



Oakland Voter

League of Women Voters Oakland Area
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2015-2016 Issue 2

January-February 2016

Consensus on Money In Politics Study Saturday, January 16, 2016 at 9:45 a.m.

**@ Bloomfield Township Library
1099 Lone Pine Road
(corner of Lone Pine and Telegraph)**

For the 2014-2016 biennium, the 2014 LWVUS Convention adopted a multi-part program including:

"A review and update of the League position on campaign finance in light of forty years of changes since the Watergate reforms, in order to enhance member understanding of the new schemes and structures used to influence elections and erode protections against corruption in our political process, and to review possible responses to counter them in the current environment."

See Pages 4-7 for the scope of the review and update of the current LWVUS position on Campaign Finance and the consensus questions.

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BRUNCH plus NATIONAL & LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING

Saturday, February 13, 10:30 a.m.

at the home of Vicki Lange,

115 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304

(Linda Lane is north off 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)

Bring a breakfast goodie for us to enjoy as we socialize and admire all of Vicki's many western artifacts before starting program planning.

What is program planning? It's our chance to take a look at the studies we already have completed, the positions we have developed, and whether they are still viable. Do they need review or updating? See article on **Page 4** for list of national positions and the national League's suggested focus on action. See www.lwvoa.org /About LWV Oakland Area /Positions for local positions.

Also we can discuss new emerging issues and evaluate possible studies, considering: Is there widespread member interest? Is this a timely issue? Is government action the most effective way to address the problem? If we propose a new study, we need to submit a statement stating the study's scope.

RSVP to Mary Ann Barkach, 248-376-6202 and let her know what you plan to bring – coffee cake, casserole, salad, fruit.

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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.

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.

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

President's Message

December, 2015

I want to wish everyone a very happy holiday season. As we wrap up another election season our members outdid themselves once again. The voter service members did candidate forums, provided voter guides both printed and on line, and webmaster was busy posting all the meetings. We had a successful meeting “Policing in the 21st Century”, did consensus on the LWVUS Constitutional Amendments study, and scheduled a consensus meeting in January on “Money in Politics”.

Our finance drive is under way. If you are able and have not yet sent your contribution, now would be a good time to mail your check. However small, all are appreciated.

We once again provided service to the Italian-American Club by handling their election. This is a way we can be visible in the community. We have a request to start a LWV unit at Fox Run Senior Community that is currently under advisement. We attended and had a table at the special showing of the movie SUFFRAGETTE.

We have started planning on our annual meeting and set a date for a program planning meeting on February 13th at the home of Vicki Lange at 10.30 am. Save this date all are welcome to attend this meeting. More about the schedule in this Voter.

And last but not least we were asked by State LWV to arrange 10 Town Halls and several civic organization Forums to hear educational programs on Redistricting. This was in the middle of election season and taxed our resources but our members came through with flying colors. We completed 8 Town Halls and spoke to 1 Civic Org and may have a few more in the future. This was a very important program for League to be involved in; however for us the timing could have been better. Thank you All who helped us inform 300 attendees.

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

Jerry Burden

THANK YOU CORNER :

We never seem to thank all of those who give so freely of their time all through the year. So I would like to take that time now.

Office and Administration: Sue Abrams, Mary Howarth and Toni Whitley.

Voter: Mary Ann Barkach, Edwin Lord and Ann Edwards

Webmaster: Tera Moon

Voter Guides and Vote 411: Deb Horner and Eva Packard.

Candidate Forums: See Page 3.

Finance Drive: Karen Degrendel and Ann Edwards.

Redistricting: Ann Bickford, Barbara Talley, Kath Maisner, Karen Linnell, Deb Macon, Judy Bateman, Jan Dolan, Eva Packard and Prof. Kevin Deegan Krause

Our Presenters: Judy Karandjeff, Linda Hoff, Sue Smith and Angela Ryan.

Membership: Linda and Doug Depoorter.

And Thank You to the entire board listed at the left!

If I missed anyone, a very heartfelt thank you also.

2015 FALL ELECTIONS

Voter service in Oakland Area was very busy in the 2015 fall election cycle. Thanks to Judy Bateman and Ann Edwards who coordinated 12 candidate forums for the following cities: Birmingham, Lathrup Village, Bloomfield Hills, Clarkston, Huntington Woods, Clawson, Keego Harbor, Southfield, Berkley, Rochester, Rochester Hills, and Auburn Hills. Jerry Burden also set up a Town Hall in Keego Harbor to hear pros and cons on their 2 ballot proposals.

