will be a short, intense session. Will focus on: Southwest Light Rail Transit Bonding proposal, Vulnerable Adult and Neglect issues, Bonding Bill, Stadium proposal.
 - He expects an abortion amendment will be proposed.
- 6. What's your position on the proposal to unionize day care workers?**
- He has big concerns about this issue. Concerned about unionizing business owners – essential what day care providers are. Supports trade associations and lobbying efforts, but has concerns about unionizing.
- 7. Now that we've had several years of Legacy funding for the environment and the arts, what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of funding projects in this way? Do you see any changes needed in the scope, use or tracking of the funds?**
- He is not involved directly with the Legacy funding process. Idea is that it will supplement general funding, rather than supplant this funding. He is okay with this process for the most part, but he understands that not everyone will always be okay with how this money is spent. Need to find a good balance – he does not have much of an agenda in this area.
- 8. What are your education priorities and funding recommendations? Do you support all-day Kindergarten? How should it be funded?**
- He supports Early childhood education funding – would fund this before funding all day kindergarten. Feels the previous budget shift for education funding was not a good move – we need to work on how to repay this. He has mixed views on all day kindergarten – a good thing, not all children will need this.
 -
- 9. How will redistricting be accomplished within the time available? What changes do you see for your district? What are your predictions about congressional districts? The courts have been involved in redistricting for the last 40 years in MN – should the current system of legislative responsibility be re-visited?**
- The courts will make the decision this year, as in past years. The Governor and Republican majority will not agree – no law will be passed.
 - Western suburbs are over-populated, while Minneapolis and St Louis Park districts are under-populated. Will need to expand Minneapolis and St. Louis Park districts, while down-sizing the western suburbs. Multiple plans exist, so it is unclear how the lines will be redrawn.
 - Would probably be a good thing to set up a non-partisan commission to handle redistricting.

Legislative Interview, continued ...

10.What do you predict for the **Vikings stadium**. Do you see gambling as the funding source? If a different site is selected, what should be done with the Dome?

- He thinks we will pass a Vikings bill, at the Linden Ave site. Thinks we will pass a gambling funding source, but as state wide electronic pull tabs, rather than Block E. Politically, this type of gambling will gather the most votes, and be the least controversial rather than a Vegas style casino.
- Probably destroy the dome at some point and make it re-development property.

11.Is there anything LWV of St. Louis Park can do to **help the community stay informed** about legislative issues?

- Broaden membership base. Keep sharing electronic newsletters. Write columns in local newspapers (Sun Sailor, Park Patch). Keep in touch with Ron Latz – get on his email update list.

12.Question re: projected budget 'surplus'.

- Calling it a surplus is a misnomer. This money is designated by statute to go to cash flow and reserve accounts. 3rd priority is repayment of school shift. Official forecast will come in February. Schools may get paid some money back, but will not be the full amount.



BRENNAN
CENTER
FOR JUSTICE
at New York University School of Law

Overview: Voting Law Changes In 2012

A shift that could change the electoral landscape is underway – the tightening of restrictions on who can vote and how Americans can vote. Going into the 2012 elections, there will be millions of Americans who will find that since 2008, there are new barriers that could prevent them from voting.

Summary

In the first three quarters of 2011, state governments across the country have suddenly enacted an array of new laws and policies making it harder to vote. Some states require voters to show government-issued photo identification, often of a type that as many as one in ten voters do not have. Other states have cut back on early voting, a hugely popular innovation used by millions of Americans. Two states reversed earlier reforms and once again disenfranchised millions who have past criminal convictions but who are now taxpaying members of the community.

Still others made it much more difficult for citizens to register to vote, a prerequisite for voting. These new restrictions fall most heavily on young, minority, and low-income voters, as well as on voters with disabilities. This wave of changes may sharply tilt the political terrain for the 2012 election. Already 19 new laws and two new executive actions are in place. At least 42 bills are still pending, and at least 69 more were introduced but failed.

Already, it is clear that:

- These new laws could make it significantly harder for more than five million eligible voters to cast ballots in 2012.
- The states that have already cut back on voting rights will provide 185 electoral votes in 2012 – more than two thirds of the 270 needed to win the presidency.
- Of the 12 likely battleground states, as assessed by an August Los Angeles Times analysis of Gallup polling, six have either cut back on voting rights already or are currently considering new restrictions.

