



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

SC Voter

Post Office Box 8453 • Columbia, SC 29202 • Phone & Fax: (803) 251-2726

Website: www.lwvsc.org

Volume 62, Issue 2

Fall 2010

SENATOR GRAHAM

Meets With LWVSC Leaders

On Sept. 2, state LWV leaders met with South Carolina's senior senator, Lindsey Graham, at his Columbia office to get his perspective on some League priority issues.



Caption: State League leaders met with Sen. Lindsey Graham on Sept. 2 in his Columbia office to discuss energy, campaign finance and immigration issues. From left, Peggy Brown, Barbara Zia, Sen. Graham, Keller Barron, JoAnne Day.

Climate change and energy – The Senator believes that global warming is real and should be addressed in terms of need for a low carbon, clean energy economy that will improve public health, jobs, and energy independence. He declared that cap and trade is dead. The best strategy is to sell the public on energy independence by asking, “Do you support cleaning up the air?” Start with

smokestack industries, utilities and transportation and incorporate stronger CAFE standards. He included nuclear and wind in his menu of clean energy options.

Campaign finance – Senator Graham explained that he opposed the DISCLOSE Act because it was a bad bill that gave sweetheart deals to groups like unions and the NRA and was brought up before the 2010 election. He agreed that there are

problems with the large amounts of special interest money in election campaigns. He deplored individuals and groups that fund unfair and fake grassroots (“Astroturf”) attack ads.

SENATOR GRAHAM: *continued on page 2*

South Carolina Leagues Launch Initiative on Judicial Independence and Diversity

By Barbara Zia, LWVSC President

South Carolina Leagues’ yearlong, statewide campaign focusing on the importance of independence and diversity in ensuring fair, impartial state courts kicked off with an October 8th conference in Charleston. An impressive array of state and national judicial experts tackled issues around: *Is South Carolina’s judiciary independent and reflective of the*

diversity of our state? If not, why not?



Sarah Leverette with Jon Butzon at Judicial Forum.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE: *continued on page 3*

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Barbara Zia
President, LWVSC

Our American democracy is like a patchwork quilt – a treasured heirloom, multi-fabric and -color, stitched by loving fingers and ever-changing, as patches are added for groups of previously

President's Perspectives:

disenfranchised citizens and new immigrants. What does our nation's current political polarization tell us? Is our democratic "quilt" fraying around the edges or being rewoven into an even stronger fabric than before?

Political tension is not new in our nation. Celebrating the 90th anniversary of the League and women's voting rights this year reminds us of how contentious women's suffrage was for Americans. Our national history is replete with examples of struggle over divisive issues. In the end, Americans have always managed to put those differences aside to work together toward achieving the goal of creating a "more perfect union."

The League has played an active role in many of our nation's divisive issues. Despite our best efforts, critics who don't agree with a League stand on an issue will sometimes question our nonpartisanship. Mary Lynn Conway reminds us in this issue that the

League was founded to rise above partisan politics and to be "all partisan" as we carry out our mission to increase the informed participation of citizens in their government. It's important in our 90th anniversary year, and every year, to inform people about why the League was founded and about how our nonpartisan advocacy is based on a member-based process of study and consensus.

The League embodies grassroots democracy at its finest. We can take pride in knowing that our commitment to citizen education and advocacy act as a vital counterpoint to the divisiveness and incivility that marks much of the current political debate. The League is strengthening South Carolina's democratic quilt through our members' dedication and hard work on projects like Spartanburg's 2010 Census Partnership, the Initiative on Judicial Independence and Diversity, and the VOTE411.org voters guide that you will read about in this issue. Enjoy!

SENATOR GRAHAM

continued from page 1 –

Immigration – The Senator declared that the situation in Arizona with its harsh immigration law is a symptom of problems facing the nation. He offered a 4-point solution:

1. Secure the border by taking reasonable steps
2. Create a temporary worker program that meets employer needs
3. Implement an ID verification system (e.g., biometric) that is required for every individual seeking employment. Responsibility to ensure that employees are legal should be the employer's because immigrants come for jobs.
4. Then move to a merit-based immigration system to address the 12 million unauthorized immigrants already in the U.S. Set criteria for citizenship and pursuing the American dream, e.g., learning English, paying taxes, obtaining biometric ID, getting in line under legal immigration

procedures. During this period, which might take years, applicants and their families could stay in the US as long as they were law-abiding.

Senator Graham expressed concern about providing birthright citizenship to children born to persons in the U.S. illegally or to tourists who come to the U.S. in order to give birth. He believes implementation of his 4-point strategy would help address this issue.

