



The League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria

# THE VOTER

Volume 69, Issue 1

Jan. 2016

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## **IMPORTANT DATES**

Thursday, Jan. 7. 6 pm.  
**"e-Transparency"**, at  
Leonardo's, 700 E War  
Memorial Dr, Peoria 61603.

Saturday, Jan. 16, 9am  
breakfast/ 9:30 meeting  
**"Money in Politics"**  
**Consensus and LWVUS  
Program Planning**  
at AFT-IFT Offices, 733 W.  
Washington St, Peoria 61602

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

I hope your holidays were joyful, and you are ready for an exciting LWV 2016!

Our December 2015 panel discussion on "Money in Politics" was a very good meeting and well attended. Thanks to Leaguers/panelists: Frank Mackaman, Allen Mayer, and Brad McMillan for sharing their knowledge and opinions. (They weren't in agreement in many cases.) Good participation with the audience. Thanks to the MIP committee- especially Irene Pritzker and Terry Matthews!

League member Rick Fox is leading our project called "e-transparency" with our LOGO committee. Please join us at Leonardo's, 700 E War Memorial Dr, Peoria on **Thursday, Jan 7 at 6pm**. Rick will explain the project. We hope to finish the surveys by early February so we can compile the information. This involves searching a selected local government website and recording whether the information is available on the survey form. Rick will explain on Jan 7. Join us for drinks or dinner (available for purchase.)

League members, please join us for a potluck breakfast at our consensus meeting on "Money in Politics" on **Saturday, January 16** (9am breakfast; 9:30 meeting.) No, you don't need to be an expert on campaign finance, but you do need to be a member to participate in the consensus discussion. The national study questions are included in this Voter.

The other part of our **Jan 16** meeting is whether we agree with the national program focus of "Making Democracy Work." This is an historic departure from our usual national program planning and will not inhibit the LWVUS Board from setting additional legislative priorities.

Quoting from the leader's program planning information for this year: "A program recommendation to Convention 2016 is not to be confused with the legislative priorities adopted by the LWVUS Board every year. While the board is asking League leaders to support a program recommendation that focuses on core democracy action and education, LWVUS legislative priorities will continue to cover a range of important issues beyond just those in the program focus. Legislative priorities for the past several years have included, in addition to election protection, climate change and health care."

*(president's message continued on p. 2)*

(president's message, continued)

Our Greater Peoria Board needs your input for our League year July 1, 2015-June 30, 2017. Nominating Committee, Budget Committee, and By-Laws Committee need you. Are you willing to:

- be on a League committee,
- be on our League Board,
- have an idea for a general meeting or Drinks & Dialogue that you would help put together,
- have a governmental unit that you want to "observe",
- suggest a new local study topic?

*We are a member directed organization.* Our program this year included two national studies - *Amending the U.S. Constitution* and *Money in Politics*. Last year we decided to participate in the state League's *Charter Schools study*, but didn't have time to participate in an LWVUS study on agriculture. Our members and Board decide our schedule and topics. I hope you will help with ideas and participation.

"Immigration" issues at the national, state, and local levels will be examined at our **February 4** meeting at 6pm at AMT on Sterling Ave. Our main speaker is from The Immigration Project. Mark your calendar.

Hope to see you and hear from you in January. Contact me at [president@lwvgp.org](mailto:president@lwvgp.org)

Cheryl Budzinski, President

### **How do Judges Get and Keep Their Jobs?**

"How do Judges Get and Keep Their Jobs" is the topic of discussion for Drinks & Dialogue, a program hosted by the League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria. The public is invited to participate in the dialogue, at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 20, at the Hearth Restaurant, 4604 N. Prospect Road, Peoria Heights, IL. Social hour begins at 5 p.m.

This dialogue about judicial appointment, election, and/or retention will open with comments from retired Judge Glenn Collier and facilitated by League members. Judge Collier was an associate and circuit judge for 16 years, serving after his retirement as Corporation Counsel for the City of Peoria IL. His comments will be inclusive of the various methods that judges are appointed, elected, or retained. The League believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government.

Drinks & Dialogue provides an opportunity for people to share opinions and ideas, ask questions and become more aware of local, state and national issues and the options for making change. There's no cost to participate, and refreshments are available to buy.

