



Ohio League Leaders' Update October 2011

Dear League Leaders:

Election season has arrived and it is a busy time for the League! In addition to election season activities, the state League is also preparing to host the president of the League of Women Voters of the United States, diving into work on the Clean Air Act, and engaging in work on redistricting reform.

Our goal is to help take the burden off local Leagues by providing timely information, sample policies and procedures, and voter service information. If we can be of assistance to you during this busy time, please contact us toll free at 1-877-LWV-OHIO (877-598-6446) or leg@lwvohio.org.

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ADVOCACY & EDUCATION

Networking Opportunity: Monthly Conference Calls

LWVO/EF is now hosting monthly conference calls for **all** League members to help keep you informed about what is happening at the Statehouse, supply you with tools and information to assist you in strengthening your local League, and provide an opportunity for information-sharing between local Leagues.

The calls are scheduled for the first Tuesday of every month at Noon. The next call will be on Tuesday, November 1, at 12:00 p.m. The topic will be redistricting. It is challenging to keep up with all the developments on redistricting and the work that the League is doing. We hope you can join us for what should be an exciting and informative call. To join the call, dial the toll-free number 1-866-740-1260 and enter access code: 4691505.

Work on the Clean Air Promise Begins

The League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund (LWVOEF), in partnership with local Leagues and with support from the national League of Women Voters Education Fund, is working to change the debate over the Clean Air Act from a focus on the cost of regulation to a focus on the public health cost of bad air quality. The campaign seeks to elicit the following promise from politicians, community leaders, League members and the general public:

"I promise to protect America's children and families from dangerous air pollution. Because toxics and pollutants such as mercury, smog, carbon, and soot, cause thousands of hospital visits, asthma attacks, and even deaths, I will support clean air policies and other protections that scientists and public health experts have recommended to the EPA to safeguard our air quality."

With grant support from the national League, LWVOEF is providing pass-through funding to participating local Leagues for activities that engage community leaders, politicians and the general public in their communities to make the promise to support clean air. Depending on the degree of involvement, local Leagues have the opportunity to earn between \$150 and \$400. In addition, LWVOEF has an intern, Munia Mostafa, who is dedicated to assisting local Leagues who want to participate in this important project.

If you are interested in participating, click [here](#) to view an overview of the campaign and download the sign-up form or contact Munia at intern@lwvohio.org.

Redistricting Reform Heats Up ****Op Ed Template Included****

Just when you think you know what is going on with redistricting, things change! In late September, the Apportionment Board adopted district lines for the Ohio House and Senate seats. Those maps are not being challenged even though they are designed to cause an overrepresentation of one political party (this time it is the Republicans) and deprive voters of an effective choice in general elections by intentionally drawing districts that are not balanced between Democrats and Republicans.

The current challenge is to the even more egregious gerrymander of Ohio's Congressional districts. Ohioans are about evenly split in their political leanings. However, Republicans are heavily favored in 10 of the 16 new districts, and mildly favored in two more. Democrats are heavily favored in four districts.

The Congressional districts are approved by the General Assembly just like any other piece of legislation and they are subject to referendum just like any other piece of legislation. One exception is an appropriations bill – those become effective immediately. Last week the Ohio Supreme Court decided that adding money to the redistricting legislation didn't make it an appropriations bill – so it can be sent to the voters for their approval or disapproval just like any other legislation (like the referendum of SB 5 which is on the ballot this year).

If enough signatures are gathered, the referendum would be on the November 2012 ballot – but that is when we need to elect our new Congressional delegation – so we need districts before that. Ideally, the legislature will come to a bi-partisan compromise that also considers the criteria we used in the map-drawing competition this year.

The League is remaining focused on the long term. What is really needed is a new way of drawing the districts so this chaos is not repeated again in 10 years.

How Can You Help with Redistricting Reform?

Click [here](#) for an op ed template for presidents (or their designees) to share League thoughts on needed reform for the redistricting process. As always, if there are multiple Leagues within a newspaper's circulation area, please coordinate your activity. If your op ed gets published, please email or send a copy to LWV Ohio for our records. Thank you for joining us in this important work!

Election Questionnaire and Interviews of Boards of Elections

The state League is asking for your help in assessing how well the election went. LWVOEF has developed a simple survey that we hope you will ask your members to complete and return to the state League. (click [here](#) to read the survey) This will be, of course, an unofficial sampling, but we hope it will give us some insight into what is happening on the ground on election day and the weeks leading up to the election. We will be contacting League presidents with more details about how to participate in the survey.

In a more formal fashion, as we did in 2009, we will be inviting local Leagues -to interview their board of elections post-election as part of the lawsuit monitoring process. Twenty-two Leagues participated in the interviews two years ago –and your state League garnered important information regarding compliance with the lawsuit settlement agreement. Virtually all who participated found it an excellent tool to build relations with their local boards. The results were published in a report entitled “Off to a Good Start” (click [here](#) to read the report). We will be communicating further with detailed information about this important opportunity for your League in the next few weeks.

