



Making Democracy Work®

► Vol. 95, No. 4 Dec. 2016

FORWARD

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WISCONSIN

Here, There, Everywhere! LWVWI Leaves No Stone Unturned in Quest to Register All Eligible Voters

In a hectic election year, the League combined voter service—carried out by knowledgeable and committed volunteers—with advocacy by our state staff to ensure that all eligible Wisconsin citizens would have both the right and the ability to vote. While the Wisconsin voter turnout in the November 2016 election hit a 20-year low for our state, we know it was not for lack of effort by the League of Women Voters.

Concerned last fall about the effects of the newly enforced voter ID requirements and voter registration restrictions, the League boosted our voter services to prevent citizens from being disenfranchised in 2016. We created a new Voter Education Coordinator position in our state office and launched a statewide minivan tour to register and educate voters. In three months we drove 6,500 miles, participated in 33 events around the state, met with more than 5,000 people and engaged more than 200 LWV volunteers. These actions supplemented outstanding outreach efforts by our local Leagues, which registered thousands of voters.

The League had trained observers covering more than 400 polling places on Election Day. They observed how the new election

laws and procedures affected voters. We teamed up with Wisconsin Election Protection lawyers to respond to any signs of voter disenfranchisement.

Working with Common Cause in Wisconsin and Wisconsin Voices, the League co-produced a series of informational flyers on voter photo ID in English and Spanish, with special editions targeting seniors and college students. *La Comunidad*, a Spanish-language newspaper in Madison, distributed thousands of flyers in one of its fall editions.

The state League also advocated for fair elections in the courts and at the policy level. Our executive director testified in the trial of *One Wisconsin Institute v. Thomsen*, a case that challenged multiple voting restrictions and succeeded in overturning some of them. Her testimony was based on the League’s observation reports from several elections since 2011. This fall the League submitted friend-of-the-court briefs in support of two recent voter-friendly court rulings that are being appealed in the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals.

When we learned in late October that hundreds of absentee ballots were at risk of being tossed because of a new procedure

that municipal clerks had not been trained on, the League wrote to the Wisconsin Elections Commission calling for swift action to relax the policy and threatened legal action if it did not do so. We were delighted when the Commission promptly amended the policy, which reduced an administrative burden on local election officials and prevented the potential disenfranchisement of thousands of absentee voters.

Yes, Wisconsin voter turnout was down this year, but it might have been worse without the long experience and unwavering commitment to nonpartisanship with which the League educated, motivated and advocated for voters. We will be following closely the investigation by a team of University of Wisconsin-Madison researchers looking into whether the new voting laws were responsible for the suppressed voter turnout. Count on the League to roar into action if their research shows this to be true. ❖

2015-2016 Annual Report Page 2

Inside:

Annual Report.....	2
Around the State	3

Thank You to Our Donors.....	4
Community Shares.....	6
Financials	6

Executive Director’s Message	7
Calendar	7
Issues Briefing	8



Annual Report

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WISCONSIN

President's Message



Debra Cronmiller

In this season that celebrates family and friends with festivities of all sorts, I can't think of a better time to extend a heartfelt thank you for all you have done to Make Democracy Work® in Wisconsin.

The 2016 Fall General Election is in the books. With just 66 percent of our eligible voters casting a ballot, Wisconsin lost its place near the top of the list for voter turnout. I can only imagine what would have occurred if the League had not put forth vigorous efforts to register voters with our Gear Up to Vote initiative to register and educate voters about photo ID

requirements, not to mention our work to support legal challenges to laws that suppressed the vote. The League was also integral to ensuring the DMV's accountability to issue temporary voting IDs to the state's non-drivers.

New policies usually accompany a change in administration and already there is discussion about the potential for significant changes to the Affordable Care Act, immigration policy, reproductive rights policies and many others on which the League has long held positions. The League has a strong track record for defending the rights of citizens and we will use our proven methods to advocate at all levels of government. Past innovative actions, such as moving our operations to our 501(c)(3) organization, leave us well prepared to forcibly oppose policies that do not align with the League's well researched consensus positions.

As local Leagues conduct your program planning meetings, I encourage you to think about how we can ensure our work reflects the trust and integrity intrinsic to this 96-year-old organization. What can and should we do to meet the needs of our members and the public? What positions need

review, updating or creation and how can we work together to do that?

