



FORWARD

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WISCONSIN EDUCATION NETWORK, INC.

Election Observers Help Keep Elections Clean

An open and honest election system is a cornerstone of democracy. Clean elections require fair laws, competent officials and robust citizen participation. Transparency throughout the process is also needed—beginning with campaigns and extending through counting votes—to have confidence in election outcomes and the legitimacy of our leaders.

In decades past, polling places could be intimidating and outsiders were discouraged from making observations.

According to an editorial in *The New York Times* (09/21/2012):

“This is how [voter harassment] works today: In an ostensible hunt for voter fraud, a Tea Party group, True the Vote, descends on a largely minority precinct and combs the registration records for the slightest misspelling or address error. It uses this information to challenge voters at the polls, and though almost every challenge is baseless, the arguments and delays frustrate those in line and reduce turnout.

can call a hotline staffed by volunteer lawyers who are experts in Wisconsin election law. The League will compile observers’ reports and share findings with election officials and policy makers to improve procedures for future elections. League observers receive nonpartisan, online training in what to watch for at the polls, as well as in the Government Accountability Board’s election observer rules, which they must follow.

The Rules Are Clear

If you see observers hovering over poll workers on Election Day, you will know they are breaking the rules. Observers may not take photos or video of voters, talk on the phone in the polling place or speak directly to voters or to most election officials. When observers have a concern they must speak to the Chief Inspector, who is responsible for maintaining an orderly and fair voting process. Observers may challenge a voter’s right to cast a ballot if they have specific information indicating that the person is not eligible. Such challenges must be filed with the Chief Inspector, who will ask the challenger under oath for evidence.

“Observers may not speak to or intimidate voters. Poll workers do not have to put up with observers who bully them or question their actions,” said GAB

cont. p. 2

**Election
Protection
Hotline
866-OUR-VOTE
866-687-8683**

Following determination from Wisconsin’s Attorney General in the 1980s that polling places fall under the open meeting law, anyone may observe so long as he or she does not interfere with the process.

Unfortunately, in Wisconsin’s June 5 recall elections, some observers did interfere. Voting advocates are preparing for this problem in more states on November 6.

League Is Monitoring Polling Places

LWV election observers in Racine and other locations documented this very scenario in the June 5 recall elections. Since November 2010, the Wisconsin League of Women Voters has been present in polling places across the state in an election observer program coordinated by LWV Milwaukee County member Carolyn Castore. League observers monitor whether: polls are open on time and accessible for the disabled; voters are registered properly; poll workers are correctly doing their job; and all qualified citizens have the opportunity to cast a ballot and have it counted.

The League is again partnering with Wisconsin Election Protection so that observers witnessing problems at the polls

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President's Message



Melanie G. Ramey

As the Presidential election approaches, many state legislatures have passed laws to restrict voting—a movement in direct opposition to the League of Women Voters' mission of advocating for active and informed participation in government. The League is as important in this hyperpartisan time as it was at its founding in 1920. Our unwavering commitment to nonpartisanship and our respected presence on the ground in many communities uniquely position the League to educate voters, challenge unfair laws and monitor elections.

I am proud that the Wisconsin League won an injunction on the unconstitutional voter ID law this year. This blatant attempt at voter suppression has struck a real nerve, and our success in fighting voter suppression here is bolstering the efforts of other state Leagues around the country. We have done numerous interviews, written opinion columns and letters to the editor and held public forums to educate people about the issues. The national media have repeatedly indicated there is no credible evidence of voter fraud anywhere in the country; these articles strengthen our resolve and reinforce our confidence that we were right to have filed this suit.

It's also remarkable that we were able to raise much of the money needed to file our successful lawsuit; however, we will need more to defend our circuit court victory through the appeals process. Since our lawsuit has been in the Court of Appeals, two groups have intervened to support the law. There have been two attempts to move the case directly to the Supreme Court, cutting short the careful legal review this constitutional issue deserves in the appeals process. Each of these motions has required an incisive response from our lawyers and demonstrates why it is so important to have the best possible legal representation.

If you haven't contributed this year, or if you want to contribute more, please do so now. Since the new fiscal year began on July 1 the League's state board of directors and staff have made commitments totaling \$9,620 to support the lawsuit and general operations. Generous support from The Brico Fund, other foundations and some 300 private individuals has brought us to within \$5,000 of the \$200,000 needed to fight the lawsuit. We also need strong operating support to continue to be a vibrant organization with the capacity for bold action and significant impact. Please give generously by using the enclosed envelope or making a secure online contribution at www.lwvwi.org.