Some members have asked if the League will be doing audits after this election. The League will not be conducting an audit for this election because it is not required. Audits will be required after the primary election and the 2012 general election.

House Bill 194 Referendum Update

The petition drive (supported by the state and local Leagues) to collect signatures to repeal HB 194, the bill changing Ohio’s election law passed by the Ohio legislature earlier this year, has been successful. The coalition collecting signatures turned in nearly 100,000 more signatures than required. The signatures will be verified by boards of elections after the election. Assuming the count holds, HB 194 will not go into effect unless approved by the voters in the 2012 general election. This means that both the 2011 and 2012 elections will be governed by the previous law.

Please visit www.lwvohio.org for up-to-date information.

ADMINISTRATION

Join Us: Dinner in Columbus *or* Breakfast in Independence with LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara

Elisabeth MacNamara, the president of the League of Women Voters of the United States will be in Columbus next week to meet with elected officials and the media about the Clean Air Promise. **Join us for dinner at Figlio in Grandview (a suburb of Columbus) next Thursday, October 27 at 6:00 p.m. or for breakfast at Shula’s in Independence (in Northeast Ohio) next Sunday, October 20 at 10:00 a.m.** to welcome Elisabeth to Ohio and network with League members from around the state.

League members will be responsible for the cost of their meal. If you would like to attend, please send an e-mail to Michele Martin, LWVO’s office manager, at mmartin@lwvohio.org by Tuesday, October 25.

- Figlio is located at 1369 Grandview Avenue, Columbus, OH 43212 (Oct. 27 at 6:00 p.m.)
- Shula's is located at 6200 Quarry Lane, Independence, OH 44131 (Oct. 30 at 10:00 a.m.)

Voter Service Information on LWVO Website

LWV Ohio's website has been updated to include everything your local League needs for the election season. Click on the links below to download any of the sample policies, checklists, or best practice tips to help you have a smooth election season.

- [LWVUS Election Checklist](#)
- [Candidate Forum Checklist: THE INFORMED ELECTORATE: Self/Candidate Assessment](#)
- [LWVO/EF Voters Guide Donor & Membership Ad](#)
- [LWVUS Membership Recruitment During Election Season](#)
- [Overview of Guidelines - League Co-Sponsorships of Debates & Forums](#)
- [Sample Media & Taping Policy](#)
- [Summary of Best Practices from August, 2011, Regional Meetings](#)
- [Voter Services - Links & Resources](#)
- [LWVOEF Early Voting Flyer](#)
- [Sample Nonpartisan Policy for Boards](#)

In addition to the information specifically for local Leagues, LWVO's website also includes information for Ohioans interested in voting. The Voter Center includes information on the statewide ballots, voter identification, absentee voting, and more. Updated information on voter rights and voter responsibilities is also available. Click [here](#) to visit the Voter Center.

Drop-in Article for Local Leagues' VOTERS: Highlights from Your State League

Your state League kept busy over the summer and into the fall -- as your voice at the Statehouse, with activities to support local Leagues and their leaders -- and much, much more! A ready-to-go article for your League's VOTER that gives your membership a snapshot of what your state League accomplished from mid-May through September is available on the League website. You can download this article by clicking [here](#).

Support the League

We are reminded during election season how important the work of the League is to protecting the right to vote, educating voters on issues, and monitoring the election process. The Ohio Campaign for Accountable Redistricting, a project of the League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund and Ohio Citizen Action, has shone light on the redistricting process and with its map-drawing contest, demonstrated that there is a better way than the partisan gerrymandering that characterized redistricting in Ohio this fall. All of this work costs money. Please take a few minutes today to support the continued work of the League. Your donation will help ensure that the mission of the League continues for generations to come. Click [here](#) to make a donation.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- October 25:** Lobby Lunch, Columbus: 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Columbus Metropolitan Library, 96 S. Grant Ave, Columbus, Ohio 43215 – all are welcome!
- October 27:** Dinner with LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara, Columbus
- October 28:** Clean Air Promise Press Conference, Columbus
- October 30:** Breakfast with LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara, Independence
- November 1:** LWVO/EF Monthly Conference Call, Noon, This Month's Topic: Redistricting
- November 8:** Lobby Lunch, Columbus: 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., Columbus Metropolitan Library, 96 S. Grant Ave, Columbus, Ohio 43215 – all are welcome!
- November 12:** LWVO/EF Board Meeting, Columbus

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**If you have local League leaders or other League members
who would like to receive the Leaders' Update,
please send their email information to leg@lwvohio.org.**