I look forward to uniting with you as we continue to fight for fair and representative voting districts, to ensure an open government where people's opinions are sought and heard by our elected officials, to continue to build a diverse and respectful organization and community, and to recognize the power of collective decision making for the common good.

I wish you a safe and peaceful holiday. ❖

Make the League Part of Your Legacy

Many of our donors use their wills or living trusts to make their most generous gifts. Please remember the LWVW when you create yours. For more information, contact Andrea Kaminski at 608.256.0827. ❖

Find the League on Facebook!

facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Wisconsin

Follow @LWV_WI on Twitter!

Your League at Work in 2016

This past year was one of the busiest ever for the League. Here are just a few of many ways Leaguers helped Make Democracy Work® in Wisconsin:

- Voter services was a central focus throughout the year. We created a Voter Education Coordinator position in our state office, launched a statewide minivan tour to register and educate voters, co-produced a series of voter photo ID information flyers, and conducted election observation in the April 5 Presidential Preference Primary and the November 8 General Election. The League also advocated for voters in the courts and with the Wisconsin Elections Commission.
- In May, the League formed a Social Media Working Group to better connect local Leagues and facilitate inter-League sharing of ideas about voter services and social media resources. The group created and distributed to local Leagues memes, infographics and messaging focused on registration and voting. While still a work in progress, we note that our local Leagues are much more visible online this year.
- The League saw record turnouts for our two statewide meetings, the 2016 Annual Meeting in Door County and the November Issues Briefing in Madison. This is further evidence that this has been a year of strong engagement and good participation across all of our local Leagues. ❖

Around the State • Around the State • Around the State Around the State • Around the State • Around the State Around the State • Around the State • Around the State

Appleton: presented Kathy Groat, Outagamie County Supervisor and community activist, with the Making Democracy Work Award® on December 10 at an event that also featured Matt Rothschild, director of Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, as keynote speaker.

Ashland-Bayfield Counties: adopted a resolution supporting the Lakota Sioux and opposing continued construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline pending meaningful tribal consultation and a full environmental review. LWVWI sent a letter supporting the resolution to Wisconsin's Congressional delegation.

Beloit: is reviewing applications for a newly created intern position.

Door County: is offering a four-session class in January called "Exploring the Many Layers of Local Government" in which elected and appointed officials will analyze the missions, challenges and interactions of local governments in Wisconsin.

Janesville: will mark Susan B. Anthony's birthday during a celebration event on February 11 that includes a program based on the book *The Highest Glass Ceiling* by Ellen Fitzpatrick.

La Crosse Area: presented a "lunch and learn" program about transportation planning in the La Crosse region.

Manitowoc County: will host a February 24 forum on children's mental health.

Upper Mississippi River Region: was featured in a video produced by LWV South Tonka (Minnesota)—watch the program online at <https://youtu.be/-cdKxxlBER0>.

Winnebago County: held a forum about the future of public education that addressed K-12 policy fragmentation, the K-12 funding formula, the Milwaukee school voucher program and the outlook for positive public education reforms. ❖

Thank You to Our Donors!

July 1, 2015-November 30, 2016

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We gratefully acknowledge the generous contributions of time, talent and unreimbursed travel expenses donated by members of the League's State Board, Legislative Committee, Off-Board Committees and hundreds of volunteer election observers. We are also very grateful to Mike Rewey and other family and friends of our late Board Member Pam Rewey.

More than 70 people contributed generously in her memory, creating a memorial of more than \$4,000.

**Enduring Support Contributors make monthly contributions to support the League.*

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Support the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin through Community Shares

For more than 40 years, a handful of activists has been joined by thousands more—all working together as part of Community Shares of Wisconsin, and all continuing to change the framework in order to improve people’s lives.

- If you work in the public sector, look for the League under Community Shares of Wisconsin (CSW) in your campaign booklet.
- Many private sector workplaces have a CSW campaign.
- Even without a workplace campaign, you can support the League through an online donation or by mailing a check to Community Shares. Details at communityshares.com.

