



# THE VOTER

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## **IMPORTANT DATES**

Thursday, Feb. 4, 6 pm.

**Immigration- the  
Complicated Path to  
Citizenship**, at AMT

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 5:30  
pm. Drinks & Dialogue.

**Jobs Partnership-  
Offering a Helping Hand**,  
at Hearth Restaurant

*Continued on p. 8*

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Thanks to Leaguers Rick Fox, Mary Jane Crowell, Terry Matthews, Irene Pritzker, and Pat Landes for the great LWVGP efforts in January; and look forward to the great programs in February on Immigration, employment skills for incarcerated women, and candidate forum.

Rick Fox initiated our e-Transparency project on Jan 7. If you missed the meeting, contact Rick to get instructions and the forms emailed to you. We are hoping to report the findings during Sunshine Week mid March. Email Rick at [rick@rickdfox.com](mailto:rick@rickdfox.com).

Thanks to Mary Jane Crowell for explaining LWVUS Program Planning at the Jan 16 meeting. At that meeting we also had our "Money in Politics" consensus meeting lead by Terry Matthews. Thank you to Terry and co-chair Irene Pritzker. Those results (after approval by our League's Board) have been submitted and verified by LWVUS. Good breakfast everyone who brought breakfast foods, thanks.

Drinks and Dialogue featuring retired Judge Glenn Collier speaking about selection and retention of judges had one of our largest attendances with many questions/discussion. Thanks Pat Landes for facilitating.

**The Immigration Project** Executive Director will talk about national and local issues with immigration on Thursday, Feb 4 at 6pm at AMT Auditorium. Peoria has about 10,500 foreign born - documented and undocumented. Some estimate that 2,769 undocumented immigrants live in Peoria County. What does the national back-and-forth on pathways to citizenship do to their lives? *See League position in Voter.*

Again, **Drinks and Dialogue** will be interesting on Feb. 17 at the Hearth Restaurant with Cheryl Parks speaking about Jobs Partnerships teaching skills to incarcerated women to find and keep a job. Some of their programs are held in jails and prisons.

Our Voter Service Committee will conduct a **Candidate Forum** on Saturday, Feb 20 at 10:15 at the north branch of the Peoria Public Library for the three contested races on some of our primary ballots.

So, what is our League doing after that? Well..... *continued, on p. 2*

*Presidents Message, continued from page 1.*

Confused about **presidential** candidates' delegates' selection/elections, primaries, conventions, November voting, and the Electoral College? Leaguer Allen Mayer will explain at our March 3 meeting.

PLEASE mark your calendars for our Annual Dinner Meeting/Fundraiser on April 7. Topic is "**Correcting Corrections in Illinois**" to be presented by John Baldwin, Illinois' Director of Corrections. He had retired after 8 years as Director of Corrections in Iowa (and 40+ years working in corrections in Iowa.) Money raised from the dinner goes to our Education Fund (501c3) and raffle proceeds go to our operating fund (501c4.)

I ask you to volunteer your time working on a committee or project for our League. We have many skills and interests in our League. We hope you will volunteer with us. If there is a topic that you want us to "study" next year and are willing to work on that issue, please email or call me. We collect these topics/issues from our members and publish them in our April Voter,

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

Cheryl Budzinski, President

## **GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK WITH THE LWVGP: LEARN THINGS, MEET PEOPLE, MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK, YOU'LL LOVE IT**

With a focus on getting more members involved in making democracy work, the LWVGP has increased the number of opportunities available to get involved in the League. These opportunities are available through a variety of committees that will conduct activities and programs critical to the League's mission. Each committee provides an opportunity for members to choose to serve as a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, or a member. Please think about your gifts, talents, and interests and then volunteer to serve on one of the committees listed below. **It's easy!** A list of the committees and their purpose is listed below with contact information to sign up and/or learn more about the many opportunities available to get more involved in making democracy work.

### **2015-16 LWVGP Committees include the following:**

Nominating- seeks and confirms qualified candidates for officer and elected director positions.

Membership- retains and increases diverse membership and participation.

Outreach-generates, coordinates, and disseminates information and messages.

Local Government Observers- monitor activities, budgets, transparency of local government entities.

Voter Services- increases voter education, facilitates candidate forums, and increases voter registration and participation.

Drinks & Dialogue- determine topics and speakers, act as facilitators

Fundraising- generates annual operating and education funds.

By-laws- reviews and recommends changes to the By-laws to the Board of Directors.

