



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of NEW ORLEANS LEAGUE ESSENTIALS

Volume 56, Issue 2

Save The Dates

December 6, General Election Run-off Information

Candidate information is available on the League's website www.lwvno.org

SHARE THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE LEAGUE'S WEBSITE FOR CANDIDATES WITH YOUR FRIENDS,
NEIGHBORS AND FAMILY.

Deadline to Request Mail Ballot: December 2, 2014

Deadline to Submit Mail Ballot: December 5, 2014

Early Voting: November 22-29, 2014



Annual Holiday Party, Sunday December 14, 2014, 1-3 pm

Community Room, 4000 Davey Street, New Orleans

Pension Study Meetings

January 10th and 17th, 2015, Smith Library, 10 am-12 noon

Call to State Convention

March 14-15, 2015

Annual Meeting

June 6, 2015

More details will be announced.

Message from the President

I am humbled and grateful for the opportunity to be President of the League of Women Voters of New Orleans again this year. Our organization was founded to help women make intelligent decisions at the polls as equal partners in democracy after the Suffrage Amendment passed in 1920. The challenges that face us today are different from those that faced the suffragists but they require the same courage of conviction.

Women face challenges in the work place in terms of equal pay, positional authority and equal opportunity. An example here in Louisiana occurred in an office where the male employees sent emails disparaging, women including the sentiment that women belong at home raising children because the love of the mother is worth more than any paycheck. This female employee was told it was her job to file even though the male employees who held the same job title did not have to do their own filing. Such sentiments regarding women show disrespect and contempt for women

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who share a viable role in the workplace.
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Many women are keeping the family together without a male partner to share the load and many women stay in abusive relationships because of the inability to earn a paycheck to support themselves and their children. And yet women still receive less pay for their work than men do and women are not treated with the same positional authority. In Louisiana, women average only 67 cents for every dollar earned by their male co-workers. Such contempt towards women leads not only to the economic disenfranchisement of women, but also violence toward women both inside and outside of the home.

Violence against women is still a reality. According to The Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Louisiana saw a 16% increase in domestic violence homicides from 2010 to 2011. According to data from the National Crime Victimization Survey, an estimated 243,800 rapes or sexual assaults of victims 12 years old or older occurred in 2011 and women made up 85.7 % of those raped or sexually assaulted.

It is important for women, especially younger women, to realize that hard fought rights can be lost if we become complacent. While equal pay issues are at the forefront so are laws designed to take away our rights to make decisions regarding our personal health and reproductive choices. Also, violence against women continues to cause post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression in the lives of too many women.

Just as the suffrage movement included both men and women, there are men who stand with women in demanding equal treatment of both genders in the workplace and who support legislation that protects a woman's rights to make her own choices regarding our health. Also, there are many men who stand with women in demanding an end to domestic violence and sexual assault. These men make wonderful employers and they are true advocates for women. We appreciate the efforts of these men who show respect for women.

The League of Women Voters of New Orleans advocates for those issues important to women. We challenge each of you to continue the struggle to be fully equal partners in our democracy and work place. Our struggle has been long and hard fought but we must continue to make strides to better the lives of all women today and for our daughters in the future.

~Francine Giugno

Abramson Meeting

On August 19, 2014, the League of Women Voters helped organize a house party with the Legislative Agenda for Women (LAW) coalition for member constituents to meet State Representative Neil Abramson. It was hosted by League member Felicia Kahn and co-hosted by Amy Irvin, a leader in the New Orleans Abortion Fund, another Coalition member group. About 35 people attended to hear Rep. Abramson speak on his legislative priorities and answer our coalition members' questions about important issues we have been following. These include expanding Medicaid to cover over 250,000 low income people who still lack insurance in LA., and equal pay for women. Sexual health education to reduce the high Louisiana incidence of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases in young people was also a coalition issue. Rep. Abramson missed key votes on these and other issues and we asked him to add our issues to his priorities for the future. LWV with LAW will be watching his voting record in the next session of the legislature. Individual LWV members will be notified when it is time to get messages to Rep. Abramson during the session.

~Annemarie Dewey

See front page for Study Meeting info, Study Materials will be available at the Holiday Party

LWVLA is very pleased to provide each local League with the materials for the state pension study. They are attached here:

- Background paper
- Four further readings, and a glossary
- Leader's Guide, including the consensus questions
- Eleven consensus questions in a stand-alone document
- Glossary

All information is available online at <http://lwvofla.org/>

How important is it for your League to participate in the study and weigh in on the consensus questions for the pension study?

1. **Credibility:** very first LWVLA study in more than 20 years; developed rapport with the four state system staff members and current and past retirement chairs; their input from draft is included in background paper.
2. **Action:** haven't had a national or Louisiana position on pensions to act on.
3. **Visibility:** could be on the agendas of the House and Senate Retirement Committees to discuss our position this spring; can send an ex. summary of our background paper and our position to the legislators this spring and to the newly elected legislators and state officials after next fall's elections
4. **Informed civil discourse:** A consensus meeting is stimulating and a model for local government.

The deadline for your League's response to the consensus questions is FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2015

The Leader's Guide discusses how to participate as a local League, some suggestions, and a recommended schedule.

We will be happy to mail you a copy of all the attached documents. Please send Sandra the mailing address where you'd like the packet sent. sandraslifer@gmail.com

You will receive a PowerPoint presentation in mid-November to assist you with presenting this information to the public and your League members.