Remember: When You Direct a Donation to the League through Community Shares, the League Receives 100% of Your Contribution

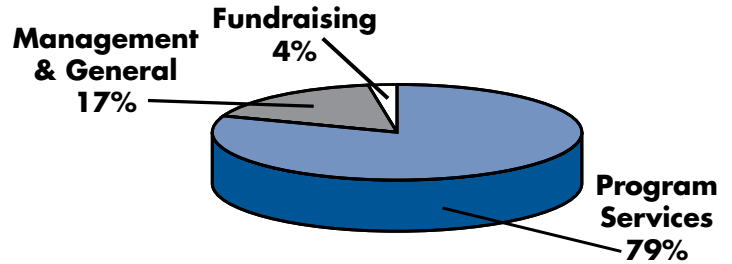
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2015-2016 LWVWI Financials

July 2015-June 2016

Expenses \$268,677



Revenue \$147,848

Membership dues	\$36,885	18%
Contributions	\$68,709	33%
Community Shares of Wisconsin	\$15,464	8%
Program revenues	\$7,430	4%
Grants & Special Projects	\$5,161	3%
Investments, other	\$4,598	2%
Promises to give (grants)	\$67,500	33%
Total	\$205,747	

Statement of Financial Condition

	6/30/15	6/30/16
Assets		
Cash	\$44,502	\$90,334
Promises to give	-	\$67,500
Investments	\$80,074	\$77,943
Security deposits	\$676	\$676
Prepaid expenses	-	\$475
Total Assets	\$125,252	\$236,928
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$2,630	\$6,101
Accrued payroll & taxes	\$3,251	\$2,993
Total Liabilities	\$5,881	\$9,094
Net Assets		
Undesignated	\$28,228	\$63,319
Board designated endowment	\$64,461	\$62,305
Total unrestricted net assets	\$92,689	\$125,624
Temporarily unrestricted	\$26,682	\$102,210
Total Net Assets	\$119,371	\$227,834
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$125,252	\$236,928

Executive Director's Message



Andrea Kaminski

Let's face it. 2016 was an extraordinary, often grueling election year.

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin saw it coming. With new photo ID requirements, more restrictive voter registration laws and a poorly timed replacement of the state's top elections agency in mid-summer, the League knew more than a year ago that we would need to boost our nonpartisan voter education and service to help prepare people for the elections. We turned to our many loyal supporters and some charitable foundations for funding to hire a new Voter Education Coordinator, and we upped our game significantly.

I am so proud to work for this grassroots organization that combines nonpartisan voter service and advocacy, and I'm honored and humbled to collaborate with the incredibly knowledgeable and committed volunteers in our local Leagues. For decades Leaguers have provided an exceptional public service that sets the League apart from other organizations.

In the past the League of Women Voters thrived on the generous contributions of time and talent from our many dedicated members, along with their modest membership dues. Times have changed and it is impossible now to sustain a strong, effective organization on volunteer efforts and annual dues alone. To keep pace with government and communications today, our League must be nimble and responsive to threats to democracy in a timely and visible manner. A dollar goes a long way in our largely volunteer-powered organization, but the state League still needs generous financial support to maintain our high profile and to continue to build the capacity and impact of our 18 local Leagues.

In today's hyper-partisan society, people are hungry for what the League provides—a safe place for civil discourse in our forums, websites and publications. The League is recognized by lawmakers and the press as a credible and reasoned voice in public policy, because they know the League's positions are backed by information, study and consensus.

Heading into the New Year, the League's advocacy will be needed more than ever in the state legislature to stand up for voting rights, a responsible state budget, strong public education and protection of our natural resources. The League, which speaks on behalf of no special interest, will oppose attempts to insert policy into the state budget, as we did when a late-night amendment in the Joint Finance Committee last session would have abolished the state's open meetings laws.

In my role as the League's registered lobbyist in the state legislature, and in concert with volunteer experts on our state Legislative Committee, I'll keep League members and the public informed and active on key policy issues developing in the State Capitol. We will alert local Leagues and members with timely information and encourage them to contact their legislators when their voices can make a difference in state policy.

With your support the League will continue to be a robust and authoritative force for good government in Wisconsin. Thank you! ❖

2017 CALENDAR

LWVWI Board Meeting by Teleconference

January 28

Spring Primary Election

February 21

LWVWI Board Meeting

March 25, Madison

Spring Election

April 4

LWVWI Board Meeting

June 9, Green Bay

State Annual Meeting

June 9-10, Green Bay

Continued from page 8

Planning for Impact

State Board members and League staff led the final session, in which they sought input about how to improve voter service and advocacy on the state budget in early 2017. The State Office will get more information about the new online voter registration system that will be introduced soon and the phase-out of the Special Registration Deputies (SRD) program. All Leagues will receive information about how some Leagues have been effective in helping people register to vote even without SRDs. The LWVWI Legislative Committee will be following the budget process closely. Watch for resources and action alerts from the State Office related to the state budget. Sign up to receive regular emails from the State Office at lwvwi.org.