Environmental- researches, reviews and recommends actions on environmental issues.

Local Study - topic determined at annual meeting in May.

To volunteer and/or to ask questions about the committees' purpose, responsibilities, and expectations, please contact Cheryl Budzinski, LWVGP President, by phone at 253-9594 or email at [c\\_budzinski@hotmail.com](mailto:c_budzinski@hotmail.com). We want to hear from you no later than **March 12** in order to announce our committees at the annual meeting. Join the fun! Sign up now!

### **Candidate Forum**

To educate our citizens we will conduct a Candidate Forum for the local contested races:

Saturday, February 20, Peoria North Branch Library, Allen Road behind Menards  
10:15 am - 11:45 am

The 10th Judicial Circuit race on the Democrat primary ballot, the winner to run in the November General Election (Joos and Williams).

Peoria County Board District 11 race on the Republican primary ballot, the winner to run in the November General Election (Adamson and Crawford).

The Dist. 150 School Board, northern District 3, election- winner will be elected to office (Spayer and Walther).

There are 2 candidates running for each office. Plan to come and bring with you questions appropriate to each race.

### **Immigration 101: The Complicated Path to Citizenship**

Thursday, Feb. 4 at 6pm, The Immigration Project's Executive Director Jasmine McGee will provide a brief overview of major immigration legislation of the past and explain how it has shaped the current immigration system and affected low-income immigrants and their families in Central Illinois. A look at the past not only gives us a better understanding of our current laws, but can be our guide to the current immigration debate – Syrian refugees, Trump's proposed wall & banning Muslims, and other hot immigration topics.

The Immigration Project is housed in Bloomington/Normal, and serves Peoria out of the Friendship House. In 2014 with the promise of immigration reform or expanded deferred action, The Immigration Project decided to focus on six cities - Peoria, Bloomington, Champaign, Springfield, Kankakee, and Carbondale. The organization is striving to build up partnerships such as currently with ICC's ESL programs, VRMI, the Red Cross, and the women's shelter.

The issues are similar throughout downstate, namely getting the trust of the immigrant community and making sure that they are getting reliable legal consultations. The organization wants to work toward having a better relationship with local law enforcement and the States Attorney's office in Peoria, because they can be instrumental in helping undocumented immigrants get legal status through the U visa or VAWA.

Currently, if deferred action (DAPA) is implemented, "community navigators," people willing to help undocumented immigrants apply for this form of relief, are needed. If any type of wide scale reform is passed, the participation of the community is vital to making sure that eligible immigrants apply.

Ms. McGee will present for 30 minutes and answer your questions for another 30 minutes.

## **LWVUS Immigration Position**

### **The League's History**

In the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, the League lobbied in support of the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act that would provide a path to citizenship for young immigrants who complete a college degree or serve in the military, thereby enabling them to be a fully productive part of American society. The legislation passed the House, but lacked enough votes to overcome a filibuster in the Senate.

### **The League's Position**

*Statement of Position on Immigration, as Announced by National Board, April 2008:*

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the United States on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the United States.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status

The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

### **Criteria for Legal Admission to the United States**

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the United States;
- Education and training needs of the United States;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

### **Administration and Enforcement**

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and
- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the United States to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

### **Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the United States**

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

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### **Jobs Partnership - Teaching Inmates To Get and Keep a Job?**

The teaching efforts for incarcerated women to enhance their character traits to get and keep meaningful employment after their incarceration will be discussed at a Drinks & Dialogue program, hosted by the League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria. The League takes a strong supportive position on specialized services and programs for offenders, and believes that an informed and active dialogue by all is essential to a democratic government.

League members and the public are invited to participate in the dialogue, at **5:30 p.m. Wednesday, February 17, at the Hearth Restaurant, 4604 N. Prospect, Peoria Heights, IL.**

The dialogue on jail and prison efforts for female inmates to be more employable after incarceration will be opened by Cheryl Parks, Director of Jobs Partnership and facilitated by a League member. Jobs Partnership has been providing instructions for 15 years in Illinois on the necessary skills to getting a job and keeping a job after incarceration. Also attending will be recent graduates of the program. 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 is 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 Restaurant with local, state and national political topics. Social hour is 5:00 – 5:30 p.m.

### **Spring 2016 Dinner**

Save **Thursday evening, April 7, 2016** on your calendar for a most exciting and enjoyable evening at The Waterhouse (formerly the MAXAM building) across from the Riverfront Museum.