Your contributions may, in fact, yield benefits far beyond ending bad legislation. Involvement with the League of Women Voters appears to be a life-prolonging experience, since many of our foremothers lived to be in their 80s and 90s in an era when a shorter lifespan was the norm. Working on important issues clearly keeps the blood circulating and makes breathing easier. With your generous support and active involvement, may we all live long lives in good health! ❖

cont. from p. 1

Elections Division Administrator Nat Robinson in a press release this summer. "The Chief Inspector is in charge at each polling place and must be obeyed. Our training will underscore that Chief Inspectors are empowered by law to order troublemakers to leave, and to call law enforcement if they refuse."

You Can Help

Wisconsin has come a long way from the days when people were regularly denied the right to register or vote. Citizens participating in the process—as voters, poll workers and poll watchers—help make those practices obsolete. As a voter, if you have a concern about something you see at the polls, call the Election Protection Hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683). ❖



Save Trees and the League Money!

Money doesn't grow on trees, but we can save both by using email for League communications! Send an email to lwvwisconsin@lwvwi.org to sign up for any of the following (be sure to tell us which items you wish to receive by email):

- *Forward Newsletter*
- *League Updates and Action Alerts*



Annual Report

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WISCONSIN, INC. • LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WISCONSIN EDUCATION NETWORK, INC.

Executive Director's Message

Andrea Kaminski



Photo: Carolyn Fath

This year, the League of Women Voters has been a visible and active presence in our communities, our state houses and the nation's capital. The League is also a force to reckon with in the courts, as we vigorously oppose efforts to suppress the vote.

In Wisconsin, many local Leagues are busy hosting candidate forums,

knowing this is the best way for voters to judge whether candidates are able to think on their feet while facing their opponents. We applaud those candidates who have been willing to set aside scripted appearances long enough to participate in live debates and forums before the voters they seek to represent.

Leagues in Wisconsin are also helping people understand the new laws for registering and voting in the November 6 election. The state League has written a series of informational media releases that clarify the procedures and deadlines for registering and voting before the election as well as the protocols for registering at the polls on Election Day.

Other state-level program activities include the Judicial Independence Committee and the Legislative Committee. The judicial committee was launched in late 2010 as a Supreme Court observer corps, which attended the high court's open administrative conferences in an effort to understand new challenges justices have been facing in recent years. Since a majority of justices voted to close most administrative conferences, the committee has shifted to an educational focus. We have compiled a packet of materials dealing with judicial selection, recusal and the role of money in elections. The committee is also reviewing our current positions related to judicial independence and will be seeking input from local Leagues before making recommendations to the state board. The packet includes ideas for local meetings and activities and can be found online in the Issues & Advocacy section of the LWVWI website at lwvwi.org.

Meanwhile, our state Legislative Committee is already following the biennial budget process. Consultant John Keckhaver generously led a budget training session for the committee in September, and committee members are also following the Wisconsin Budget Project (wisconsinbudgetproject.blogspot.com/), a program of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. When the new legislative session begins in January, the committee will be well prepared to advocate effectively for our positions. Finally, to keep our positions relevant, state board members are working with Legislative Committee members to identify positions in need of updates.

These are some of the many activities of your League at work in Wisconsin! ❖

As of June 30, 2012

Assets

Current Assets

Cash	116,679
Investments	60,618
Security deposits	675

Total Current Assets 177,992

Equipment - net 0

Total Assets 177,992

Liabilities

Accounts payable	10,852
Accrued payroll & taxes	1,620

Total Liabilities 12,472

Net Assets

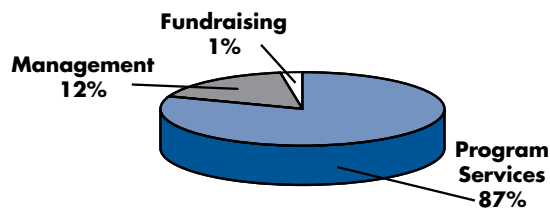
Undesignated	30,119
Board designated endowment	49,087

Total unrestricted net assets 79,206

Temporarily unrestricted 86,294

Total Net Assets 165,500

Total Liabilities & Net Assets \$177,992



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† Community Shares of WI

We gratefully acknowledge the generous contributions of time, talent and unreimbursed travel expenses donated by the members of the League's State Board, Legislative Committee, Membership and Leadership Development Team, and Judicial Independence Committee, as well as the League's dedicated financial volunteer, Cynthia Benevenga.

Thank You! With Your Support, We Are Making Democracy Work®!

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Nancy Hill
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Julie Arneith, State Board

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Janesville
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Milwaukee County
Ozaukee County
Ripon Area
Stevens Point Area
Whitewater Area
Winnebago County
Wisconsin Rapids Area

Support the League through Community Shares of Wisconsin

Community Shares of Wisconsin is your connection to more than 55 grassroots nonprofit organizations—including the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network—that build social and economic equity and a healthy environment.