States have changed their laws so rapidly that no single analysis has assessed the overall impact. It is too early to exactly quantify how the changes will impact voter turnout, but we know they will be a hindrance to many voters at a time when the United States continues to turn out less than two thirds of its eligible citizens in presidential elections and less than half in midterm elections.

Read the full report, *Voting Law Changes in 2012*, by the Brennan Center's Wendy R. Weiser and Lawrence Norden. Updated Nov. 9, 2011.

Voting Law Changes, 2012, continued....

More Than 5 Million Voters impacted?

We estimate more than 5 million voters could be affected by the new laws, based on six key numbers.

1. 3.2 million voters affected by new photo ID laws. New photo ID laws for voting will be in effect for the 2012 election in five states (Kansas, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin), which have a combined citizen voting age population of just under 29 million. 3.2 million (11 percent) of those potential voters do not have state-issued photo ID. Rhode Island voters are excluded from this count, because Rhode Island's new law's requirements are significantly less onerous than those in the other states.
2. 240,000 additional citizens and potential voters affected by new proof of citizenship laws. New proof of citizenship laws will be in effect in three states (Alabama, Kansas, Tennessee), two of which will also have new photo ID laws. Assuming conservatively that those without proof of citizenship overlap substantially with those without state-issued photo ID, we excluded those two states. The citizen voting age population in the remaining state (Alabama) is 3.43 million; 240,000 (7 percent) of those potential voters do not have documentary proof of citizenship.
3. 202,000 voters registered in 2008 through voter registration drives that have now been made extremely difficult or impossible under new laws. Two states (Florida and Texas) passed laws restricting voter registration drives, causing all or most of those drives to stop. In 2008, 2.13 million voters registered in Florida and, very conservatively, at least 8.24 percent or 176,000 of them did so through drives. At least 501,000 voters registered in Texas, and at least 5.13 percent or 26,000 of them did so via drives.
4. 60,000 voters registered in 2008 through Election Day voter registration where it has now been repealed. Maine abolished Election Day registration. In 2008, 60,000 Maine citizens registered and voted on Election Day.
5. One to two million voters who voted in 2008 on days eliminated under new laws rolling back early voting. The early voting period was cut by half or more in three states (Florida, Georgia and Ohio). In 2008, nearly 8 million Americans voted early in these states. An estimated 1 to 2 million voted on days eliminated by these new laws.
6. At least 100,000 disenfranchised citizens who might have regained voting rights by 2012. Two states (Florida and Iowa) made it substantially more difficult or impossible for people with past felony convictions to get their voting rights restored. Up to one million people in Florida could have benefited from the prior practice; based on the rates of restoration in Florida under the prior policy, 100,000 citizens likely would have gotten their rights restored by 2012. Other voting restrictions passed this year that are not included in this estimate.

Voting Law Changes, continued....

The Wave Of New Laws

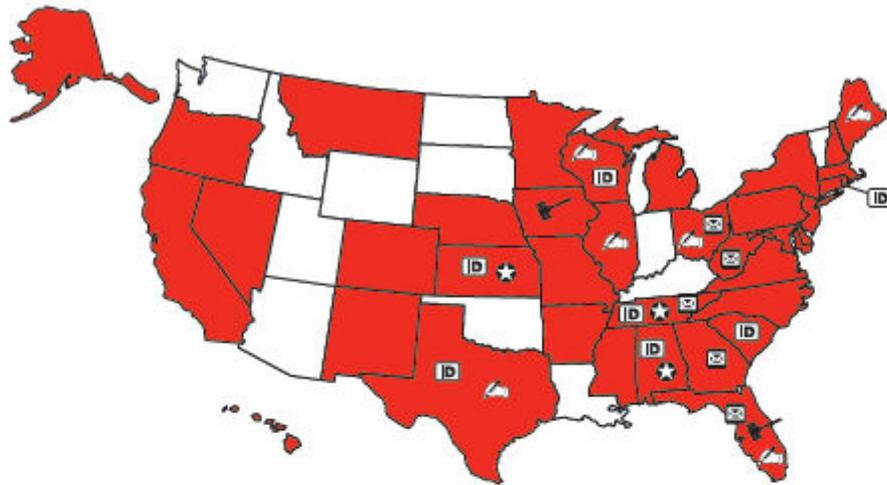
- Photo ID laws. At least thirty-four states introduced legislation that would require voters to show photo identification in order to vote. Photo ID bills were signed into law in seven states: Alabama, Kansas, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin. By contrast, before the 2011 legislative session, only two states had ever imposed strict photo ID requirements. The number of states with laws requiring voters to show government-issued photo identification has quadrupled in 2011.