This is our Spring 2016 dinner fundraiser for the League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria. Mr. John Baldwin the new Director of Corrections for the State of Illinois will speak on "Correcting Corrections in Illinois."

The committee is excited about the speaker, new location, the outstanding food, the raffle prizes, and your reservation. More details and formal invitation later this month.

-- Carol Hedeman, Chair

**Peoria Leaguers** Farrell Davies, Sandy Stemler, and I participated in the Responsible Budget Coalition rally for a budget (State of OUR State) in Springfield on January 27. There were people from many of the 200 organizations who are part of the Responsible Budget Coalition -which LWVIL is one.

The message was to put kids, families, and communities first; non-budget items can be debated later. We ask them to choose REVENUE instead of more cuts.

Lack of budget is harming: working families & the economy, communities & public safety, seniors & those with disabilities, children, and women & public health.

**ACTION ITEM:** Please tell our legislators and the governor that the lack of a budget is harming all of us in Illinois and to just do it.

-- Cheryl Budzinski

**Observer report: Metro Peoria Committee meeting Jan 13, 2016.**

Members Turner and Morris were absent from the meeting which has changed to a quarterly meeting instead of every-other-month. And some representatives have changed. The committee discussed their joint legislative agenda:

- The city added diversity in Public safety positions. The Fire Dept needs more local control on personnel issues.

Already on the list:

- Joint request to allow the city to declare vacant land abandoned when owner ceases to maintain it.
- City request to extend the Illinois Historic Preservation Tax Credit to 2021
- City request to funnel the local share of State Motor fuel Taxes directly to municipalities or require IDOT to conform to local design guidelines
- County request to extend authority to all counties, not just Cook, to track down and collect fines from property owners who have multiple Homestead exemptions when they should not.
- County request to be included in Retailer Occupation Tax Access
- County request to use Hanna City Work Camp property for either public or private purpose
- Joint request regarding Illinois Fiscal Concerns to protect and enhance existing revenue base of local governments
- Joint request DCEO flexibility for using State incentives for attracting/retaining business
- City request to preserve Home Rule powers when drafting state legislation
- City request - local public safety pension reform - adopting 30 yr rolling amortization period
- City request - special assessments for Municipal Charges: allow fines, fees, municipal debts to be collected via special assessment on property taxes
- County request - provide funding for Probation officer s as prescribed by state law
- Capital Projects request by city: Pioneer Parkway extension; University St repair between Pioneer and Townline; pedestrian infrastructure on state routes - Knoxville and War Dr; Western Ave; Glen Ave repair
- Capital Projects request by county: Willow Knolls & Allen intersection; and Old Galena Road Reconstruction - Cedar Hills to Rte.29

The interim Recorder has instituted electronic transactions for Real Estate Transfers that are saving money and time - more responsive and efficient which will also help the city and their rental registration compliance.

The County Treasurer and City partnered to get City Garbage fee onto Real Estate Tax Bills to be more efficient and save money.

The committee may increase its membership to include 2 citizens. Staff was asked to draft an amendment.

There was discussion about the 1967 agreement on road transfer of ownership. And the lack of funds for the county to do "urban cross-sections" such as for Willow Knolls. Next meeting April 13.

-- Cheryl Budzinski

**Observer Report: Peoria County Board Meeting, Jan. 14, 2016:** There was a long discussion over whether to renew an electricity aggregation program for the residents of the county which offers the possibility of getting lower electricity rates by bargaining as a group. As part of this program the County gets about \$100,000 from Homefield Energy which runs the program.

There were strong differences of opinion. Some felt that it had not saved residents money and that it was just a boondoggle. Finally on a 11-5 vote it was decided that the County Administrator will use an energy management consultant to see if they can help the county find a better rate than offered by Ameren Illinois.

--- Elliott Murray

**Observer Report: Peoria City County Landfill Committee Meeting, Jan, 20, 2016.**

The Foth Engineering regular report on environmental testing had several monitoring wells that were showing contaminants at the closed Landfill #1. Monitoring is continuing.

Budget issues progressed significantly, thanks to repeated meeting discussions over several months lead by newer committee members. Last year, the proposed 2016 Budget was passed without including reimbursements to the City or County for their staff support for Landfill Committee since the City did not provide an analysis of actual city staff support costs.

