

President's Message

LWVG works on Election 2020

As leaves change color and the days become cooler, we have work to do!

With less than 35 days until Election Day, continue to encourage people to: Check out www.illinoisvoterguide.org or ballotpedia.org for candidate information; check ISBA.org/judicialevvaluations for judges' information. Verify their voter registration information. Have a plan to vote by mail or early voting.

For questions on the Fair Income Tax amendment to the Illinois constitution, try the LWVGP Facebook page for the September Drinks & Dialogue presentation by Ann Courter, LWVIL Issues Specialist. Or go to the Fair Tax Calculator at www.illinois.gov/fairtaxculculator to see the how the amendment could impact individual households if it succeeds in the November election. Hint: The majority of residents will see a decrease in their state income tax. If you like what you see and want a Fair Tax yard sign, contact Cheryl Budzinski at c_budzinski@hotmail.com.

Many League members may remember Dorothy Sinclair. A long-time member, she was past President of LWVGP, an At-large Peoria City Councillor and mayoral candidate. At 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 3, a Sinclair Marker Dedication will take place in Riverfront Park at the foot of Morton Street north of Constitution Garden. The event will include thoughts from Dorothy's friends and relatives, as well as remarks from current Peoria City Council members Rita Ali and Beth Jensen. Masks and social distancing will be observed.

On Sept. 18, we lost a champion for equality of all people with the death of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She won landmark decisions arguing before the Court in the 1970s that allowed women to serve on juries, provided for gender equality for widowers with children to qualify for SSI benefits and provided an equal housing allowance for women officers in armed services. In 1996, she wrote the majority opinion of the Court on equal pay for women. This was recognized in 2009 when Congress passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act that amended Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ensuring non-discriminatory practices in pay for women. Her voice will be missed.

———— Constance Romanus, LWVGP President

CRIMINAL JUSTICE UPDATE STUDY LWVIL, Oct. 14

Our Criminal Justice Update Study meeting at 6 p.m. Wed, Oct. 14 will include questions 6 -9. Our Resources — Katie, Tim, Ron and Connie — will give background for each of the four topics and answer your questions.

Overall there are 14 questions in this study; questions 1-5 were discussed on Sept 9. It doesn't matter if you missed our September meeting — we hope you will join us on October 14.

The comprehensive report on these questions is available for you to read including the background information for the Pros and Cons included below: <https://www.lwvil.org/criminal-justice-position-update.html>

Video resources including other Leagues' meetings regarding these same questions are available at: https://www.lwvil.org/uploads/1/2/3/7/123745968/video_resources_6-12.pdf

Please take a few minutes to read the text of the questions at the end of the newsletter. Then join us on your computer at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89610290110?pwd=NGpqWkRaQzRrZU83WDVPbS95eVNGUT09> or find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89610290110?pwd=NGpqWkRaQzRrZU83WDVPbS95eVNGUT09>

Meeting ID: 896 1029 0110 Passcode: 090278

—— Cheryl Budzinski, CJ study group co-leader

DRINKS & DIALOGUE, Oct. 21

Democracy is not a spectator sport! Join us at 5:45 p.m. Wed. Oct. 21, for our Drinks & Dialogue session with Dr. Megan Remmel. She will discuss Legal Mechanisms That Affect Voter Rights.

As we work toward increasing voter participation as part of Making Democracy Work, it is important to understand the history and ramifications of laws impacting voter access. Dr. Remmel will discuss three Supreme Court Cases since 2008 in particular.

Dr. Remmel is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Bradley University. She earned her Masters and Doctorate degrees from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her scholarly interests center around personality and legislative behavior, in particular how personality affects the behaviors and attitudes of state legislators. She also has an interest in ballot design and its effects on turnout.

We will have a brief "social" at 5:45 p.m., and begin the discussion at 6 p.m. See you there, via Zoom! Join on your computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84100071532?pwd=Y3E0R3hvOVdDYXZZMIVUaEVLNk0ydz09> or find your local number for mobile: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84100071532?pwd=Y3E0R3hvOVdDYXZZMIVUaEVLNk0ydz09>

Meeting ID: 841 0007 1532 Passcode: 663555

—— Kathleen Kelly

VOTER SERVICES

Voter Services, in collaboration with Fondulac District Library and WCBU Peoria Public Radio, hosted a candidate forum on Sept. 17. The intent was to have candidates running for the 46th Illinois Senate District and the 91st and 92nd Illinois House Districts participate.

