



Ohio League Leader Update - December 2014

*Happy Holidays from
The League of Women Voters of Ohio*

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1. Happy Holidays from LWVO President Nancy Brown

As December winds to a close, it is time to pause and take stock of all we have accomplished in 2014 - another incredibly busy year in League land. We can take pride in our efforts to safeguard voting rights and to achieve redistricting reform. The turnout in the fall election may have been disappointing, but the voter service activities of local Leagues was impressive. We launched judicial and educational projects designed to educate and inform Ohioans. Our MLD program continues to grow as more and more Leagues are exploring ways to increase and diversify membership and encourage and support new leaders.

Of course, none of this work is finished and 2015 - our 95th anniversary year - is bound to bring new challenges. But hopefully, the last couple weeks of the year will provide an opportunity for all of us to spend time with family and friends and recharge for all the challenges to come. Best wishes to all of you for enjoyable holidays and a very happy new year. Thank you for all you do for the League.

2. Ohio Legislature - End of Session Report

The 130th General Assembly has adjourned so legislative activities have ended for the year. The highlight of the last General Assembly was the passage of redistricting reform bill for the General Assembly. There are pros and cons for the LWVO Board to weigh in January when they look at the issue.

Some pros include:

- the legislature gave it a strong bi-partisan approval;
- it provides stronger requirements for keeping counties, cities, and townships intact so the districts should be more compact and voters should have an easier time understanding their district boundaries; and
- it encourages representational fairness - having the number of seats each party gets more

closely reflect that party's strength with the voters.

Some cons include:

- it doesn't include congressional districts - the gerrymandering problem is even worse with those districts;
- it doesn't become effective until 2021; and
- there still is some reliance on the old "single party in control" system - the Governor, Secretary of State and Auditor are on the commission.

A couple of other highlights this past year were actually things that didn't happen:

- HB 248, known as the "heartbeat bill" failed to pass the House a few weeks ago after it garnered only 47 of the 50 votes needed. It drew opposition votes from all participating Democrats and 11 Republicans. Eleven legislators did not vote on the bill, including 10 Democrats.
- HB 490 also failed to pass. It was an omnibus agriculture and budget bill. The League was particularly concerned about the provision that denied first responders to a "fracking " emergency, such as EMTs and fire fighters, access to information about the composition of the chemicals involved in the emergency.

3. LWVO Program Planning

'Tis the season for Program Planning! After you're done celebrating the holidays, many Leagues will be holding program planning meetings in January and February. Please note that Program Planning response forms are due by February 22.

Program Planning Packets were emailed to local League presidents the last week of November, and they are also available on the state League website [here](#).

We will be reviewing LWV Ohio positions, which are online [here](#). This page lists the short summary of each state position. If you click on "read more" at the end of each summary, it will take you to the full position statement to be reviewed.

LWVUS positions are available online [here](#). We are only reviewing state positions this year, not national positions. However, if your League is contemplating proposing a study or update, you may want to consult LWVUS positions to make sure that topic is not already covered.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the state office at 614-469-1505 or lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org.

4. MLD Tip of the Month

As we head into the new year, here's a retrospective of top MLD Tips from prior League Leaders Updates:

September 2013: MLD Tip - [The 10 Commandments of Meetings](#)

October 2013: MLD Tip - [Want to Customize Your League's Membership Brochure to Make It More Inviting?](#)

November 2013: MLD Tip - [Engage College Students in the Work of Your League!](#)

April 2014: MLD Tip - [Engaging New Members and Emerging Leaders](#)

June 2014: MLD Tip - [Check Out These Leadership Resources!](#)

August 2014: MLD Tip - [LWV Business Cards for Members](#)

October 2014: MLD Tip - [Attract New Members at Your League Events!](#)

November 2014: MLD Tip - [Use Your Program Planning Meeting to Engage New Members and Develop Leaders](#)

5. Thank you to all of our 2014 donors!

A sincere thank you to every one of our donors! You reached into your pocket and gave to support your state League this past year. We are deeply grateful for each and every gift, large and small, as every gift adds up to making a big difference in the work we do. If you haven't given yet and would like to do so, rest assured it's not too late! If you give before the end of the year you'll be able to take advantage of tax breaks in 2014. Please [click here](#) to give. Thank you and best wishes for a healthy and happy 2015!

6. Holiday office hours

Please note that the LWVO office will be open only Monday and Tuesday in the last two weeks of December and will be closed from Wednesday to Friday.

7. 2015 Save the Date!

- February 22, 2015 - Deadline to turn in Program Planning forms to LWVO
- March 31, 2015 - LWVO Statehouse Day in Columbus
- May 15-17, 2015 - LWVO Convention in Cincinnati

8. Let Individuals Give the Gift of League this Holiday Season

Here's an opportunity to donate to the League this holiday season and honor a friend or loved one at the same time. Encourage individuals to give the gift of strengthening democracy by donating to the League in the name of someone they wish to honor. Upload [this card template](#) prepared by the LWVUS to your League's site allowing donors to immediately print out a card that they can give to the recipient of the gift.

9. All Member Conference Call

Our next all- member conference call will be held on Tuesday, January 6, 12 - 1 pm.

Topic: Redistricting Update. The call discussion will focus on redistricting reform measure passed by the legislature in December.

CALL - IN NUMBER: 866-740-1260

PIN NUMBER: 4691505#

Please RSVP at lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org to help us plan for the numbers of attendees. Thank you.

Thank you for all you do for League! Best wishes for a lovely holiday season to you and your loved ones.