



Oakland Voter

League of Women Voters Oakland Area

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The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan 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.

BRUNCH plus STATE & LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING

Saturday, January 19, 10:00 a.m.

At the home of Vicki Lange, 115 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

(Linda Lane is north of Lone Pine Rd. between Cranbrook Rd. and Woodward; Linda Lane dead ends at Linda Knoll and is the closest street to Woodward. Look for a yellow sign with an arrow; the house behind sign is Vicki's)

Be sure to join us for our biennial review of our state (LWVMI) and annual review of local (LWVOA) policy positions. This is your chance to voice your opinion on whether some positions are out-of-date and need a fresh look. It appears that an update on our Education position will be proposed at State Convention in May. Or perhaps you think there is a new topic which needs to be studied.

A summary of our State positions is on pages 6-7. Local positions can be found in the 2012 Annual Meeting booklet and will be posted on our website www.lwvoa.org.



This is your opportunity to suggest a local issue to study for the LWV Oakland Area.

Before we start our work, we will again have a chance to admire all the western artifacts in Vicki Lange's lodge style home and enjoy a potluck brunch.

Please call Patricia Finn at 248-302-3510 to confirm your attendance and say what dish you will bring.

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THE OAKLAND VOTER is the official publication of the League of Women Voters. It is published six times a year by the LWVOA. Articles and Letters to the Editor, with writer's name, address and phone number may be sent to the LWVOA office.

- Editor: Randa Keener

LWVOA ON FACEBOOK!

If you are not already a member of Facebook, you can sign up at www.FACEBOOK.com and make "League of Women Voters Oakland Area" one of your Facebook friends.

Invite your friends to learn about League activities and upcoming programs.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Did you all see the article about the LWVOA in some of the C&G newspapers on Nov. 21? Reporter Andy Kozlowski wrote the article after attending a candidate's forum for the 9th Congressional District. Kozlowski was so impressed with the professionalism of the forum that he called me later and said he was interested in doing an article on the LWV in general and how we maintain civility and impartiality in our voter service activities. The complete article covered the League in depth, but here are some excerpts.

"There was a lot of noise during an election season full of vitriol and mudslinging. Now the dust has settled, the signs have come down and the back-to-back campaign ads have stopped airing — but the country is as divided as ever.

Through it all, one group has tried to keep a civil tone, exploring the issues in balanced, nonpartisan fashion — and encouraging voters to not just talk, but also listen....

'In October, for example, the LWVOA hosted a candidate forum for the 9th congressional district, featuring Sander Levin, Don Volaric, Jim Fulner, Les Townsend and Julia Williams. Right from the start, the moderator established certain ground rules: candidates cannot interrupt each other and can only address their view of the issues — no personal attacks or statements involving the other candidates' views were allowed.

'At several points during the night, various candidates broke the rules, criticizing their opponents. At another point, the audience laughed derisively at one candidate's beliefs. In all cases, the moderator immediately chastised the offenders, putting the kibosh on incivility. The moderator even warned she would end the forum right then and there, if people didn't start behaving — and everyone knew she was serious.....

'We'd like people to respect the other person's point of view, and if you are going to disagree, don't jump at them like a lion,' (Judy Bateman said. "We have to start disagreeing civilly, in a low voice. And everyone has to take the time to listen — just listen."

Our thanks go to Andy Kozlowski for writing the article, to Judy Bateman and Jerry Burden for maintaining high standards in conducting our candidate forums, and to Linda DePoorter our master moderator at the 9th Congressional District forum.

League of Women Voters Birthday Celebration and Reunion



**Lunch and State Legislative Update
with State Rep. Vicki Barnett, Farmington/ FH**
(former Mayor and on City Council in Farmington Hills)
Friday, February 15, 2013 12 noon
Cost: \$20 valet parking included RSVP by Feb. 11th, please

The Village Club
190 E. Long Lake Road
(just east of Woodward Avenue, south side of Long Lake Rd.)
Bloomfield Hills 48304

Lunch menu: Quiche, Fruit, House Salad, Popovers,
Muffins, Birthday Cake, Beverages

For more information, call Barbara Suhay 248-642-8514
Website for map and other information: www.thevillageclub.org

Registration for 'Birthday Lunch' – reservations due: February 11th

Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

No. attending _____ Amount Enclosed _____ **Please make checks payable to: LWVOA**

Mail to: LWVOA Office, 725 S. Adams Rd., Rm 292, Birmingham, MI 48009

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Student Turnout High for Mock Election

At the request of Richard Zagar, Social Studies Teacher at Levey Middle School in Southfield, Toni Whitley and Cathy Hodson of the LWVOA met with Mr. Zagar to discuss and prepare a Mock Election at the school. It was held on November 5, 2012.