Thanks to the following people who moderated the forums: Tera Moon, Judy Bateman, Jerry Burden, Mary Howarth, and Carla Gribbs. Thanks also go to the following members who were screeners, greeters, timers, and pages: John Magary, Renate Soulen, Laura Gogola, Sara Ward, Neil Zechman, Judy Bateman, Sharon Kelley, Ann Edwards, Karen DeGrendel, Toni Whitley, and Pat Szura.

Italian American Club of Livonia election

The Italian American Club of Livonia (IACL) holds their election of officers every 2 years and this is the 4th time we have run this election. It's a long busy day but you meet friendly people and eat great food.

I would like to thank Doug DePoorter, Jan Dolan, Mary Ann Barkach, Kath Maisner, Gretchen Pugsley, Jerry Burden and Edwin Lord for helping with the IACL election. Everyone volunteered for at least 4 hours of their time. This is a great fund raiser for LWVOA.

Linda DePoorter, Chairperson



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LWV Program Planning

For the upcoming biennium the LWVUS Board suggests taking a close look at our current positions as found in [Impact on Issues](#) and, in some cases, in state and local program books. Over the years, the League nationally has studied and come to consensus on many topics in four major categories:

Representative Government: Voting Rights, Election Process, Citizen Rights, Congress & the Presidency.

International Relations: United Nations, Trade, U.S. Relations with Developing Countries, Arms Control, Military Policy and Defense Spending.

Natural Resources: Resource Management, Environmental Protection & Pollution Control, Public Participation, Agriculture Policies.

Social Policy: Equality of Opportunity, Federal Role in Public Education, Fiscal Policy, Health Care, Immigration, Meeting Basic Human Needs, Child Care, Early Intervention for Children at Risk, Violence Prevention, Gun Control, Urban Policy, Death Penalty, Sentencing Policy, Human Trafficking.

When looking at our positions as a whole, it is clear that a main goal for which we are striving is to **Make Democracy Work**. Voting rights, voter protection and service, and election reform are crucial elements in achieving the goal, and the League is particularly noted for action in these areas. Currently, as part of the three-part Key Structures of Democracy program adopted at the 2014 Convention, Leagues nationwide are: engaging in the Money in Politics Review and Update of LWV's campaign finance position, studying the process of amending the U.S. Constitution; and reviewing the Redistricting process for U.S. Congress for the purpose of developing action steps.

National recommends that we more fully utilize the positions we have and **focus on taking action** versus adding new studies or reviews for the 2016-18 biennium. Visit www.lwv.org for detail on our positions.

LWVUS MONEY IN POLITICS



SCOPE OF THE MIP REVIEW AND UPDATE

The scope of the study, as adopted by the LWV Education Fund Board, October 2014, states:

The Committee will conduct an update of the League's position on campaign finance for the purpose of addressing the lack of member understanding and agreement on the extent to which political campaigns are protected speech under the First Amendment. The campaign finance position will be updated through a study and consensus process to consider:

- ✓ The rights of individuals and organizations, under the First Amendment, to express their political views through independent expenditures and the finance of election campaign activities; and
- ✓ how those rights, if any, should be protected and reconciled with the interests set out in the current position.

CURRENT LEAGUE POSITION ON CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Statement of Position on Campaign Finance, (January 1974 and Revised March 1982):

"The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the methods of financing political campaigns should ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and allow maximum citizen participation in the political process. *This position is applicable to all federal campaigns for public office — presidential and congressional, primaries as well as general elections. It also may be applied to state and local campaigns.*"

The Study Guide for the Money in Politics Consensus as well as other supporting materials may be found at: <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/study-guide-money-politics-consensus>

MONEY IN POLITICS CONSENSUS

PART I QUESTIONS:

Democratic Values and Interests with Respect to Financing Political Campaigns

Background Readings

Here are readings that provide background on the issues that the Part I questions are asking about:

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/money-politics-mip-introduction-and-overview>

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/money-politics-shifts-supreme-court-opinion-about-money-politics>

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/money-politics-role-supreme-court-interpreting-constitution>

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/evidence-spending-impacts-electoral-and-legislative-outcomes>

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/money-politics-corruption-and-rationales-regulating-campaign-finance>

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

(Please respond to each item in Question 1.)

