



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

PO Box 8453, Columbia, SC, 29202, (803) 251-2726, www.lwvsc.org

LETTER CONGRATULATING CHIEF JUSTICE TOAL ON RECEIVING AWARD FOR HER WORK ADVANCING CIVICS EDUCATION

Sent To South Carolina Newspapers, April 2011

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina congratulates Chief Justice Jean H. Toal of the South Carolina Supreme Court on her receipt of the inaugural National Center for State Courts “Sandra Day O’Connor Award for the Advancement of Civics Education.” The award was established in 2010 to honor an organization, court, or individual who has promoted, inspired, improved, or led an innovation or accomplishment in the field of civics education.

We applaud Chief Justice Toal’s efforts to bring civics education into the classroom for South Carolina students. Through her support for programs such as the “iCivics” web-based interactive civics education program; the “Justice Case Files” educational graphic novel series; the Class Action Program, which brings middle- and- high school students to the state Supreme Court to hear oral arguments; the Case of the Month Program, which provides streaming video of a case argued before the state Supreme Court; and the South Carolina Supreme Court Institute, which is held for middle- and high-school social studies teachers to teach them how to bring law to life for their students, Justice Toal enriches our students’ understanding of their government and enables them to be better-informed citizens.

Civics education is central to the mission of the League of Women Voters. Since 1920, our organization has encouraged informed and active participation in government, working to increase citizen understanding of and influence on major public policy issues through education and advocacy. Specifically, for the last ten years, the League of Women Voters Education Fund has focused on educating the public about our nation’s system of separation of powers and highlighting the vital need for protecting a fair and independent judiciary.

Last fall, the League of Women Voters of South Carolina launched a state-wide civic education campaign that aims to promote transparency, independence, and diversity in the South Carolina courts. Through the next year and beyond, Leagues across the state will hold public education events, activities and programs that aim to increase public knowledge about the third branch of government.

We thank Justice Toal for her work to educate the public about our state’s justice system.