



Ohio League Leader Update August 2011

Dear League Leaders:

August is a busy month for the state and local Leagues with regional meetings around Ohio discussing election reforms, the referendum on HB 194 and Women's Equality Day activities. This summer has also been a busy time at the Statehouse. Thanks to your efforts, the League was able to defeat the Voter I.D. bill (for now). Let's keep up the great work!

You are receiving this email because you have been a League officer or have requested to receive the League Leader Update. We are currently working to update our contacts so that we have the necessary information to communicate with your League and facilitate networking between the local Leagues. If you are the League President for 2011-2012, please [click here](#) to complete the short [Local League Profile survey](#).

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ADVOCACY & EDUCATION

LWV Ohio Board Takes Position on House Bill 194 Referendum

On August 22nd the LWV Ohio board voted to support the effort to repeal HB 194 -- passed by the legislature in June, 2011 -- through a referendum petition drive. HB 194 includes a number of provisions which we believe are likely to make it more difficult for Ohioans to exercise their right to vote and which will result in long lines and other problems on Election Day. Among the concerns are provisions reducing the number of days for mail-in and early in-person absentee voting, prohibitions against the mailing of absentee ballot applications unless they are requested, and eliminating the requirement that poll workers direct voters to the correct precinct so that their vote will be counted. LWV Ohio supports the referendum based on national League positions to protect the right of all citizens to vote; to encourage all citizens to vote; and to facilitate citizens' participation in government decision-making. The petition effort was undertaken by Fair Elections Ohio and is backed by a coalition of state legislators, voting rights advocates, progressive groups and others. The petitioners have until September 29th to gather the requisite petitions -- over 231,000. If the petition effort is successful, the law will be stayed until after the election in November of 2012. Although the League typically makes a decision about whether to support a statewide referendum only after it gets on the ballot, in this instance the board concluded that because the issue of voters' rights is so crucial to the League's mission, the League should support the petition drive. LWV Ohio will send League presidents a copy of the press release and additional information about this decision -- and what it means for local Leagues -- prior to the issuance of a press release on Thursday of this week. The press release and referendum document will be available on the League website, www.lwvohio.org, later this week.

LWV Ohio Human Trafficking Study to Begin

At the LWV Ohio Convention in May, the delegate body approved a study on human trafficking in Ohio. The scope of the study is to review the recommendations of the [Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study Commission 2010 Year End Report to the Attorney General](#), as well as other research materials, and develop study materials and consensus questions for the Ohio membership to use in the human-trafficking consensus process.

Karen Rainey, President of LWV Delaware County, is leading the study and can be contacted at karengr@yahoo.com. **If you are interested in being on the study committee, please contact Karen.** The first committee meeting is planned for mid-September.

LWVUS Update: Public Education Study and Privatization Study

LWVUS has undertaken two studies this year: one on the Role of the Federal Government in Public Education and the second on Privatization. The goal is to reach consensus on both studies in time for approval at the National Convention in the spring. National is asking local Leagues to reach consensus on the education study by the end of November. This is an extremely ambitious goal, particularly since it will require Leagues to study these issues and reach consensus at a time when there are many other demands on their time.

The education study focuses on the history of public education, funding and equity issues, which are addressed under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the common core standards/assessments, which are required for many federal grant programs.

Resources on the LWVU website include:

[Leaders' Guide for Education Study Consensus](#)
[Background papers by the LWVUS Education Study Committee](#)
[VOTER-ready articles](#)

If you have League members with a passion for education, they may be interested in starting to read the papers, which the US study committee has prepared so that they can lead the discussion when you get to the consensus meeting.

Participation in this study is certainly not mandatory for Leagues whose schedules just won't permit it. However, the topic is both interesting and important. A speaker on issues covered by the study might attract community interest, and the study may attract new League members who would like to participate in the consensus process, which is open only to members.

Report on Election Administration Plans Released

LWV Ohio Education Fund, as part of the historic 2009 settlement of the state League's 2005 federal lawsuit seeking to fix defects in the way Ohio conducts its elections, undertook a review of the Election Administration Plans (EAPs) prepared by county boards of elections prior to the 2010 general election.

With the assistance of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and the League's additional pro bono counsel, the League has completed an assessment of a cross-section of EAPs from county boards of elections around the state. The report can be found [here](#). The report summarizes best practices, includes concrete suggestions on how election administration planning can be improved, and notes serious deficiencies in some instances.

The League has shared the report with the Secretary of State's office and stressed the importance of effective election planning in light of the changes to election laws. The Secretary of State is reviewing the report as it addresses planning for upcoming elections. The League will continue to monitor future Election Administration Plans through 2015.

To view a press release issued by LWV Ohio on August 23, click [here](#).

ADMINISTRATION

Thank you, Joanna Helon!

On behalf of the 2009-2011 and 2011-2013 Boards of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Ohio / Education Fund, our sincere thanks to Joanna Z. Helon, our intrepid interim executive director, January - July, 2011. Joanna exemplifies the best of the League: an extraordinary passion for our mission and a commitment to ensuring that the League fulfills its mission, regardless of what it takes. We are deeply grateful for Joanna's exceptional sharing of time, talent and vision. She has given the League a wonderful seven months of inspirational leadership -- and we are all the better for it!

Thank you, Joanna -- and best wishes for continued success!

Nancy Brown
Co-president

Meg Flack
Co-president

State League Welcomes New Executive Director

The League of Women Voters of Ohio/Education Fund is very pleased to announce that Jennifer Williams is the new Executive Director of the Ohio League.

Jennifer has served for the past seven years as Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations (OANO). In that role, Jennifer created OANO's first public policy program dedicated to advocating and lobbying on behalf of Ohio's 45,000 nonprofit organizations. She dramatically increased OANO's membership and funding and implemented a successful strategic planning process. Jennifer has a passion for public policy, lobbying and voter engagement, which makes the League a perfect fit.

Jennifer can be reached at jwilliams@lwvohio.org. Welcome, Jennifer!

League Profile ... Presidents, Please Complete ASAP

If you are the president of your League and have not yet completed your League profile, please click [here](#) to provide the information. The state League needs this information to communicate with the local Leagues effectively.

Congratulations to Stuart Wright, Winner of Arizona Redistricting Contest

Stuart Wright, a LWV Metro Columbus member, was recently named a winner of Arizona's redistricting competition. A judging panel created by the Arizona Competitive Districts Coalition and overseen by the Arizona League of Women Voters selected two winners in each category of Legislative and Congressional maps, as well as a special Honorable Mention for each.

Wright also placed in the Ohio League's 2009 Redistricting Competition.

Statewide Ballot-Issue Information to be Released September 14

Information on statewide ballot-issues will be released on September 14 following LWV Ohio/Education Fund's September board meeting in Columbus.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

September 6: Lobby Lunch, Columbus Metropolitan Library

September 10: LWVO/EF Board Meeting, Columbus

September 14: Information from LWVO/EF on statewide ballot-issues released

September 20: Lobby Lunch, Columbus Metropolitan Library

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League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund**

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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.**