



November 2014

Ohio League Leader Updates

Contents

1.
Ohio Legislature Update - "Lame Duck" Session
2.
Judicial Reform News
3.
Election Recap
4.
All - member Calls
5.
It's Program Planning Time
6.
MLD Tip: Use Your Program Planning Meeting to Engage New Members and Develop Leaders
7.
Regional Meetings
8.
Save the dates
- a.
LWVO Statehouse

1. Ohio Legislature Update - "Lame Duck" Session

The ink is hardly dry on the fall election results, and we are already into the lame duck session in the Ohio Legislature. Here are some of the issues the League has been lobbying on or has been actively watching. Since the elections:

Redistricting -- Two new redistricting bills, HJR11 and HJR12, were introduced in the House and received hearings in committee. LWVO testified on [HJR11](#) and [HJR12](#) last week, as well as [testimony](#) presented the week before to the Constitutional Modernization Commission. The legislative proposals that have been discussed for the last several years, SJR1 this session and SJR5 in the prior session, have included a requirement for at least one vote from both the majority and minority political party. The new House bills provide a default provision in which only votes from the majority party are needed to adopt a plan.

Reproductive Health Rights -- The "Heartbeat Bill" (HB 248) made an ugly return this month. It was introduced in August 2013 and sat in committee without a hearing until Tuesday of last week. At 5pm Tuesday, the House announced it would hear all testimony that Thursday morning and a vote. The Freedom of Choice Ohio coalition, of which LWVO is a member, alerted partner groups who hurriedly submitted testimony. You can read LWVO's testimony [here](#). Despite opposition from numerous groups, HB 248 passed out of committee on Thursday. The bill would prohibit an abortion if there were a detectable heartbeat except in a narrow list of circumstances in which the life or physical health of the mother is in jeopardy. This bill has been highly controversial the last few sessions, and it's not clear if the bill will move forward. It has been struck down in every state where it has passed.

Death Penalty -- The House passed a death penalty secrecy bill, HB 663. This legislation would shield execution drug manufacturers and others involved in the process. The bill was passed a mere 10 days after it was introduced. Some positive modifications were made to the bill, but it still shields information about a very important aspect of government from being disclosed. Ideally, this debate about how the state carries out executions would lead to a broader discussion of the larger issue of whether the death penalty should continue to be imposed. LWVO sent out an action alert about this bill, which you can read [here](#).

Education -- Lawmakers are also taking action on education issues related to the Common Core State Standards (HB597 - Thompson/Huffman); limits on student testing (HB228-Brenner/Gonzales); eliminating the state's minimum salary schedule for teachers (HB343-Stebelton); and cleaning-up recently passed legislation regarding

Day - March 31, 2015
in downtown Columbus
b.
LWVO Convention - May
15-17, 2015 in downtown
Cincinnati

9.
Holiday Office Hours

the graduation test requirements, the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, and more (HB343-Stebelton). The League supports the use of state education standards as a method of requiring a general education of high quality, and compliance with the same state standards by all chartered schools. We will continue to monitor these bills as they go through the legislative process. But, time is running-out, and the Ohio Senate, which still needs to hold hearings on any bill approved by the House, is focused on "fixing" specific issues, and not necessarily the House's agenda.

The legislature will be back for about 2 weeks after Thanksgiving and will then adjourn for the year. Updates on these bills are posted on the LWVO website at www.lwvohio.org.

2. Judicial Reform News

The League was excited to learn recently that Ohio Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor is open to reforming how we select state Judges. Read her Nov. 13 interview with the Associated Press [here](#). LWVO President Nancy Brown had an [op-ed published in the Nov. 16 Plain Dealer](#) arguing that Ohio should move to an appointment retention system of selecting judges. We look forward to working with the Chief to strengthen our courts.

3. Election Recap

Congratulations and thank you to all the Leagues and members who worked so hard this election - from voter registration drives to voters guides, and candidate forums to working the polls. Even in a low turnout year - [see this article from the New York Times](#) - we can be proud that Leagues did all they could to empower and inform voters.

4. All - member Calls

LWV Ohio is happy to announce that we are now recording our monthly all - member calls and making them available to our members. Please note that the recordings will only be available following each call until the end of the month to make room for the following month's call. These podcasts are intended for LWV members and guests, just like the calls, and therefore should not be shared outside the League family.

The recording of our last member call - Professor Daniel Tokaji, an election law professor at the Moritz Law School at the Ohio State University, shared insights on the current issues in money in politics from his new book, "The New Soft Money: Outside Spending in Congressional Elections." To listen to the All Member Call recording, [click here](#) and enter passcode "lwvohio."

Our next all-member conference call will be held on **Tuesday, December 2nd, 12-1pm**.

Topic: Voter Service Debrief and "Empty Chair" Debates

Join us for a post - election debrief to talk about voter service activities in 2014, including a discussion on "empty chair" debates. Share your League's experience and hear presentations from Leagues that have found creative solutions.

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.

5. It's Program Planning Time

It's that time again! 2015 is a state convention year which means it is state program planning time. The Program Planning process lets local Leagues review League positions and recommend changes. Program Planning Packets will be sent to all local League presidents at the end of November. Leagues will have all of December, January, and most of February to hold program planning meetings. Program Planning meeting reports will be due back to the state League by February 22, 2015. All the materials needed for local Leagues' program planning meetings will also be available in the Member Area section on the LWVO website.

6. MLD Tip: Use Your Program Planning Meeting to Engage New Members and Develop Leaders

A League's program planning meeting is a wonderful opportunity to engage new members and potential League leaders in a cornerstone of LWV: advocacy and our consensus process. As Leagues prepare for their meetings, they can intentionally reach out to new members and potential leaders - before, during and after the meeting by doing a few key things. [Here's how...](#)

7. Regional Meetings

The LWVO Board is re-evaluating regional meetings due to fluctuating attendance in some regions. Should we hold Regional Meetings once a year instead of twice a year? What month(s) are best for holding Regional Meetings? We welcome your suggestions. For the time being, LWVO has decided to scale back to once a year, in August only. We hope this will provide Leagues with additional time for program planning in January and February.

8. Save the dates

a. LWVO Statehouse Day - March 31, 2015 in downtown Columbus

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us for Statehouse Day on Tuesday, March 31, 2015. Workshops and sessions will be held at the Riffe Center, and the keynote luncheon will be held in the Statehouse Atrium. We are pleased to announce that our keynote speaker is Professor Erin E. O'Brien, the chair of political science at University of Massachusetts Boston. Professor O' Brien's research and teaching interests focuses on the politics of poverty and social welfare policy, voting access policymaking in the United States, and gender in political participation/representation. Her work employs a variety of methods and approaches to social science in order to examine the connections among social policy, political thought and action, inequality, and patterns of stratification associated with social groups. Watch the LWVO website for announcements about speakers and workshops. Registration will open in January.

b. LWVO Convention - May 15-17, 2015 in downtown Cincinnati

Join fellow League members from around the state to celebrate our League's 95th Anniversary! Convention will be held May 15-17, 2015 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Cincinnati. Watch the LWVO website for announcements about speakers and workshops. Registration will open in January.

9. Holiday Office Hours

The LWVO office will be closed on Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28 for the Thanksgiving holiday. We wish you and your families a very Happy Thanksgiving!