The LWVOA's goal to participate in this endeavor was to train and educate youth on the importance of registering to vote and to teach them the procedures involved in voting. Therefore, we replicated a ballot for their particular precincts.

In order for them to experience voting as accurately as possible, we made up registration cards to give to each student. As they entered the precinct table to check in, they used those cards as their registration identification. The card (on which they were told to write in their full names) was then matched against a list of names that the school had provided to us.

Once their name was verified, they were given a ballot and instructions on to how to vote a straight party ticket or how to split their ticket between parties. They were also told that they could vote both the "Partisan" and "Non-Partisan" sections of the ballot.

Students proceeded into the library where the voting booths were set up. After voting, they placed their ballot in an optical scanner, and then received an "I Voted" sticker. They also received a 'Know Your Michigan Voting Rights' flyer to take home to their parents.

The entire event was a huge success! About 330 students voted in our Mock Election and they seemed to enjoy the experience.



Levey Middle School students register to vote in Mock Election.



Coming up the week of March 12-14:
A local forum on Judicial Selection with Justice Marilyn Kelly and Rich Robinson. Stay tuned for Email notice with date and place.

Lame Duck Session News:

LWV of Michigan was closely following several bills on which it had positions. State President Sue Smith testified in front of legislative committees on those bills which had hearings. Advocacy letters are going to Governor Snyder on bills which passed.

Education Achievement Authority:
LWVMI opposed. Did NOT pass. Will be re-introduced next year.

Personal Property Taxes:
LWVMI opposed repeal because revenue lost for local governments and schools not replaced. PASSED.

Anti-Choice Legislation:
LWVMI opposed based on LWVUS position. Blue Cross bills with amendments to require health insurance exchange policies offering abortion coverage to include it only as a rider PASSED. An omnibus anti-abortion bill adding regulations on clinics and doctors PASSED. Bill adding a conscience clause for health professionals did NOT pass.

Southeast MI Transit Authority:
LWVMI supported. Package of four bills PASSED.

Emergency Manager Changes:
No LWVMI position on revised bill with four options for local governments to choose from, plus state funds to pay for Emergency Manager. Bill PASSED.

Michigan in the news –unfortunately

“JUDICIAL ELECTIONS, UNHINGED” (Excerpts from New York Times editorial, Nov. 19, 2012)

This year’s round of state judicial elections broke previous records for the amounts spent on judicial campaigns around the country. The dominant role played by special interest money – including money from super PACs financed by undisclosed donors – has severely weakened the principle of fair and impartial courts...

In Michigan, where three of seven seats on the State Supreme Court were up for election, records were set for both spending and lack of accountability. The 3.2 million raised by candidates and reported to the Michigan Bureau of Elections was dwarfed by unreported spending by the political parties and outside groups interested in tilting the balance of the court. One ad run by an independent group against Bridget McCormack, a Democratic candidate for a seat on the court, featured the mother of a soldier killed in Afghanistan and suggested that Ms. McCormack’s legal work for a detainee released from Guantanamo Bay in 2007 showed support for terrorism. Ms. McCormack won the race.

Of the \$15 million or so spent for TV ads in Michigan 75 percent cannot be attributed to identifiable donors, notes Rich Robinson, executive director of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network, which advocates changing Michigan law to bar undisclosed independent spending. That exceeds even the 2010 record, when half the total spending in the Michigan Supreme Court races came from secret sources.

Regrettably, states that elect their top judges show no inclination to address these distressing trends by replacing judicial election with systems of merit appointment that avoid retention votes. This year’s experience should at least hasten state efforts to revise rules for judicial recusal to take campaign contributions into account....”

NOTE: Two veteran Michigan jurists – Michigan Supreme Court Justice **Marilyn Kelly** and Senior Judge **James L. Ryan** of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit – convened a Task Force of distinguished Michiganders in December 2010 to study the processes by which state Supreme Court justices are selected across the United States. A copy of the report can be downloaded by going to the home page of LWVMI.org and just scrolling down to the link.

LWVMI POSITIONS

At our program planning meeting we will be deciding whether to recommend that these positions be retained, dropped, updated or restudied in whole or in part. You can find the complete positions by going to LWVMI.org, and then clicking Issues and Actions.