Efforts by Committee Members resulted in significant revisions to the 2016 costs, with the City of Peoria reducing their 2016 staffing support for the Landfill Committee from \$137,957.00 to \$75,784. The County had reported their costs last year and reduced their 2016 budget request from \$37,885.00 to \$8,500. Staffing for accounting, clerical and budget work are done by the city. The county supplies legal and recycling staff support.

The landfill budget has been teetering with deficits at times and transparency in costs and costs review have been an ongoing effort of more recent Committee members to improve the overall financial management. Foth Engineering was thanked for transparency and reductions in their costs.

The Committee continued their discussion of re-establishing a Reserve Fund because of the importance of having funds for environmental problems with Landfill #1 or with the existing dam, which has needed major repairs in the past. Discussion included that a Reserve Fund should be a budgeted item. Various percentages for a reserve fund were considered and for having both contingency and perpetual care funds. Landfill #1 is the responsibility of the Landfill Committee and they have also had to pay for dam repairs.

Chris Coulter reported that Peoria Disposal Company (PDC) has purchased the Midland Davis Recycling Company and Matt Coulter will be taking over running those recycling divisions in Pekin, Moline and other places. PDC will no longer be sending their recycling pick-ups to Midwest Fiber. A committee member asked if this would mean improvement in the once a month recycling pick-up schedule. Chris Coulter replied an increase in recycling pick-ups would be costly as it would require more trucks and drivers and that discussion should be taken up with Matt Coulter.

-- Joyce Blumenshine

Ballots Delayed: Early voting and vote-by-mail ballots for the March primary elections will be delayed because of pending objections to the candidacy of several presidential candidates, the Peoria Election Commission announced. They should be ready by February 17. To order a mailed paper ballot call the commission at 309-494-8683 or visit [www.peoriaelections.org](http://www.peoriaelections.org).

**Issues Briefing sponsored by League of Women Voters of Illinois**

You are invited

Sat, Feb 27 9:30am-4:00

University Center, Chicago

Issues Briefing is an annual event to allow members to hear more in-depth information about what our state League has been working on. LWVIL issue specialists put together the program which includes panel discussions, outside experts, legislators involved in specific topics that our members have identified are important to them.

Topics include: Illinois Vision 20/20; Redistricting; Illinois clean Jobs Bill; America's Watershed Initiative; Mental Health and Prisons; Consolidation of Governmental Units; Gun Violence Prevention; and Outlook for Criminal Justice Reform.

You can select which workshops to attend. Full day cost is \$60 (including lunch) or there are partial day options. Deadline to sign up for that price is Feb. 12. You can register online through Paypal at [www.lwvil.org/issuesbriefing](http://www.lwvil.org/issuesbriefing).

Tazewell County needs election judges. Must live in Tazewell and not be a precinct committeeperson. 5am - 8pm on March 15. Pays \$110. contact Judy at 478-5922



League of Women Voters  
of Greater Peoria

623 W. Stratford, Peoria, IL 61614

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ON THE WEB:

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

**IMPORTANT DATES**

Thurs. Feb. 4. 6pm. **Immigration- the Complicated Path to Citizenship, General meeting,**  
AMT Auditorium, 1718 N. Sterling (near Nebraska) Peoria 61604.

Wed., Feb. 17. 5:30 pm. **Drinks & Dialogue, Jobs Partnership- Helping Incarcerated Get Job Opportunities**  
(social 5pm) Hearth Restaurant, 4604 N. Prospect, Peoria Heights 61616.

Sat. Feb. 20. 10:15 am. **Candidate forum, 3 contested races: Dem Circuit Judge; Rep Co Board; PSD 150**  
Peoria Public Library North Branch. 3001 W Grand Parkway 61615 (behind Menards, Allen Rd)

Thurs. March 3, 6pm. **Electing the President - Delegate Petitions to Electoral College, General meeting**  
AMT Auditorium, 1718 N. Sterling (near Nebraska) Peoria 61604.

April 7. **Annual Meeting and fund raiser. "Correcting Corrections in Illinois".**

Feb. 4. **Early voting and vote by mail begin** (may be delayed by ballot printing issues).

Feb. 17. **Grace period voting begins.**

March 15. **General primary election.**

Take a look at the interesting survey on the website <http://www.isidewith.com> which matches your values and beliefs with a presidential candidate. The site was started to "boost voter engagement and education using information, data and breaking technologies." It is not affiliated with any party or interest group (and not sponsored or endorsed by LWV.) Thanks to LWV McLean Voter.