Drinks & Dialogue is offered monthly, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month, for one hour starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Hearth with local, state, and national political topics. Inquires may be directed to Cheryl Budzinski

## *Thank you for your support!*

*We appreciate the financial contributions from all of our members, and want to acknowledge our 2015/16 Susan B. Anthony members:*

*Beth Akeson*

*Cheryl & Ron Budzinski*

*Farrell Davies*

*Tracy & Rick Fox*

*Michael McCuskey*

*Elliott Murray*

*Kathie Raeborn*

*Bill Poorman*

*Sherry Hillman*

*Shirley Belke*

*Katherine Coyle*

*Jan & Emil Deïssler*

*Pat Landes*

*Mary McDade*

*Irene Pritzker*

*Sonni & Dick Williams*

*Joan French*

*Pat Barton*

**Welcome New Members!**

Ryan Hidden  
Allen Mayer

Connie Torrey-Romanus  
Carey Mayer

**Clean Power Plan**

The Peoria LWV Board voted at the December meeting to participate in the Illinois State Clean Power Plan as a stakeholder group. This means that we will post public hearings information and updates as our state plan is presented and encourage members to comment at local meetings. We are activating locally using the National LWV suggestions that groups help build awareness and understanding of their state Clean Power Plan. See National's Toolkit on the Clean Power Plan and many helpful links at:

[http://participate.lwv.org/c/9217/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content\\_item\\_KEY=10158](http://participate.lwv.org/c/9217/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content_item_KEY=10158)

LWVGP President Cheryl Budzinski checked with our state League President and also our state Environmental Issues Chair and they are encouraging us to do this.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) is drafting the state plan and will be taking comments on a variety of issues. The entire Peoria area is important in the process as our air, health, and economy are affected by three large, old coal power plants that add huge amounts of CO2 and other air pollution to our area (Edwards near Bartonville; Powerton near Pekin; and Duck Creek near Canton).

The Illinois Clean Power Plan is to meet federal guidelines to reduce coal fired power plant carbon dioxide pollution.

This is an opportunity to expand understanding on why reducing carbon dioxide pollution in our air is essential. We will be able to participate in a public process to promote local awareness and comment on what we want to be a strong and just implementation plan for our state Clean Power Plan. Since most of our members breathe air impacted by coal fired power plants, we will watch for opportunities to be meaningfully engaged in the state's process.

Once the IEPA has formulated a plan, it will have to go before the state Joint Committee on Rules and be voted on by the state Legislature. Our efforts could help make an impact on air quality for our area for the present and for the future. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has many helpful articles about the Clean Power Plan goals, positive health and environmental impacts, and other issues at their website: <http://www.epa.gov/cleanpowerplan>

Joyce B

**Voter Service News**

We will need more help from our registrars in January as we prepare to have a registration day for 18 year olds in conjunction with their government classes at our high schools. The rush of registering voters and conducting forums will start early in the year. If you wish to help by becoming a registrar, please call me for information.  
– Mary Jane Crowell 674-5313

**Observer Report: Metropolitan Airport board meeting, November 16, 2015.**

Board members in attendance: Crespo, Dawson, Henzmann, Sensen, Landwirth, and Stella.

Monthly report - air passengers through PIA 53,840 - if November numbers reach 49,795 it will pass last year's numbers.

Peoria Metro Construction Co approved the following change orders for removal of existing out of service fire hydrant, modification to vault for a sidewalk, terminal expansion of a steel column support, realignment of sidewalk adjacent of fence line. The airport Tax Levy Review is to be placed on file for review, the Personnel Policy updates and financial statements were presented to the board. The director of Operations presented an update on airport signage. The flights to Houston are to resume in December. Director Olson will be interviewed on WMBD radio and several new ads for PIA will be airing soon. A new ad for PIA for is presently being shown on TV.

– Hettie Beers

**Observer Report: SPRINGDALE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY meeting Dec. 15, 2015.**

All members were present.

The engineering survey of the bridges has been completed. The “white bridge” was not even rated. This seemed to be a concern to authority members, but exact meaning was not clear. A report back next time was promised after expert review.

The sale of the new mausoleum is still in the works, and a legal description of the property now is complete. The manager will be working on developing the formal contract. He also reported that Peoria Wilds volunteer Mike Rucker has been working on cleanup of the scatter garden site, and it is “beautiful.” The manager met with Peoria public works staff, Mike Rodgers and Sid. They discussed a set of projects that the city will be able to assist with, and a few that they won't. The 2016 budget as presented in November was discussed briefly and approved. The Verizon cell tower (flag pole) discussed at previous meeting was discussed again, with an expected income of approximately \$1,500 a month. Visual mock-ups of how it would look on the site were provided to the authority. Authority members voiced concern that this may become controversial, but a consensus was to proceed. The item was deferred to allow time to investigate further.

--- Rick Fox

**CLARIFICATION: Peoria Township does not supply rental assistance to the indigent, so a statement that they prevent homelessness in the November Voter needs clarification. Some of the agencies they work with do provide assistance in preventing homelessness, however.**

**e-Transparency: Make it Happen**

Join us at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 7 at Leonardo's at 700 E War Memorial Dr, Peoria 61614, for our kick-off meeting on e-transparency.

Our League will be collecting and compiling an e-transparency survey of local elected and appointed government bodies in Peoria and Tazewell County. It will focus on what information is available on the internet, and social media related to that government and its meetings, and how the public can engage in the process.