To put this into context, 11 percent of American citizens do not possess a government-issued photo ID; that is over 21 million citizens. On November 8, 2011, Mississippi also passed a constitutional amendment by ballot initiative, requiring government-issued photo ID to vote.

- Proof of citizenship laws. At least twelve states introduced legislation that would require proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate, to register or vote. Proof of citizenship laws passed in Alabama, Kansas, and Tennessee. Previously, only two states had passed proof of citizenship laws, and only one had put such a requirement in effect. The number of states with such a requirement has more than doubled.
- Making voter registration harder. At least thirteen states introduced bills to end highly popular Election Day and same-day voter registration, limit voter registration mobilization efforts, and reduce other registration opportunities. Maine passed a law eliminating Election Day registration, and Ohio ended its weeklong period of same-day voter registration. Florida, Illinois and Texas passed laws restricting voter registration drives, and Florida and Wisconsin passed laws making it more difficult for people who move to stay registered and vote. Fortunately, on November 8, 2011, Maine citizens approved a ballot initiative to reinstate Election Day registration.
- Reducing early and absentee days. At least nine states introduced bills to reduce their early voting periods, and four tried to reduce absentee voting opportunities. Florida, Georgia, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia succeeded in enacting bills reducing early voting.
- Making it harder to restore voting rights. Two states—Florida and Iowa—reversed prior executive actions that made it easier for citizens with past felony convictions to restore their voting rights, affecting hundreds of thousands of voters. In effect, both states now permanently disenfranchise most citizens with past felony convictions.

Results from the 2010 Census, continued....

States Where Voting Changes Were Pursued And Types Of Changes Enacted



As of Nov. 2, 2011

-  Legislation introduced
-  Photo ID requirements passed
-  Proof of citizenship passed
-  Restrictions on voter registration passed
-  Restrictions on early/absentee voting passed
-  Executive action making it harder to restore voting rights

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Conservation

Submitted by Barbara Aslakson

Easy Ways to Conserve Water

Fresh water is a finite natural resource. We can run out of water. Several world leaders predict the next big war will be over who owns water and who gets the use of it. Weather factors such as drought can make the situation much worse.

We need to be water conscious at all times. The next time you brush your teeth be aware of how long the water is running down the drain for no good reason. How about at the kitchen sink while preparing or cleaning up after a meal?

The EPA says that running the faucet for five minutes uses about the same amount of energy required to power a 60-watt light bulb for 14 hours.

Routine maintenance can help. Leaks - no good reason to put up with one. Get it fixed. One drop per second wastes 2,700 gal per year. Replace water guzzlers such as toilets, washing machines, and shower heads. Think early morning or late date to water plants to avoid water evaporation. Tolerant grasses, shrubs and trees require less watering.

Phantom Load - An Energy Problem

Did you know that many of your appliances use electricity even when turned off? Think TV, stereo, coffee maker, garage-door opener, microwave oven, clock radios - anything with a clock that needs setting and is plugged in! Cell phone chargers siphon energy if left plugged in, too.

This is called a phantom load which means energy vampires. Typical homes have 20 such vampires. Off buttons don't necessarily mean off; they mean standby. Cornell University calculates this means the equivalent of seven electrical generating plants just to carry this load.

What to do?

Use power strips and plug these vampires in. They can be turned off easily. If it is something you rarely use.

Just unplug it and only plug it in when you need to use it. Think chargers for phones, etc.

Get Energy Star label appliances that use less energy.

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



Our Redistricting Values

Transparency

A government that operates in the dark, behind closed doors is antithetical to a democracy founded by and for the people. Like lack of oxygen to a candle, government secrecy slowly extinguishes the flame of democracy. Redistricting is no exception. Regardless of location, citizens everywhere should be able to see what is happening in their state, every step of the way when it comes to redistricting. No less than who will represent them at all levels of government is ultimately at stake.



