



FORWARD

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WISCONSIN EDUCATION FUND, INC.

LWVWI to Challenge Wisconsin Voter ID Law

Lawsuit filed October 20

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network, with representation by attorneys Lester Pines and Susan Crawford of Cullen Weston Pines & Bach, LLP, is challenging the Wisconsin legislature's authority to enact the new voter ID law. As a nonpartisan organization that encourages participation in government, the League is concerned about the many eligible citizens who will be disenfranchised by the new law.

This challenge is different from lawsuits brought in other states against voter ID laws because it is based on the Wisconsin state constitution. The suffrage, or voting, portion of the state constitution defines who may vote, based on citizenship, age and residency. It specifically limits what kind of laws the legislature may enact affecting suffrage to the following:

- laws defining residency;
- providing for voter registration;
- providing for absentee voting;
- and excluding felons and persons adjudicated incompetent from suffrage.

It allows for amendments that *extend* the right of suffrage to additional persons, such as when the age for voting was lowered from 21 to 18.

While the constitution allows only the two named classes to be excluded, the new law creates a third class of citizens who may not vote—those who do not have ID. This places an unfair burden on

ARTICLE III.

SUFFRAGE

Electors. SECTION 1. [As amended Nov. 1882, Nov. 1908, Nov. 1934; repealed April 1986; created April 1986] Every United States citizen age 18 or older who is a resident of an election district in this state is a qualified elector of that district. [1881 J.R. 26 A, 1882 J.R. 5, 1882 c. 272, vote Nov. 1882; 1905 J.R. 15, 1907 J.R. 25, 1907 c. 661, vote Nov. 1908; 1931 J.R. 91, 1933 J.R. 76, vote Nov. 1934; 1983 J.R. 30, 1985 J.R. 14, vote April 1986]

Implementation. SECTION 2. [As repealed April 1986; created April 1986] Laws may be enacted:

- (1) Defining residency.
- (2) Providing for registration of electors.
- (3) Providing for absentee voting.
- (4) Excluding from the right of suffrage persons:
 - (a) Convicted of a felony, unless restored to civil rights.
 - (b) Adjudged by a court to be incompetent or partially incompetent, unless the judgment specifies that the person is capable of understanding the objective of the elective process or the judgment is set aside.
- (5) Subject to ratification by the people at a general election, extending the right of suffrage to additional classes. [1983 J.R. 30, 1985 J.R. 14, vote April 1986]

Suffrage, or voting, as defined in Wisconsin's Constitution.

people who do not need a driver's license, in particular the elderly, people with disabilities, low-income citizens and students. It excludes anyone who does not have an acceptable ID for any reason.

Join the challenge

You can be part of the challenge! First, become an informed advocate—the

LWVWI staff or board will be happy to sit down with you to discuss this issue in detail. And then support these efforts. We anticipate this will be a lengthy and costly undertaking. If you are able, please consider making a monthly donation to provide steady support to help sustain the effort. You'll find ways to get involved with the lawsuit at www.lwvwi.org. ❖

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President's Message

LWV *Melanie G. Ramey*

What does it mean to be nonpartisan?

Most people agree that the League of Women Voters has a revered reputation as a trusted convener of candidate debates and issue forums in which speakers might not agree but must discuss their differences respectfully.

What some may not know is that while the League never endorses or opposes a political party or candidate, we do take positions on issues. In today's hyper-partisan environment, that's enough to make some people suspect that the League is a partisan political organization. In fact, over the years, the League has been accused of being aligned with both the Republican or Democratic parties.

A review of the process by which the League adopts its positions will show why this isn't true. As with candidates, League members do not always agree, but we work to identify issues on which we have general agreement and those become our positions. League members use a consensus process to select issues to study, and these become the topic of forums and discussions in which local Leagues seek to educate our members and the public. Then we again use a consensus process to identify basic positions on which we agree. These positions are adopted by members at our annual meeting and become the basis for our advocacy. This process is replicated at the local, state and national levels.