Unfortunately, it did not work out that way.

Neither of the candidates for the 91st Illinois House District (which is currently held by Mike Unes (R) who is not running for re-election), Josh Grys (D) nor Mark Luft (R) bothered to respond to repeated attempts to reach out to both invite and confirm their participation. Additionally, Mary Buress (R) running for the 46th Illinois Senate District did not respond. So, none of those three candidates were eligible to participate.

David Koehler (D), running for reelection in the 46th Illinois Senate District and Jehan Gordon-Booth (D) and Chad Grimm (L), competing for the 92nd District, responded and thus were eligible to participate.

Mr. Koehler was told he would only be allowed to give a brief statement as League rules do not allow for question/answer format when only one candidate for an office is present.

The evening of the forum, League officials received a call from Ms. Gordon-Booth's campaign staff alerting us that she had a family emergency that prevented her from being present. While disappointed by this, we certainly understood her situation. Mr. Grimm did also, and he was allowed to make a brief statement.

This was probably the shortest candidate forum this League has ever hosted. We want to thank the Fondulac District Library, East Side Community Media which broadcast it live in the East Peoria area and facilitated the forum being live on the League's Facebook page, and WCBU which rebroadcast the entire forum (about 15 minutes!!!) on Wednesday, Sept. 23.

Just a quick reminder that voters can request a vote by mail ballot by contacting local election authorities (Peoria County Election Commission; Tazewell or Woodford County Clerk's office) or going to their websites. You can also early vote. Check those same sources for locations and times.

———— Roberta Parks

PEORIA CITY/COUNTY LANDFILL, cancelled

The September meeting of the Peoria City/County Landfill Committee was cancelled. There will be a special virtual meeting at 3 p.m. Wed., Oct. 7. Connection information and the agenda packet for the meeting will be posted on the City of Peoria, Solid Waste Committee webpage.

———— Joyce Blumenshine, Observer

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY, Sept. 8

Board Chairman Carl Cannon presided at the Sept. 8 meeting of the Peoria Housing Authority via Zoom, with a quorum present.

There were no Community comments. In addition, there were no new employees or Family Self-Sustaining (FSS) graduates this month. The minutes of the Aug. 3 regular board meeting and Aug. 31 special meeting were approved.

Jackie Newman, Chief Executive Officer, gave an update on PHA. A soft re-opening of PHA office has begun. Over 2,500 families have been notified of upcoming inspections. Maintenance of occupied units is being scheduled to address regular maintenance and work orders that occurred since COVID-19 shutdown in March. Households will be screened for COVID-19 to ensure safe environment for maintenance workers. Asset Managers at each site will prioritize work orders so all issues can be addressed in one visit. This is also consistent with U.S. Housing & Urban Development guidelines to keep units maintained at acceptable levels. Rent moratorium has been extended to the end of the year. Staff were recognized for reaching out to families to ensure they had access to resources as needed and are updating rent payment agreements.

Reports were approved by Consent Agenda without discussion. Six resolutions were approved: replacement of roof at Sterling Towers East, bathroom renovation at scattered-site housing, contract for renewal of legal services, contract for renewal of lawn care and commercial grounds maintenance, and extension of contract with PDC Services Inc. for garbage disposal services PHA-wide.

During board comments, Chairman Cannon asked about a power outage in the Harrison Homes area on Sept. 7. Staff had discussion with Ameren and Laser Electric during the outage and plans to follow up with Ameren to identify any issues to prevent or limit outages. Commissioner Kim Furness asked if any employee voiced concerns regarding availability of Personal Protective Equipment. CEO Newman responded protective equipment was available at all locations including masks, gloves and booties. Employees had been informed of this. Newman mentioned that funding was available through the Cares Act.

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

SPRINGDALE CEMETERY AUTHORITY

No meeting in September.

———— Kathie Raiborn, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION, Sept. 8

The Peoria County Election Commission held its monthly meeting Sept. 8, with all members present.