State Board members Debra Cronmiller, Louise Petering and Consuelo Lopez Springfield contributed to this article. ❖

Issues Briefing: Election Takeaways and Plans for 2017

Results from the recent General Election permeated the discussions at the November 19 Issues Briefing in Madison. The goals for the day were to learn about the current status of key League issues at the state level and begin planning for our advocacy in the coming year.

Lessons of 2016 for Future Voter Advocacy

Mike Wagner, Associate Professor at UW-Madison's School of Journalism and Mass Communication and Department of Political Science, opened the Issues Briefing with a lively presentation and discussion about the November 8 General Election. He began with an analysis of who showed up and why. Despite Herculean voter registration efforts by the League and many others, along with record levels of early voting and the highest primary turnout since 1972, Wisconsin saw a decline in voter turnout with just 66 percent of eligible voters casting their ballots. Atypically, voters in Wisconsin cast more votes in the Senate race than in the much hyped race for President.

Wagner next turned to the topic that interests most League members—how to improve voter turnout. His research indicates that same-day registration has a large impact and it is important to keep this system in place. Canvassing, social pressure and partisanship, along with knowledge of the issues and one's interest in politics all show positive correlation to getting to the polls. Voting, Wagner reported, is a habit-forming activity. Older people are more likely to vote because they have voted previously. For League, this means we must continue to educate voters, connect them to issues that matter to them and work to ensure that everyone has a solid knowledge of civics and exercises their right to vote as young adults and every election thereafter.

Protecting Our Natural Resources Through Our Inter-League Organizations

Understanding that the flow of water transcends political boundaries, two Interleague Organizations (ILOs) have been founded to protect the waters of the Lake Michigan and the Upper Mississippi River regions. In highlighting this goal, Marge Palleon, LWV Ozaukee County, and Ellen Rosborough, LWV Dane County, encouraged local Leagues and individuals to join the LWV Lake Michigan Region ILO and/or the LWV Upper Mississippi River Region ILO. By joining forces, Leagues and individual members increase their effectiveness when advocating on behalf of Wisconsin's waters.

Both ILOs approach water management from regional watershed perspectives. Water, along with whatever may be on the ground surface, percolates down into the earth, possibly reaching the water table. Alternatively, it can move downgrade along the surface until it reaches a stream and then continue downstream to the Mississippi River or Lake Michigan or Lake Superior. In either case, the water carries with it pollutants that have come down with precipitation or been dumped on the ground.

What is in the water affects all of us. The ILOs use education and advocacy to tackle issues such as invasive species, toxic sediments and pollutants. Wisconsin's three watersheds and surface waters—Lake Michigan, Lake Superior and the Upper Mississippi River—are critical to the health of the environment, economy and people of our state and region and need protection more than ever. More information is available online at LWVLMR.org and LWVUMRR.org.

The Case for Driver Cards for Immigrants

Our growing Latino community contributes greatly to Wisconsin's economy and labor force: Latinos represent 90 percent of agricultural labor and 40 percent of dairy farm workers, 27 percent of manufacturing labor and 15 percent of hospital and educational personnel, and are also well represented within restaurant, meatpacking, construction and roofing labor pools. However, the rise of anti-immigrant rhetoric is fanning fears of deportation "roundups" among these workers, terrifying families who work hard to build better lives.

Cecilia Ramirez, Latino Service Providers Coalition and LULAC Branch President, Deb Fallon, LVM Beloit, and Ruth Kolpack, Justice Overcoming Borders, focused on the safety benefits of providing drivers' cards to Wisconsin's undocumented immigrants. They explained that changes to regulations in 2005 under the Real ID Act enabled states to decide whether undocumented people may hold driver licenses. Wisconsin stopped allowing this in 2008, creating devastating consequences for road safety and people's daily lives, as well as automobile insurance rates.

In the last legislative session the League supported a bill that would allow undocumented immigrants to apply for driver cards. They would need to provide proof of identity and pass driver's knowledge and skills tests just as for a standard license, but they would not be required to prove they are in the United States legally. Proponents point out that many undocumented immigrants currently drive without a license and that this legislation requires that they be tested, licensed and insured.

Continued on page 7



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