We are asking for volunteers to review information on a specific governmental unit's website and answer a set of predetermined questions. Once we collect this information we will compile it and rate which bodies are best and worst. Hopefully, we can interest local media in publishing the results. If you'd like to help, please contact Rick Fox via email at [Rick@RickDFox.com](mailto:Rick@RickDFox.com).

Join us on Saturday, Jan. 16 at 9am for potluck (free) breakfast; and meeting at **9:30am on Money in Politics' consensus and LWVUS Program Planning**. We want your opinion on these issues. None of us are experts...join the discussion.

(location: at AFT-IFT Offices, 733 W. Washington St, Peoria 61602

(MEMBERS ONLY PARTICIPATE IN THIS PARTICULAR MEETING)

Here are the LWVUS' committee's questions on Money in Politics:

## **MONEY IN POLITICS CONSENSUS QUESTIONS**

This update on Money In Politics builds on the League's current position on campaign finance. The consensus questions in **Part I** address the goals of campaign finance regulation in terms of democratic values. The questions in **Part II** relate to the extent to which First Amendment protections like free speech and freedom of the press should apply to various speakers and activities in the campaign finance context. **Part III** asks about methods of campaign finance regulation. **You are asked to respond to the questions without regard for the Supreme Court's current views on the First Amendment.** In responding to each question, please interpret the words in their most general sense. Keep in mind that the LWV intentionally words positions that are derived from member study in the broadest possible way so that our positions have relevance for many years. Future national Boards will determine when and how to apply our positions.

An optional comment section is included at the end of each of the three parts. Please note that while comments will be read and considered, only responses to questions can be tabulated.

### **PART I QUESTIONS: Democratic Values and Interests with Respect to Financing Political Campaigns** (☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ No consensus" for Part I questions)

#### **1. What should be the goals and purposes of campaign finance regulation?**

- a. Seek political equality for all citizens.
- b. Protect representative democracy from being distorted by big spending in election campaigns.
- c. Enable candidates to compete equitably for public office.
- d. Ensure that candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public.
- e. Ensure that economic and corporate interests are part of election dialogue.
- f. Provide voters sufficient information about candidates and campaign issues to make informed choices.
- g. Ensure the public's right to know who is using money to influence elections.
- h. Combat corruption and undue influence in government.

#### **2. Evaluate whether the following activities are types of political corruption:**

- a. A candidate or officeholder agrees to vote or work in favor of a donor's interests in exchange for a campaign contribution.
- b. An officeholder or her/his staff gives greater access to donors.
- c. An officeholder votes or works to support policies that reflect the preferences of individuals organizations in order to attract contributions from them.
- d. An office holder seeks political contributions implying that there will be retribution unless a donation is given.

OPTIONAL COMMENTS (250 word limit)

### **PART II QUESTIONS: First Amendment Protections for Speakers and Activities**

## in Political Campaigns

This set of questions is designed to determine the extent to which the First Amendment protections of free speech and freedom of the press should apply to different speakers or activities in the regulation of campaign finance. Free speech and free press provide essentially the same protections to speakers, writers, publishers and advertising, whether or not they are part of the institutional press, and largely regardless of the medium. Essentially, these protections extend to any conduct that is expressive. Many of the options below would be found unconstitutional by the current Supreme Court, but we are seeking your League's views, not those of the Court. These are broad, overarching questions about spending to influence an election, including independent spending, contributions to candidates, broadcast news and other communication expenditures.

☐ Spending banned   ☐ Some spending limits   ☐ Unlimited spending   ☐ No consensus" for Part II questions:

**1. Many different individuals and organizations use a variety of methods to communicate their views to voters in candidate elections. Should spending to influence an election by any of the following be limited?**

- a. Individual citizens, including wealthy individuals like George Soros and the Koch Brothers.
- b. Political Action Committees, sponsored by an organization, such as the League of Conservation Voters, Chevron, the American Bankers Association, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), whose campaign spending comes from contributions by individuals associated with the sponsoring organization, such as employees, stockholders, members and volunteers.
- c. For-profit organizations, like Exxon, Ben and Jerry's, General Motors, and Starbucks, from their corporate treasury funds.
- d. Trade associations, like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Wind Energy Association, and the American Petroleum Institute, from the association's general treasury funds.
- e. Labor unions, like the United Autoworkers and Service Employees International, from the union's general treasury funds.
- f. Non-profit organizations, like the Sierra Club, Wisconsin Right to Life, Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, American Crossroads, and Priorities USA, from the organization's general treasury funds.
- g. Non-partisan voter registration and GOTV (get out the vote) organizations and activities, like the LWV and Nonprofit Vote.
- h. Political parties, like the Republicans, Libertarians, and Democrats.
- i. Candidates for public office spending money the candidate has raised from contributors.
- j. Candidates for public office spending their own money.