GOVERNMENT

Redistricting For the State Legislature and US House of Representatives

LWVMI supports the formation of an independent redistricting commission in lieu of the legislature as the primary redistricting body. Such a commission should afford equal representation to the major parties and provide for independent and diverse representation. This commission should be established through legislation and/or a constitutional amendment.

Election Laws

LWVMI supports uniform ease and accessibility of voting with assurances of accuracy, security and voter privacy; fair and uniform party regulation; open primaries and a regional presidential primary; local officials having primary authority for elections, the principles of initiative, referendum and recall; nonpartisan merit appointment and the subsequent retention election of appellate judges; nonpartisan election of judges for local courts; public funding for judicial election campaigns.

Intergovernmental Relations Within Michigan

LWVMI supports measures to allow flexibility in solving regional problems and to encourage orderly growth and efficient government. Such measures should include cooperation, coordination and long-range planning.

Taxation and Budgeting

LWVMI supports a state-local tax structure that is adequate, equitable, flexible and moderately progressive.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Great Lakes Ecosystem

LWVMI supports preserving and enhancing the environmental integrity of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River ecosystem. A priority is the attainment and maintenance of high water quality standards throughout the Basin with emphasis on conservation and pollution prevention. Decision-making should include public education and input, and inter-governmental participation and planning.

Land Use

LWVMI, recognizing that land is a finite resource, not just a commodity, believes that land ownership (whether public or private) implies responsibilities of stewardship.

Pesticides

LWVMI supports reduction of exposure to pesticides, the use of non-toxic alternatives, regulation of the use of pesticides by all levels of government, and public notice of pesticide use.

Solid Waste Management

LWVMI supports measures to solve the problem of solid waste disposal including state cooperation with local and federal bodies, primary responsibility by local government, and mandatory reuse and recycling technology.

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations

LWVMI supports adequate regulation and inspection of facilities and the public's right to know of environmental risks.

SOCIAL POLICY

Children and Youth

LWVMI supports a system of comprehensive and coordinated services for all children and families to provide basic resources for an adequate quality of life; policies and programs staffed with well-trained and sufficient personnel to provide preventive, protective and rehabilitative services for all children and families; individualized justice for children within the framework of due process of law with adequate and coordinated court services.

Education: Structure, Financing and Goals

LWVMI supports a publicly financed public education system in which there is equal opportunity for good education available to all children. State, federal, and local governments should share financial responsibility with the state having the greatest funding responsibility and with some local millage levies. Public funds should not be used for general nonpublic education purposes.

Education: Teacher Certification in Michigan

LWVMI supports teacher preparation and professional development with certification of educators.

Education: Public School Academies (PSA)

LWVMI supports the concept of educational choices for parents and students within the public school system. PSAs (also known as Charter Schools) should demonstrate strong oversight, accountability, evaluation criteria, and compliance with state laws. The number of PSAs should be limited until student achievement can be assessed.

Health Care

Support: a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost available to all U.S. residents; equitable distribution of services; efficient and economical delivery of care; a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care.

Social Services System

LWVMI supports a system of services which: 1) provide sufficient income assistance to assure decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter for people unable to work, or for whom jobs are not available, or whose earnings are inadequate; 2) establish adequate financial incentives and opportunities for realistic job training and counseling.

Structure and Funding of Michigan's Public Libraries

LWVMI supports basic and stable funding for public libraries to insure basic services to all state residents. Sources include penal fines, state aid, and local taxes. Organization of public libraries should be uniform with self-governing library boards with financial autonomy, the establishment of minimum standards, and cooperation with other libraries.

Prisons in Michigan

LWVMI supports a cost-effective prison system that reduces recidivism, utilizes alternatives to incarceration, reduces emphasis on prison construction, and provides supportive/rehabilitative programs.



League of Women Voters® Oakland Area

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Time Dated Material Enclosed

Calendar of Events

Details will be posted in Event Calendar on www.LWVOA.org

- Sat Jan. 19 10 am State and Local Program Planning Meeting and Brunch**
at the home of Vicki Lange, 115 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304 (See pg. 1)
- Fri Feb. 15 noon Birthday Lunch & Legislative Update with State Rep. Vicki Barnett**
at The Village Club, 190 E. Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304;
reservations required: \$20 (See Pg. 3)
- TBD Mar 12, 13, or 14 Forum on Judicial Selection** with MI Supreme Court Justice Marilyn Kelly
and Rich Robinson, Michigan Campaign Finance Network Executive Director
- Fri-Sun May 17-19 League of Women Voters of Michigan State Convention**
Lansing, Michigan
- Sat June 1 10 am LWV Oakland Area Annual Meeting**