After all, legislators are elected to serve the public and conduct "the people's business" and the people can't hold their representatives accountable if they are purposely kept in the dark.

Common Cause is committed to making the process of redistricting as open, transparent and accessible as possible. Secrecy in government is inherently contradictory to democracy. A country that is not accountable to its people risks losing its basic legitimacy. Open government, transparent processes and a fully informed and engaged citizenry helps ensure this never happens.

Procedural Fairness



While procedural fairness alone does not guarantee that everyone impacted by redistricting outcomes will embrace the results, those charged with redrawing the district maps must at least adhere to an established, accepted set of rules and procedural guidelines. In part, such "fair play" means encouraging full and robust citizen participation, so that people can speak up if they see their communities divided. In simple terms, it means lawmakers should make sure citizens know the "who, when, and how" redistricting will be conducted so they can evaluate if lines are drawn to protect incumbents or parties at the expense of the public interest.

In this context, procedural fairness also means ensuring adequate public hearings, objective decision making, seeking and then providing evidence to support decisions. Fairness implies that adequate time be given the public so they may understand and respond to proposals and such reactions may be given due consideration. Perception of fairness throughout the process is vital.

Voting Rights Act



Redistricting often happens behind closed doors without public input and participation. While citizens may be optimistic and hope, even assume, that their lawmakers are following the law as they conduct redistricting, history tells us this is simply not always the case. Without the watchful eye of the public, the rule of law can be violated and respect to its principles eroded. District lines must be drawn in adherence to the

Common Cause, Redistricting Values, continued. ...

Voting Rights Act, which ensures that communities of color are not deprived of opportunities to elect representatives by racial gerrymandering.

Citizen Engagement

At the heart of redistricting is a battle over which party and candidate will be best positioned to win legislative seats at the local, state and national level, conceivably for the next decade. With so much at stake for those in power, as well as citizens, public participation is a must if we're to mitigate the partisan/special interest power struggles sure to accompany line drawing. Without citizen involvement, there can be no genuine "consent of the governed," and without the consent of the people, decisions made supposedly on their behalf will lack legitimacy.

When citizens are not engaged in the political process, when citizens are deprived of their voice and a seat at the table, democracy suffers. Individuals and groups not working in the best interests of the public will seek to manipulate the process to meet their own narrow agenda and aims. Common Cause is committed to engaging citizens everywhere around the redistricting process so that their individual and collective voice is heard.

The Origin of 'Gerrymander'

"The word gerrymander is first found in 1812."From: 'The Mavens' Word of the Day - February 2, 1999' as posted at: www.randomhouse.com/wotd/index.pperl?date=19990202

"The word gerrymander is an American political term that William Safire has called "one of the most triumphant political expressions."

To gerrymander is to divide an area into election districts so as to give one political party a majority in many districts while concentrating the voting strength of the other party into as few districts as possible. In short, gerrymandering is designing a district to fit a voting pattern.

The word gerrymander is a portmanteau from the name of Elbridge Gerry and salamander. Gerry was the governor of Massachusetts when he signed a bill in 1812 to redraw the district boundaries to favor the Democrats and weaken the Federalists, who had better numbers at the voting booth. The shape of the district he formed was likened in appearance to a salamander, and political cartoonists emphasized that appearance to denigrate the Democrats. Gerry did not sponsor the bill in question and was said to have signed it reluctantly, but his name has gone into history as that of a villain.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that extreme examples of gerrymandering--in the case they looked at, an election district was literally one road wide at one point, as the district meandered around to try to grab voters from another area--are unconstitutional, but what is allowed is still an open question.

There is a pronunciation issue regarding the word gerrymander. Governor Gerry's name was pronounced with a hard g, and in the nineteenth century gerrymander was likewise pronounced with a hard g. However, by analogy with the common name Jerry (sometimes spelled Gerry), our word is now almost always pronounced with a soft g, and is sometimes even spelled jerrymander. I have never heard anyone pronounce it with a hard g, nor has the Random House pronunciation editor, but I might as well mention it since some people bring it up.

The word gerrymander is first found in 1812. "

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NEEDS YOU!!

We need you for many activities, but right now we need you to check your calendars and let me know which date(s) you are available to observe the City Council or School Board. This is an important activity of LWV chapters across the nation.