You can support Community Shares, and its member nonprofits like the state League, through:

- workplace giving campaigns at over 100 private sector employers in Dane County
- a Combined Campaign for public sector employees
- the Community Shares of Wisconsin website: communityshares.com

If you designate your gift to the League of Women Voters, the League will receive 100% of your contribution; none is kept for administrative purposes. Alternately, you can make a general contribution and support the state League along with many other worthy nonprofits.

To learn more about Community Shares of Wisconsin's workplace giving program, or to start a Community Shares campaign at your workplace, visit their website or call (608) 256-1066. ❖





Delegates to the Lake Michigan LWV, including Art and Marge Palleon, LWV Ozaukee County, and Anita Rappe, LWV Manitowoc County, at the LMLWV Annual Meeting, held in Michigan City, Indiana. One of the field trips was to a U.S. Steel facility in Gary.

Northwoods LWV Hits the Ground Running

A small but lively group of community activists has become a visible force for good government in the Rhinelander/Minocqua/Eagle River area. The Northwoods League of Women Voters Members-at-Large group formed several months ago, and they are already engaged in voter service and education under the auspices of the state League.

The Northwoods LWV held a judicial candidate forum in the spring and an Assembly forum this fall. They did an excellent job of recruiting volunteers to be LWV election observers in the June 5 recall elections. The group also has been following the mining situation in the area, in particular a proposal to amend Oneida County zoning and shoreline ordinances. ❖

Nominate a Leader for the State Board

The LWVWI Nominating Committee is seeking nominations for new state board members for the two-year term beginning July 1, 2013. Self nominations are welcome!

The state board is a dynamic group that is leading the charge on such things as the voter ID lawsuit, judicial independence and modernizing the League in our state. Board meetings are productive and fun, and serving on the state board is a great way to make a difference!

For more detailed information, contact a Nominating Committee member. The state office will be happy to provide contact information.

LWVWI Nominating Committee:

Marilyn Boeldt, LWV Milwaukee County, Chair

Nancy Hill, LWV La Crosse Area

Julie Arneith, LWV Greater Green Bay and state board ❖

Around The State

LWV Beloit:

Used an LWVWI pass-through grant from Joyce Foundation to host a discussion of debate-watching strategies, followed by a public viewing of the first presidential debate.

LWV Door County:

Cosponsored two showings of the documentary film *Patriocracy*, which offers a “non-partisan examination of the Washington dysfunction and hyper-partisanship undermining America’s ability to tackle its most serious problems.”

LWV La Crosse Area:

Hosted a forum about children and poverty and a presentation on “austerity budgets vs. investment budgets and their implications.”

Lake Michigan LWV:

Collaborated with Fresh Water Future to develop a presentation that can be shown at public meetings in Lake Michigan states.

LWV Milwaukee County:

Along with other Leagues, held public forums to address myths and facts about the Affordable Care Act.

LWV Ripon Area:

Water Action committee is considering several proposals, including labeling storm drains to protect the lake, testing stream water quality, and teaching people about and advocating for actions and items that improve water quality.

LWV Whitewater Area:

Kicked off the new League year by showing the documentary *Patriocracy*, followed by a panel discussion on how to promote civil discourse, as part of the Season of Civility project.

LWV Winnebago County:

Hosted a “Food for Thought Lunch” about prison reform; took a bus tour of projects and facilities in Oshkosh that was led by city officials. ❖

Find the League on Facebook!

facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Wisconsin/166060673456299

Make the League Part of Your Legacy

The League of Women Voters is the organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Guided by principles that help nurture and protect our government systems, the League is a “trusted convener” that helps citizens understand and influence policies that affect their lives and liberties.

You can help advance these efforts in Wisconsin and leave your legacy by making a tax-deductible gift to the LWVWI Education Network Endowment. Income from bequests, gifts of stock and memorial gifts sustains the League well into the future. The next time you review your charitable giving plan, consider the League.

For more information, contact Andrea Kaminski, (608) 256-0827. ❖

League of Women Voters of WI Education Network/Advocacy Network 2012 Calendar

General Election
November 6

State Board nominations due
November 30

LWVWEN State Board Meeting
December 1, teleconference

LWVWEN State Board Meeting
February 2, Madison

Nonpartisan Primary Election
February 19

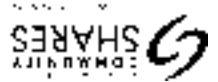
Nonpartisan Election
April 2

LWVWEN State Board Meeting
April 6, Madison

LWVWEN Board Meeting
June 7, Milwaukee

LWVWIEN Annual Meeting
June 7-8, Milwaukee

LWVUS Council
June 14-17, Virginia



2011-2012
Annual Report
INSIDE!

Madison, WI 53703

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