In studying an issue, the League seeks the views of experts, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, and citizen groups. While political power and trends shift through the years, the League of Women Voters relies on the positions adopted by its members, which are broad enough to withstand trends. When League members agree that a position needs updating, it is done through study and consensus.

Our positions sometimes please one party and sometimes another. We get criticism from both sides. For example, in 1989 the Assembly leader—a Democrat—chided the League for supporting a redistricting proposal that, in his view, favored Republicans. This year the League supported the same proposal—an independent entity to draw district maps—and it was Democrats who proposed the plan. In the case of healthcare reform, the League took a national position in the 1990s supporting single-payer, universal healthcare. While the League supported the Affordable Care Act, we certainly did not do so because the Democrats supported it. We did so because it came as close as anything to our own position adopted almost 20 years ago.

Every League has a nonpartisanship policy, which requires that members holding certain "sensitive" positions, such as President and Voter Service Chair, not engage in partisan politics. If they want to work on a candidate's campaign, they must resign from their League positions. Our national affiliate directs local and state League boards to review their nonpartisanship policies annually. League boards take this responsibility very seriously, and nonpartisanship is the topic of frequent discussions.

This care and concern gives the League of Women Voters the credibility and respect needed to take significant action when there is a serious threat to democracy, such as Wisconsin's new voter ID law. We wish the legislature and Governor Walker had not enacted this law. Given that they did, we are proud to challenge it in court. ❖



Green Bay LWV Seeks to Stop County Board Expansion

Brown County continues to debate whether to expand its County Board from 26 to 29 seats—an issue of interest to area League members. Some members of the County Board moved for expansion based on results from the 2010 Census, which found that Brown County had gained about 22,000 residents in the last decade. Board expansion would give each supervisor approximately 900 fewer constituents, arguably providing better representation, but it would also increase the cost of governing the county.

When the County Board met to consider the matter, it initially voted 13-12 to stay at 26 supervisors. The Board Chair—who supports expansion—then called a brief recess after which two supervisors switched their votes in support of a larger board. County Executive Troy Streckenbach refused to sign the Board's action, and as required by law the issue was turned over to the public to see if an alternate plan would be submitted to Brown County Court.

LWV Greater Green Bay members Joyce McCollum and Anneliese Waggoner, with assistance from attorney and League member James Sickel, filed a proposal maintaining 26 supervisors. At a hearing for their proposal McCollum and Waggoner argued that a Board increase cannot be justified when county services are being cut to save money. Several Brown County towns passed resolutions supporting keeping the Board at 26 seats. The Mayor of Green Bay voiced his support for the League's proposal, which was one of three 26-seat plans proposed.

Brown County Circuit Judge William Atkinson eventually settled on a different 26-supervisor plan than that proposed by the League. A majority of supervisors then signed a petition to hold a special County Board meeting, at which they again voted to increase the board size to 29. On October 4 Streckenbach again vetoed the 29-seat plan, and the Board chair vowed to override the veto. ❖

IRS Approves Group Exemption for Wisconsin Leagues

After four years, the IRS has approved the state League's application for a group exemption, making all Leagues in Wisconsin tax-exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the tax code. This is an exciting development initiated by the state board in recognition of the fact that the League's work is eligible for this favorable tax status. The exemption offers many benefits: local leagues are now exempt from paying Wisconsin sales tax, and dues and contributions to both state and local Leagues are now tax deductible for our members and supporters.

History

In 1988 League leaders created the LWVWI Education Fund as a 501(c)(3) organization in order to receive tax-deductible support. They maintained two separate organizations, a 501(c)(3) and a 501(c)(4), because they were justifiably concerned that the state organization's lobbying activity not exceed IRS limits for 501(c)(3) organizations. Since then we have developed a better understanding of our work and of those limits. Armed with data from several years of League advocacy, the state board successfully sought the favorable tax status that our organization deserves.

Under the new structure, the primary state organization is the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network (formerly LWVWI Education Fund). It has a 501(c)(3) group exemption which covers all local Leagues in Wisconsin. The state board maintained the state 501(c)(4) organization, which has been renamed League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Advocacy Network (formerly LWVWI). The Advocacy Network is inactive, but it is available to be reactivated if there is ever a need to do a much larger lobbying effort.