Please e-mail or call Thetis Cusimano, Study Chair, at tcusimano8@gmail.com or call 337-962-6954 (cell) if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Sandra Slifer
sandraslifer@gmail.com

116 Tulip Drive, Covington, LA 70434
985-875-9388 985-285-3552 - text please!
League of Women Voters of Louisiana, President, <http://lwvofla.org/>
League of Women Voters of St. Tammany, President, <http://lwvofst.org/>
Women of Infinite Possibilities, Communications Director, <http://womenofwip.org/>

Early Childhood Education Reform on a Roll

It's only a few short years ago that the Louisiana legislature passed Act 3 (2012) which called for a unified system to ensure that all children are ready to enter kindergarten. The state board of education (BESE) then approved a multi-year plan for implementation by all communities throughout the state. Louisiana is now in its third year of launching new Community Network Pilots.

New Orleans was among one of the first year's pilots. Agenda for Children is the managing agency for the contract with BESE. At this time, only early childhood programs receiving state/federal funding (including Headstart and LA-4 classrooms) are eligible to participate. Many public schools including charters have LA-4 classrooms which has encouraged the partnership of public as well as privately run child care centers.

On September 30, 2014 the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) announced the transfer of Licensing Authority for Child Care and Head Start Centers from DCFS to the LDOE. The LDOE will link academic expectation to licensure for these publicly funded programs. A two-level report card system has been designed and is being field tested to evaluate both programs and community networks on performance. The New Orleans Cohort has been chosen to help field test this new report card system

The first meeting of the newly formed Early Childhood Care and Education Advisory Council (ECCEAC) meeting was on October 21, 2014. In the week following both webinars, face-to-face roundtables were held around the state to review the proposed licensing and workforce policy changes. On October 29, a formal draft of licensing regulations were made public. On November 5 the ECCEAC reviewed and provided recommendations for the final regulations.

Act 3 outlines three sets of needed investments:

- Child Care Assistance – increase funding for the current 12,000 slots so that providers can hire and retain a high quality, Child Development Association (CDA) certificated, teachers.
- Increase funding to the state Kindergarten funding rate for the 20,000 current pre-k 4 slots.
- Increase expansion of the number of Pre-K4 slots by 5000 so all at-risk children can access Pre-K4 classrooms.

The League of Women Voters of New Orleans and Louisiana need to develop and implement plans now to contact legislators across the state. The LWVLA joined a state-wide coalition to support the passing of legislation to reform the licensing and evaluating of early childhood programs. Now we must all step forward to contact our legislators and demand their support for increased allocations for early childhood education.

You can contact ameese@cox.net to offer your assistance in this huge effort. If you would like more information on Early Childhood Reform in Louisiana, let Ann Meese know.

~Anne Meese

Welcome New Members!

Brenda Breaux, Deborah Chapman, Beverly Gianna, Blake Jones, Radha Radha, Margaret Walker,
Louadrian Reed

CELEBRATE AND VOTE

League members, it's time to congratulate ourselves! With the November 4 election we accomplished local election schedule reform by the passage of PW HRC Amendment Section 3. Starting in 2022 the inauguration for the mayor and city council will be in January. This is on top of our legislation moving the elections from the spring to fall beginning in 2017. This is the perfect outcome of a classic league study and we did it!

~Linda Walker

BIG RIVER OF DEMOCRACY TOUR

Our League was contacted by Joe Mathews, California columnist and editor, requesting a visit for a group of foreign journalists sponsored by Zocalo Public Square and the Smithsonian. Mr. Mathews is also a professor at Arizona State University and co-president of the Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy. They were in New Orleans from Friday night through Sunday morning and would be available Saturday afternoon, November 8th. Arrangements were made to meet at the Rosa Keller Library to discuss the role of non-government groups in elections and influencing public policy.

Francine Giugno, Rosalind Cook and Linda Walker represented LWVNO. Keith Twitchell was there to represent the Committee for a Better New Orleans (CBNO). There were 16 visitors from Germany, Austria, Sweden, India, Korea, Bulgaria and Uruguay. We gave a short history of the League and its structure. Rosalind described our study and the process we used to accomplish election changes through legislation. Then we talked about registering new citizens to vote each week and the website and forums to educate voters. Keith discussed CBNO's efforts to inject citizen participation into the new zoning process and their leadership training program.

After our presentations, the questions came fast and furious. The visitors wanted to know about funding, membership, how to access and influence the leaders and policy. The voting patterns of the citizens were of particular interest. They wanted to know how citizens received information and transparency. We learned much about their views on voting and projects such as parliament watch. I found it disturbing to hear from the Austrian gentleman who was an elected magistrate in his village who refused to vote if he disagreed with any actions of his chosen party. It was an invigorating afternoon that I wish all our membership could have experienced.

~Linda Walker

Volunteer Opportunity

Another volunteer opportunity offered by the League is registering voters at the swearing in ceremonies for new citizens each week. The on-going project is registering 15-20 new voters per week from across Louisiana, not just New Orleans. In the near future the ceremonies will be moved from the Homeland Security headquarters in Metairie to the Federal Courthouse in downtown New Orleans. If you would like to participate, contact Joyce Corrington, joycecorrington@hotmail.com or Sue DiCharry, sdicharry@yahoo.com.

~Linda Walker

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Return Service Requested

Office Hours
Tues, Wed & Thurs, 9 am to 1 pm

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lwwno.org



MISSION

The League of Women Voters,
a nonpartisan political organization,
encourages informed and active
participation in government, works to
increase understanding of major policy
issues and influences public policy
through education and advocacy.



FIRST CALL TO CONVENTION

March 14-15, 2015

Opening Reception Friday, March 13, 2015

Clarion Inn & Suites Conference Center

LWVNO is eligible to send delegates to the
State Convention. Please contact Rosemary at
504-581-9106 or lwwno@bellsouth.net
for more information.

LWVNO Board of Directors 2013-2014

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