Executive Director Tom Bride explained the state guidelines for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the upcoming election: what each one is, what has been purchased, which ones will be reimbursed.

Each polling place will need separate entries and exits and someone to monitor social distancing. Online videos will be used to train election judges. These will include information on use of PPE (hand sanitizer, face shields, and alcohol wipes) in addition to normal judges' training. Masks cannot be mandated for voters, but they will be encouraged.

As of Sept. 8, the Election office had received approximately 23,000 requests for Vote By Mail. About 5,500 of those were received on-line. Any requests received by Oct. 2 must be mailed by Oct. 6.

Voters will be able to track their ballots on line. If another person physically returns a ballot to the Election Commission, an affidavit must be signed. That is not necessary if the ballot is mailed or put in a drop box. The election office has received 200 to 225 applications for judges, with a goal of 400 to 500. Some judges have declined to work this year.

Director Bride presented the Commission's proposed budget to the County. The only concern seemed to be where to get the money for the new voting system. The final budget may get tweaked, but so far it was deemed acceptable.

—— Chris Schmidt, Connie Romanus, & Irene Pritzker, Observers

PEORIA PARK DISTRICT, Sept. 23

President Robert Johnson called the Sept. 23 meeting of Peoria Park District Board of Trustees to order at 6 p.m. The meeting was held via ZOOM on the PPD Facebook Page. Trustees Joseph Cassidy, Joyce Harant, Jacqueline Petty, Nancy Snowden and Mic Williams were present. Trustee Matthew Ryan was absent.

The board was presented with a Human Resources Report that indicated PPD employment fell from 741 employees in July 2019 to 280 employees in July 2020 as a result of the reduction in services caused by COVID-19. Most of the employees are currently working in parks and golf.

Executive Director Emily Cahill reported the Beyond School Program begins in October to support home school and online students aged 4 to 17 years in the areas of fitness, nature, and STEAM. She also reported that the Children's Playhouse remains closed; however, live and online programs are available for children ages 2 to 5 years of age. Proctor's DREAM Program operates from 1 to 5:30 p.m. daily.

Trustees were requested to provide staff with direction on the Christopher

Columbus statue in Bradley Park following recommendations made by the Planning Committee and a public ad hoc committee.

Trustee Cassidy made a motion to leave the Columbus statue in Bradley Park. Harant, Petty, Snowden, Williams, and Johnson voted Nay; Cassidy voted Aye. The motion failed.

Trustee Petty made a motion to remove the Columbus statue and return the area to green space. Cassidy voted Nay; Harant, Petty, Snowden, Williams, and Johnson voted Aye.

President Johnson announced that a Policy Committee will be formed and announced at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 PM.

——— Farrell Davies, Observer

CRIMINAL JUSTICE UPDATE STUDY LWVIL QUESTIONS 6-9

If you'd like to get a little more information before our Oct. 14 Zoom meeting, here are the four questions which will be discussed. And if this seems like a lot of information, I condensed it down from 12 pages!!

Questions 6-9

6. Policing Introduction - The Illinois League of Women Voters does not currently have a position on policing.

Policing Consensus Questions

6a: Is building trust and nurturing legitimacy on both sides of the police/citizen divide foundational to positive relationships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve?

PRO: Police are called upon to respond to a number of issues that would be better handled by the public health system or social services. A new model is needed- one that rebuilds trust, maintains public safety, and reserves arrest as a last resort. Law enforcement culture should embrace a guardian mindset rather than a warrior mindset in which police officers are trained and equipped like soldiers.

CON: These reforms cannot be accomplished without the abolition of the police and the prison system. There are a significant number of organizations who share the same goals of structural reform, but argue that it cannot be achieved within the given institutional structure and composition of law enforcement agencies and the power and influence of police unions who resist police accountability and the move from a warrior to a guardian mindset.

6b: Should law enforcement agencies collaborate with community members to develop policies and strategies to reduce crime?

PRO: Communities must be respected and valued in order for there to be a positive response from and collaboration with the community. The community's

input and insight is essential if law enforcement is to respond properly and effectively. Both the community and police departments are responsible for developing ways of ongoing collaboration with the community that will lead to more deflection from arrest by using community resources and responding in a creative, less punitive manner.