The state League board and staff worked with the assistance of Attorney Melissa Auchard-Scholz of Scholz Nonprofit Law, LLC, to bring about this change. LWVUS also contributed some of their lawyer's time for consultation. All local Leagues participated in the effort by revising their bylaws and providing financial and other information requested by the IRS. The state League has an ongoing responsibility to monitor, train and guide local Leagues and keep them in compliance with 501(c)(3) law.

This huge effort made LWVWI the first state League in the nation to attain 501(c)(3) status for its local Leagues. More important, it will enhance our ability to do the nonpartisan work the League has done so successfully since 1920.

Benefits

The new arrangement will advance the League's mission of nonpartisan advocacy and voter education by streamlining the state organization's administration and governance and improving funding opportunities. It will make dues and contributions to local Leagues tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. With the potential of more contributions comes the promise of enhancing our capacity as an organization to educate and encourage greater participation in good government.

The 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status will help local Leagues raise the funding they need to carry out their important work in the community. It also helps the state League to make the big changes that help keep the League relevant and effective as times change. This is important because the League's mission is just as critical today as it was 91 years ago! ❖

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.



Acceptable IDs for Voting

1. Wisconsin Drivers License*
2. Wisconsin State ID*
3. Passport*
4. Military ID*
 - *May be used if expired after the date of the last general election (11/2/10)
5. Certificate of Naturalization issued less than 2 years prior to the election
6. Receipt for Drivers License issued less than 60 days prior to the election
7. ID issued by a federally recognized Indian Tribe in WI
8. College or university student ID that includes:
 - Date of Issuance
 - Signature of Student
 - Expiration date no later than 2 years after issuance
 - Accompanied with proof of enrollment

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Acceptable documentation for voting, registration, obtaining an ID or a birth certificate: lwwi.org/Portals/0/VotingElections/PDFS/ACCEPTABLE%20DOCs%20photo%20id.pdf

Government Accountability Board's Voter Photo ID Law Information website: gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/photo-id

STATE LEAGUE LEADERSHIP

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Melanie Ramey
President
LWV Dane County
2011-2013

Debra Cronmiller
Vice President
LWV Appleton
2010-2012

Ellen Rosborough
Treasurer
LWV La Crosse Area
2010-2012

Julie Arneth
Secretary
LWV Greater Green Bay
2011-2013

STAFF

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Executive Director

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Program Assistant

DIRECTORS

Laura Boettcher
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2010-2012

Patricia Finder-Stone
LWV Greater Green Bay
2010-2012

Ethel Himmel
LWV Janesville
2011-2013

Linda Jorgenson
LWV Ashland/Bayfield Counties
2010-2012

Joyce McCollum
LWV Greater Green Bay
2011-2013

Louise Petering
LWV Milwaukee County
2011-2012

Pamela Rewey
LWV Dane County
2011-2013

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Marilyn Boeldt, Chair
LWV Milwaukee County
2011-2012

Nancy Hill
LWV La Crosse Area
2011-2012

Pamela Rewey
State Board

LOCAL LEAGUES

Appleton
Ashland/Bayfield Counties
Beloit
Dane County
Door County
Greater Green Bay
Janesville
La Crosse Area
Manitowoc
Milwaukee County
Ozaukee County
Ripon Area
Stevens Point Area
Whitewater Area
Winnebago County
Wisconsin Rapids Area

LWVUS Clean Air Promise Aims to Safeguard Clean Air Act

With the demise of cap-and-trade legislation during the 2010 session of Congress, the climate action spotlight shifted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Clean Air Act (CAA). Unfortunately, efforts are now underway to block EPA regulation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. As one of the first environmental organizations to speak out for the CAA and EPA, the League is bringing the Clean Air Promise to U.S. voters in order to inform and engage Americans on the issue of clean air and to demonstrate what is at stake.