Our elected officials need to know that we are observing, sitting at their meetings with our badges on, taking notes. When it's over, write a short paragraph (or 2, if the meeting warrants) and forward it to Deb Brinkman at deb.brinkman@gmail.com Please advise me by return email the date(s) that you can be our Observer.

If you have any questions regarding observing the city Council contact me at jcook42@comcast.net or 952-928-9846. Questions regarding observing school board meetings direct to Dorothy Karlson at dkarlso@ties2.net

Meeting Day	Group	Observer	Phone number
January 3*	City Council	Judith Cook	952-928-9846
January 17*	City Council		
February 21*	City Council		
March 19	City Council		
April 2	City Council		
April 16	City Council		

Meeting Day	Group	Observer	Phone number
January 23	School Board		
February 27	School Board		
March 19	School Board		
April 27	School Board		
March 7	City Council		
March 21	City Council		
March 21	School Board		
April 4	City Council		
April 25	School Board		
April 25	City Council		
May 2	City Council		
May 16	City Council		
May 23	School Board		

Observer Reports

Observer Coordinator: Judith Cook 952-928-9846

St Louis Park School Board Meeting, December 12, 2011 - Dorothy Karlson, reporter

The meeting room was packed with citizens interested in the Spot Lights that were to be presented that evening and to put in pleas for stadium turf. The first was recognition of the participation of Cargill in the district's science program. Their grant of \$600,000 was used to hire two teachers, buy a truck load of school supplies and sponsor student lessons and family science nights.

The second Spot Light was recognition of Jamie Schnack and Barry McKane who have been named TIES Teachers of the Year.

The third Spot Light was on the Girls' Swim Team that has won the conference title three years in a row.

The majority of people in attendance were there in support installing artificial turf at the High School Stadium. The field is currently underused and various community parks are overused. Neighboring school districts have turf. It was brought up that artificial turf requires less upkeep and would bring in more sports activities to the district. Andy Ewald, director of Athletics gave a presentation via video about how having turf would improve the athletic program in St. Louis Park.

Park Spanish Immersion School's Annual Report was given by Dr. Corey Maslowski, principal. The students have successfully met all annual yearly progress targets for both achievement and attendance. 94% of students met or exceeded proficiency on the MCA reading test. 91% reached that goal in math. Maslowski stated that the school is working hard to eliminate racial achievement disparities.

Principal Les Bork gave updates on the Middle Years Program IB, the Coordinated Middle School, and the Immersion/Equity program. He said that the staff is 100% behind the IB (International Baccalaureate) program and progress is being made in that direction. Visits will be made to two schools already in the program. Work is being done on the components of the Application for Candidacy which is due in April.

Sancy Salin, Director of Business Services, recommended that the School Board approve a final levy of \$22,812,151. \$15 will be added on to the taxes of a \$250,000 home. She also presented a budget update.

City Council Meetings, January 3, 2012, Judy Cook, Observer**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

At 7:06 p.m. the City Council dismissed their appeal of the Freight Rail Relocation Project by a vote of 4 to 2, after a closed door meeting with the city attorney. Council members Sanger and Omodt opposed the dismissal. The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING: Convened at 7:30 p.m.

Mayor Jeff Jacobs, Councilmember At Large A Steve Hallfin and Councilmember At Large B Jake Spano were sworn in as newly elected officials of St. Louis Park by Judge Allen Oleisky. Councilmember Sanger was designated as Mayor Pro Tem for 2012. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

This meeting was convened at 7:47 p.m. Councilmember Santa presiding. 2012 Economic Development Authority officers were elected by unanimous vote of the Council; President, Sue Santa; Vice President, Ann Mavity; and Julia Ross, Treasurer. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

TODAY: January 26, 1961 – President John F. Kennedy appointed Janet Travell as his personal physician, making her the first woman in history to hold the post

Judy Cook is coordinating the 2011 – 2012 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 Judy. Remember to wear your pin at the meetings – our presence at the meetings is noted and appreciated.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
Making Democracy Work®

LWV SLP OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR 2011-2012

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Vice President: Debbie Blake
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YES! I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ST. LOUIS PARK

Name (Family Member #1): _____

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Membership Dues

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

Make checks payable to LWVSLP

and send check & this form to:

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

LWV Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. <http://www.lwvmn.org/local/Leagues/SLP>