CON: See 6a

6c: Should law enforcement adopt model policies and best practices for current technology-based community engagement that increases community trust and access?

PRO: Some technology is not conducive to increasing trust, so there is a need for the community's input in choosing technology that is appropriate.

CON: See 6a

6d: Should community policing be the guiding philosophy for all stakeholders (law enforcement agencies, schools, social services, churches and businesses)?

PRO: "Community policing emphasizes working with neighborhood residents to coproduce public safety."

CON: See 6a. Not all officers are interested in or suited for community policing.

6e: Should quality training and education begin with recruits and continue throughout an officer's career?

PRO: The Taskforce found that there is a need for ongoing evidence-based training of police officers throughout their careers.

CON: See 6a. The cost of such extensive and ongoing training for all officers is prohibitive.

6f: Is the wellness (health) and safety of law enforcement officers critical not only for the officers, their colleagues, and their agencies but also to public safety?

PRO: Good physical health and good mental health are essential for a police officer to be effective and safe in their work. The Task Force found that officer suicide is also a problem- police died from suicide 2.4 times as often as from homicides.

CON: See 6a. It should be the responsibility of individual officers to seek the mental and physical health support and treatment that they need.

6g: Is it desirable for police to use alternatives whenever possible to deflect offenders from arrest?

PRO: Police are called upon to respond to a number of issues that would be better handled by the public health system or social services.

CON: See 6a. Many officers do not see themselves as social workers, nor do they want to be seen that way.

7. Pre-Trial Procedures - Current Position: Pretrial Release- The League supports a bail bond system to ensure court appearances, but opposes a system of

bondsmen who provide bail monies for fee. Financial ability should not be a criterion for pretrial release. Thorough evaluation and investigation should precede the use of release on Recognizance.

Consensus Questions:

7a. Should we delete the existing position and revise our position based on consensus regarding the following issues?

PRO: This update would replace the existing position, deleting out-of-date references to bondsmen and retaining the opposition to the concept that financial ability should not be a criterion for pretrial release.

CON: None.

7b. Should cash bail be abolished?

PRO: The update supports the abolition of cash bail altogether.

CON: There should be a presumption of detention for violent crimes. The court system relies on cash bail to provide services to victims. Cash bail makes the defendant more likely to remember to show up for court appearances. Victims of crime would be endangered.

7c. Should defendants be detained in jail only if they are a flight risk or a danger to society?

PRO: The Illinois Supreme Court in April, 2017 adopted a Statewide Policy Statement for Pretrial Services: “Illinois pretrial principles and practices are founded upon the presumed innocence of the accused – the cornerstone of our nation's justice system. As such, defendants are entitled to bail practices that are consistent with the requirements of due process. . . . Our bail statutes provide for release on recognizance when a court is of the opinion that the defendant will appear as required, will not pose a danger to any person or the community, and will comply with the conditions of release. . . .”

CON: Law enforcement would be discouraged from making arrests if they see someone whom they arrested on the street the next day.

7d. Should risk assessments be transparent and designed to exclude weights that may be prejudicial against certain populations?

PRO: The Illinois Bail Reform Act of 2017 which became effective in 2018: “Research shows the use of pretrial detention does not decrease the likelihood of recidivism in certain populations and, in some instances, may increase the likelihood.” The Illinois Bail Reform Act of 2017 supports the use of the least restrictive conditions based on an individual’s pretrial risk rather than the financial ability to secure release from custody.

CON: Risk assessments may consider those from disadvantaged communities to be a higher risk of flight or danger to the community

7e. Should electronic monitoring be used rarely for offenders prior to trial and/or sentencing?

PRO: In some instances, a defendant will be released—but on electronic monitoring which allows the defendant to leave jail, but it can be highly restrictive so that going to work and/or carrying out day-to-day tasks can be very difficult. If a defendant is neither a danger to the community or a flight risk, electronic monitoring is inappropriate.

CON: Electronic monitoring isn't as restrictive as jail and provides the community with a sense of security.

7f. Must the Bond Court Judge review the Public Safety Assessment (PSA) that is the basis of determination as to an individual's release?