Clean Air Act of 1970

Following the first Earth Day in April 1970, Congress passed the Clean Air Act and created the EPA to implement the new law. Over the 40 years that the CAA has been in effect, it has yielded dramatic public health and environmental benefits.

CAA programs have achieved major reductions in dangerous air pollutants that cause smog, acid rain and lead poisoning. The EPA reports that this action has prevented hundreds of thousands of premature deaths, has helped millions avoid developing respiratory ailments and heart disease and (by banning leaded gasoline) has greatly reduced the incidence of low child IQ.

The benefits of these advances have far exceeded the costs of compliance. An EPA analysis of the CAA's first 20 years found that the dollar value of the human health and environmental benefits amounted to more than 40 times the costs of regulation. For the 1990-2010 period, during which requirements became more stringent, the EPA estimates a benefit-to-cost ratio of four to one.

At the same time, CAA programs spurred significant growth in the U.S. environmental technologies industry. By 2007, the industry was generating \$282 billion in revenues, producing \$40 billion in exports and supporting 1.6 million jobs. Innovations include catalytic converters, scrubbers and low-VOC paints and consumer products.

U.S. Supreme Court Ruling

Despite these achievements, concerns about global warming led Massachusetts and 11 other states to sue the EPA over its failure to regulate GHG emissions from the transportation sector. They charged that human-influenced global climate change was causing adverse effects, such as sea-level rise in the state of Massachusetts.

In a 5-4 decision in April 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that carbon dioxide and other GHGs meet the definition of "air pollutants" under the CAA. The Court directed the EPA to determine whether or not GHG emissions from new motor vehicles (the sector cited in the lawsuit) cause or contribute to air



LWVWI Executive Director Andrea Kaminski, second from left, was one of several citizens from Wisconsin who last July met with staff in the offices of Senators Herb Kohl, center, and other legislators for Clean Air Action Day, an advocacy event for maintaining the Clean Air Act.

pollution that may endanger the public health or welfare. In 2009, the EPA responded by conducting an extensive examination of the scientific evidence and, in December 2009, made a determination—the "endangerment finding"—that GHG concentrations in the atmosphere do threaten the public health and welfare of current and future generations. The EPA also found that GHG emissions from new motor vehicles contribute to the atmospheric concentration of these gases and, thus, to the threat from climate change.

Once the EPA had issued its endangerment finding, the agency moved ahead to finalize proposed GHG emissions standards for light-duty motor vehicles.

Challenges to EPA Regulations

Opponents of the new rules are working to block or delay EPA regulation of GHG emissions. Several dozen legal challenges to EPA's recent actions have been filed by a variety of business and industry groups and by several states and members of Congress. In Congress, bills have been introduced that would, for example, amend the CAA to exclude regulation of GHGs, limit the use of EPA funds and delay regulation of GHG emissions for two years.

Taking Action

The state League and several of our local Leagues are supporting the LWVUS Clean Air Promise campaign with advocacy efforts in Wisconsin. You can do your part by visiting and signing on to The Clean Air Promise website at peoplenotpolluters.org and pledging to protect the health of children and families from air pollution.

Excerpted from an article by Eleanor Revelle, LWVIL and LWVUS Climate Change Task Force Member. A link to the original article is available online at lwvwi.org. ❖

Around The State

1 Dane County: Helping citizens meet voter ID requirements, including assisting 18-year-olds with voter registration, educating voters about and helping them obtain proper ID for voting and raising funds to offset costs for people who need birth certificates to obtain a voting ID.

2 Greater Green Bay: Joined in a communitywide Climate Action Tour during which the Chamber of Commerce was urged to stop denying climate change, Public Service asked to advance alternative energy, and vendors at the Farmers Market thanked for providing local food and encouraged to produce local energy. Finally, the group delivered petitions to City Hall in support of clean air policies.

3 La Crosse Area: Created and celebrated “National Observer Corps Day” to honor the 21 League members who are government observers, recognized honored members with rhinestone Vote pins, and welcomed four new participants to the Observer Corps.