- a. Seek political equality for all citizens.
 Agree Disagree No consensus
- b. Protect representative democracy from being distorted by big spending in election campaigns.
 Agree Disagree No consensus
- c. Enable candidates to compete equitably for public office.
 Agree Disagree No consensus
- d. Ensure that candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public.
 Agree Disagree No consensus
- e. Ensure that economic and corporate interests are part of election dialogue.
 Agree Disagree No consensus
- f. Provide voters sufficient information about candidates and campaign issues to make informed choices.
 Agree Disagree No consensus
- g. Ensure the public's right to know who is using money to influence elections.
 Agree Disagree No consensus
- h. Combat corruption and undue influence in government.
 Agree Disagree No consensus

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

(Please respond to each item in Question 2.)

- a. A candidate or officeholder agrees to vote or work in favor of a donor's interests in exchange for a campaign contribution.
 Agree Disagree No consensus
- b. An officeholder or her/his staff gives greater access to donors.
 Agree Disagree No consensus
- c. An officeholder votes or works to support policies that reflect the preferences of individuals or organizations in order to attract contributions from them.
 Agree Disagree No consensus
- d. An office holder seeks political contributions implying that there will be retribution unless a donation is given.
 Agree Disagree No consensus
- e. The results of the political process consistently favor the interests of significant campaign contributors.
 Agree Disagree No consensus

Part I: 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.

Background Readings

Here are readings that provide background on the issues that the Part II questions ask about:

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/money-politics-first-amendment>

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/money-politics-debate-can-government-regulate-money-politics>

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/hard-soft-and-dark-money>

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/money-politics-independent-expenditures>

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/new-soft-money-daniel-p-tokaji-renata-e-b-strause-e-book> (pp. 17-27)

- 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? (Please respond to each item in Question 1.)**
- a. Individual citizens, including wealthy individuals like George Soros and the Koch Brothers.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus
- 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.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus
- c. For-profit organizations, like Exxon, Ben and Jerry's, General Motors, and Starbucks, from their corporate treasury funds.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus
- 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.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus
- e. Labor unions, like the United Autoworkers and Service Employees International, from the union's general treasury funds.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus
- 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.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus
- g. Non-partisan voter registration and GOTV (get out the vote) organizations and activities, like the LWV and Nonprofit Vote.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus
- h. Political parties, like the Republicans, Libertarians, and Democrats.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus
- i. Candidates for public office spending money the candidate has raised from contributors.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus
- j. Candidates for public office spending their own money.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus

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.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus
- b. Television and other electronic media, like Fox News, CNN, MSNBC and CBS.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus
- c. Internet communications, like Huffington Post, Breitbart, Daily Kos, and individual bloggers.
 Spending banned Some spending limits Unlimited spending No consensus

Part II: OPTIONAL COMMENTS (250 word limit):

PART III QUESTIONS:

Methods for Regulating Campaign Finance to Protect the Democratic Process

Background Readings

Here are readings that provide background on the issues that the Part III questions are asking about:

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/options-reforming-money-politics>

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/money-politics-action-states>

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/mip-enforcement-federal-campaign-finance-law>

1. In order to achieve the goals for campaign finance regulation, should the League support? *(Please respond to each item in Question 1a and 1b.)*

- 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 in Question 1 c.)
- 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.

Part III: OPTIONAL COMMENTS (250 word limit):



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A Voice for Citizens,
A Voice for Change

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Calendar of Events

- Saturday, Jan. 16, 9:45 am** **Consensus on Money in Politics Study**
Bloomfield Twp Library, 1099 Lone Pine Road at Telegraph
- Thursday, Jan. 21, 7 pm LWVOA Board Meeting,
25800 Northwestern, Real Estate One Building, Southfield, MI
8th floor, Globe Midwest office
- Saturday, Feb. 13, 10:30 am** **National Program Planning & Brunch**
Vicki Lange's house, 115 Linda Knoll, Bloomfield Hills 48304
Directions on Page 1. RSVP to Mary Ann Barkach 248-376-6202
- Tuesday, March 8 7am-8pm** **Presidential Primary election**
Voter must specify which party's Presidential ballot to receive.
Michigan's ballots will contain 13 Republicans and 4 Democrats.
Some communities may also have proposals on the ballot.
Visit **VOTE411.org** for candidate information.
- Th-Sun, June 16-19 LWVUS National Convention in Washington, D.C.