PRO: An Examination of Illinois and National Pretrial Practices, Detention, and Reform Efforts observes that: A pretrial risk assessment tool provides the court with an objective research-based measurement of pretrial failure for defendants released from custody during the pretrial phase of their case. Such validated tools can help judges make risk-based decisions on detention and release, thereby reducing potential bias and subjectivity about who should be detained pretrial.

CON: The judge is able to determine these factors without the PSA, considering the 37 factors that they must consider in making this decision. These factors are set by state statute.

7g. Should Pre-Trial Service providers remind defendants of court appearances?

PRO: In the Cook County Procedures for Bail Hearings and Pretrial Release, Chief Judge Timothy Evans, recognizing that defendants may unintentionally miss their court dates, orders that "Pretrial Services shall provide reminders to all defendants released on bail in felony cases of their upcoming court dates, unless the defendant informs Pretrial Services that he or she does not want to receive reminders."

Con: It is the defendant's own responsibility to remember court dates.

7h. Should an attorney or a public defender be present for all defendants, at all hearings?

PRO: Cook County officials and criminal justice reform advocates supported HB1616 to ensure that people who are arrested are allowed to call their attorney or a family member within the first hour of being in police custody. The bill, however, failed to move in the General Assembly.

CON: By law, attorneys are provided to defendants who can't afford to hire one. But to require the attorney to be present at all hearings represents an undue burden on courts especially in rural areas.

8. Restorative Justice Existing Position: NONE - Consensus Questions:

8a. Should the criminal justice system be open to the use of restorative justice approaches and values?

PRO: The concept of restorative justice is found in the Illinois Constitution. Article 1 SECTION 11 states: “All penalties shall be determined both according to the seriousness of the offense and with the objective of restoring the offender to useful citizenship.” Adult Redeploy Illinois and Problem Solving Courts are models that break away from the traditional justice system because sanctions are imposed in the community and offenders get services that address root causes of offenses.

CON: The criminal justice system exists for the victims of crime to receive restitution and retribution and to punish the offenders.

8b. To succeed, must restorative justice courts involve community members?

PRO: In 2017, a Restorative Justice Community Court (RJCC) in North Lawndale empowers victims and residents to help restore nonviolent individuals back to society and to provide restitution to victims. For a case to be eligible for the court both the person charged and the victim of the crime must agree to participate in the process. In addition, the person charged must: have been charged with a non-violent felony or misdemeanor, live in the jurisdiction, have a nonviolent criminal history, and accept responsibility for the harm caused. An agreement with the person harmed and the community can focus on restitution, community service, and letters of apology.

CON: It can be exhausting work to keep community members involved in restorative justice. It is between the offender, the victim, and the court. Restorative Justice Courts should only focus on the victim being made whole after to a crime.

8c. Must restorative justice courts be adequately funded?

PRO: Funding can be a challenge. But this model has promise of restoring young people to their communities and addressing the needs/concerns of victims.

CON: It seems unlikely that the two systems can be adequately funded. This is a new experiment in Illinois. It is too early to see whether outcomes measure up.

9. Emerging Adults Consensus Question: Should emerging adults (ages 18-25) in the criminal justice system be treated in a developmentally appropriate manner, recognizing that those in this age group are not fully mature and culpable for their actions?

PRO: Expanding juvenile jurisdiction increases the likelihood that youth will become engaged and productive members of society, and provides an opportunity to simultaneously increase public safety and reduce long-term costs to taxpayers. A wide variety of psychological disorders and behavioral problems (such as substance abuse) reach their peak during the emerging adult years.

CON: Leave age out—further research might expand or contract the ages involved. Young people are considered adults, e.g., in voting and serving in the military; why should they be treated differently here?

—— Cheryl Budzinski, study group co-leader



**League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria**

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ON THE WEB: **www.lwvgp.org**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

IMPORTANT DATES:

2 p.m. Sat., Oct. 3. Dedication of Sinclair Monument at Riverfront Park.

12:30 p.m. Mon., Oct. 12. LWVGP Board Meeting, via Zoom.

6 p.m. Wed., Oct. 14. Criminal Justice Study Questions, via Zoom.

5:45 p.m. Wed., Oct. 21. Drinks & Dialogue on Voter Rights, via Zoom.

**League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors
2020-2021**

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Newsletter

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