4 Manitowoc County: Co-presented forums featuring two perspectives on the relationship between media and politics with speakers Matt Rothschild, editor of *The Progressive* magazine, and Scott Klug, former U.S. Congressman, journalist and publisher who is now public affairs director at the national law firm of Foley & Lardner LLP.

5 Ripon Area: Planning two public question-and-answer sessions with city water and wastewater directors that will address questions such as: What is done to ensure that city drinking water is safe and how is it tested? Does wastewater from local industries get treated at the plant or is it released through the storm sewer system into our natural waterways?

6 Whitewater: Hosted and recorded a program presented by the Government Accountability Board about voter ID that has been made available by Whitewater Community TV at <http://vimeo.com/29961791>. Since its posting, the program has been downloaded 134 times, played directly 20 times and embedded into 104 different websites. ❖

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network has disbursed \$2,800 in funding from The Joyce Foundation to local Leagues for public education related to voter ID and other issues. Pass-through grant recipients include: Appleton; Beloit; Dane County; Greater

Green Bay; Ripon Area; Whitewater Area; Winnebago County; and Wisconsin Rapids Area. Most of these Leagues are holding public forums and making presentations at community meetings to help citizens understand the new law and know what they need to do to obtain an ID for voting.

Executive Director's Message



Andrea Kaminski

Since the state League moved into the Center for Change in Madison last April, we've hosted a number of visitors from near and far who want to know more about civic engagement. Our location along Madison's Southwest Commuter Bike Path also makes the Center a convenient destination for students who are involved in service-learning projects and considering nonprofit careers.

The vigorous but peaceful protests in the state Capitol earlier this year made international news that has drawn activists, journalists, officials and scholars from politically turbulent countries to seek the Wisconsin League's perspective as a nonpartisan citizen organization. This fall we

have met with a delegation representing a group of Middle Eastern countries, plus individuals from Yemen and Germany—meetings which at times required interpretation services. Our visitors wanted to get the pulse of how Americans view issues such as the economy, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and immigration. They also wanted to know how citizen organizations affect politics and policies. For one of these meetings, the League invited two graduate students with opposing views on the Wisconsin state Capitol protests, and this led to a stimulating and respectful discussion.

On September 29, the Center for Change hosted three groups of UW-Madison students through the Morgridge Center's "Walk the Walk" tours. The Morgridge Center for Public Service connects students, faculty and academic staff with nonprofits and the community through volunteerism, service-learning and community-based research.

Our guests were interested in the collaborative nature of the Center, a project of Community Shares of Wisconsin that offers shared office space, equipment and opportunities for training and networking. The walking tours gave me a chance to talk with the students about the complex new voter ID law and how to obtain an ID for voting. This was not only a valuable opportunity to reach students with an important message; it also provided an example of the kind of work they might do as future nonprofit leaders and engaged citizens.

We are fortunate to have three bright and enthusiastic students working in the state League office this fall. Our Administrative/Program Assistant, Lindsay VanVonderen, attends Edgewood College and is majoring in accounting. She is the friendly staff person who answers your calls to the state office and connects you with the information you need. We also have two student interns: Justin Barney and Caitlin Lundquist attend UW-Madison where they study political science. They are working on getting the message about voter ID to the student population through social networking, radio and other methods as part of their service-learning requirements.

The state League and I are enriched by these exciting opportunities made possible, in part, by our membership in the Center for Change. ❖

Support the League through Community Shares of Wisconsin

Community Shares of Wisconsin is your connection to 63 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
- the 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. ❖



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 lwwwisconsin@lwwwi.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*

League of Women Voters of WI Education Network/Advocacy Network 2011-2012 Calendar

LWVWEN Board Meeting
December 3, By teleconference

LWVWEN Board Meeting
February 4, Madison

Nonpartisan Primary Election
February 21

LWVWEN Board Meeting
March 31, Madison

Spring Nonpartisan Election
April 3

LWVWEN Board Meeting
June 1, Wausau

LWVWIEN Annual Meeting
June 1-2, Wausau

LWVUS Convention
June 8-12, Washington, DC



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