**2. The press plays a major role in candidate elections through editorial endorsements, news coverage, and other communications directly to the public that are often important to the outcome. Should such spending to influence an election by any of the following be limited?** *(Please respond to each item in Question 2.)*

- a. Newspapers, like the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal.
- b. Television and other electronic media, like Fox News, CNN, MSNBC and CBS.
- c. Internet communications, like Huffington Post, Breitbart, Daily Kos, and individual bloggers.

OPTIONAL COMMENTS (250 word limit)

## **PART III QUESTIONS: Methods for Regulating Campaign Finance to Protect the Democratic Process**

### **1. In order to achieve the goals for campaign finance regulation, should the League support?**

- a. Abolishing SuperPACs and spending coordinated or directed by candidates, other than a candidate's own single campaign committee. ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ No consensus
- b. Restrictions on direct donations and bundling by lobbyists? (Restrictions may include monetary limits as well as other regulations.) ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ No consensus
- c. Public funding for candidates? Should the League support:  
*(You may respond to more than one item.)*
  - i. Voluntary public financing of elections where candidates who choose to participate must also abide by reasonable spending limits? ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ No consensus
  - ii. Mandatory public financing of elections where candidates must participate and abide by reasonable spending limits? ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ No consensus
  - iii. Public financing without spending limits on candidates? ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ No consensus

### **2. How should campaign finance regulations be administered and enforced?**

*(You may choose more than one response for Question 2.)*

- a. By an even-numbered commission with equal representation by the two major political parties to ensure partisan fairness (current Federal Election Commission [FEC] structure)?
- b. By an odd-numbered commission with at least one independent or nonpartisan commissioner to ensure decisions can be made in case of partisan deadlock?
- c. By structural and budget changes to the FEC (e.g., commission appointments, staffing, security, budget, decision making process) that would allow the agency to function effectively and meet its legislative and regulatory mandates.
- d. No consensus.

OPTIONAL COMMENTS (250 word limit)

## **Key Structures of Democracy (from LWVUS) regarding requested program planning directive.**

"Given the challenges facing our democracy at every level of government and in every corner of the country, the LWVUS Board believes.... it is important to provide our recommendations..." for program planning to continue local, state, ILO, and national work already begun. Those program areas for Making Democracy Work include:

- Redistricting. LWVUS redistricting committee compiled the 40 different state League positions. The LWVUS Board recommends concurrence with a broad, general statement on redistricting at Convention 2016 to enable state Leagues without positions to take action.
- Voting Rights and Voter Protection. LWVUS must continue to push by supporting the bipartisan Voting Rights Advancement Act and continue to support positive reforms including allowing voters to register through the federally-facilitated health care exchanges.
- Money in Politics. encourage Congress to support: Stop super PAC-Candidate Coordination Act in the House; and legislation regarding disclosure, stopping Super PACs, public financing of congressional and presidential elections, and anti-bundling bills; and meaningful enforcement of existing and future laws including fixing the Federal Election Commission.

"Support for a League-wide focus comes from a recent member survey. In November 2015 the LWVUS conducted an online survey of individual League members in order to understand how members are involved in the organization and their interest in specific public policy issues.... The survey findings told us that members engage with the League primarily at the local level. Respondents identified money in politics, voting rights, redistricting and climate change as the main areas for League focus...."



League of Women Voters  
of Greater Peoria

623 W. Stratford, Peoria, IL 61614

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ON THE WEB:

[www.lwvgp.org](http://www.lwvgp.org)

#### **IMPORTANT DATES**

**Thurs. Jan. 7. 6 pm. e-Transparency**, members encouraged to attend  
at Leonardo's, 700 E War Memorial Dr, Peoria 61603.

**Sat. Jan. 16. 9:30am Consensus Meeting on Money in Politics & Discussion of LWVUS Program Planning**  
**9am free breakfast - member-only participation meeting**  
AFT-IFT Offices, 733 W Washington St, Peoria 61602

**Mon. Jan. 11am LWVGP Board meeting**

**Wed. Jan. 20. 5:30 pm. Drinks & Dialogue**, "How do Judges Get and Keep Their Jobs?"  
Hearth Restaurant, 4604 N. Prospect Rd. Peoria Hts.

**Thurs. Feb. 4. 6pm. "Immigration"**

Since June 2014, we have, through LWVUS efforts:

- delayed or defeated over 40 state laws aimed at suppressing the vote;
- Supported at least 20 state laws intended to reform our elections;
- Participated in 10 lawsuits involving voting rights;
- Sent 60,457 messages to Congress regarding the Voting Rights Act Amendment; and



- Sent 27,705 messages to the FEC/IRS regarding regulations restricting money in politics.