Port of Charleston – The Senator asked for League support of his efforts to deepen the Port of Charleston. Federal funding is required, as this would involve the US Army Corps of Engineers. He feels this will be an economic boon to the South Carolina in the fierce competition with other states for shipping traffic. He wants the SC congressional delegation to come together and support Port enhance, despite its needing an earmark. Senator Graham told us he would be happy to meet with LWV groups in his offices around the state. Local Leagues should contact regional offices to set up appointments.

LWVSC Board News

The LWVSC Board appointed **Jon Butzon** and **Rita Paul** to fill open director positions for K-12 Education and Early Care and Education/Child Welfare, respectively. Jon is a member of LWV/Charleston Area and serves as Executive Director for Charleston Education Network, an independent, community-based, non-profit organization dedicated to high quality education leading to high levels of achievement for Charleston County children and youth. Rita is an LWV/Columbia Area Board member who retired recently from SC Department of Social Services where she worked on children's issues, including First Steps. It's with pleasure and gratitude that we welcome Jon and Rita to the state Board, while thanking **Sheila Gallagher** and **Janet Marsh** for their devoted service in these roles previously.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE:

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The Initiative's goal is two-fold: to educate citizens about the important role the state judiciary plays in their lives, and to identify changes to the current judicial selection process that would increase levels of independence and diversity among our judges. In the coming year, in pursuit of this goal and in partnership with a diverse coalition of community groups, the state and 11 local Leagues across the state will implement strategies for education and advocacy.

The American Bar Association's *Presidential Diversity Commission Report* observed recently how "lack of diversity can malign the legitimacy of not only lawyers, but the law itself." According to the Brennan Center's 2010 *Improving Judicial Diversity* report, most judiciaries do not reflect their states' diversity. South Carolina is no exception: As of June 2010, 56 out of 186 judges were women, and women represented only 6 out of 46 judges at the Circuit Court level; South Carolina had only 17 African-American and no Latino or Asian state judges. Such imbalance in the composition of the judiciary, as well as any actual or perceived lack of independence, may erode public confidence that judges will treat them fairly and impartially, and undermine the legitimacy of the courts in the community. As stated in a recent SC Supreme Court

decision in *Segars-Andrews v. Judicial Merit Selection Commission, et al.*, judicial independence is "the elephant in the room."

The Initiative on Judicial Independence and Diversity is an outgrowth of the League's long held belief that our judiciary must be structured so as to instill confidence in citizens that court decisions will be fair and impartial. In South Carolina, the League has viewed the current process by



Barbara Zia, conference facilitator Constance Anastopoulos and speaker Barbara George Barton.

which judges are nominated and elected as a barrier to this goal. Historically, the power to nominate and elected judges rested with the General Assembly. Amid concerns that this system undermined the



LWV/Charleston Area member Catherine Malloy (left) and LWVSC VP Peggy Appler talk to LWVUS Deputy Director Zaida Arguedas (center).

independence of the judiciary from the legislature, voters passed a constitutional amendment in

1996 that called for an independent Judicial Merit Selection Committee (JMSC) to screen potential judicial candidates for fitness and qualification and to submit a list of nominees to the legislature based on their findings. The legislature was thereafter limited to electing judges from among the nominees on the JMSC's list. The independence of the JMSC from the legislature was greatly compromised, however, when the legislature required by statute that a majority of the JMSC members also be members of the General Assembly.

The South Carolina Judicial Initiative has been selected to take part in the prestigious LWV Education Fund ongoing project, "Safeguarding U.S. Democracy: The Quest for a More

Diverse Judiciary." The current focus of the LWVEF project is on promoting diversity at all levels of state judiciaries in order to enhance the legitimacy of the judicial system in the eyes of an ever more diverse public. South Carolina's Initiative is supported (in part) by a grant from the Transparency and Integrity Fund of the Open Society Institute and the League of Women Voters Education Fund.

Because it's important to include the voices of all the stakeholders in having a fair and impartial judiciary, a diverse group of organizations have joined as cosponsors: AARP SC, AAUW SC, Center for Women, American Judicature Society, Brennan Center for Justice, Charleston Branch NAACP, Charleston County Bar Association, Charleston



Enjoying the post-conference reception: LWV/Clemson Area President Linda Gaha, LWV/Charleston Area President Mary Horres, LWVSC VP JoAnne Day.

Education Network, Charleston School of Law, College of Charleston Women and Gender Studies Program, Common Cause of SC, Girl Scouts of Eastern SC, Girl Scouts of SC-Mountains to Midlands, Justice at Stake Campaign, Charleston Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., Riley Institute at Furman, SC NAACP, SC Women Lawyers Association, Southeastern Institute for Women in Politics, USC School of Law.

Please visit www.lwvsc.org/JudicialInitiative.html to learn about activities planned by the state and local Leagues, as well as background on the state judiciary.



LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara, former Family Court Judge Frances P. Segars-Andrews and LWV/Charleston Area member Candy Fletcher.



A League 2010 Census Success Story

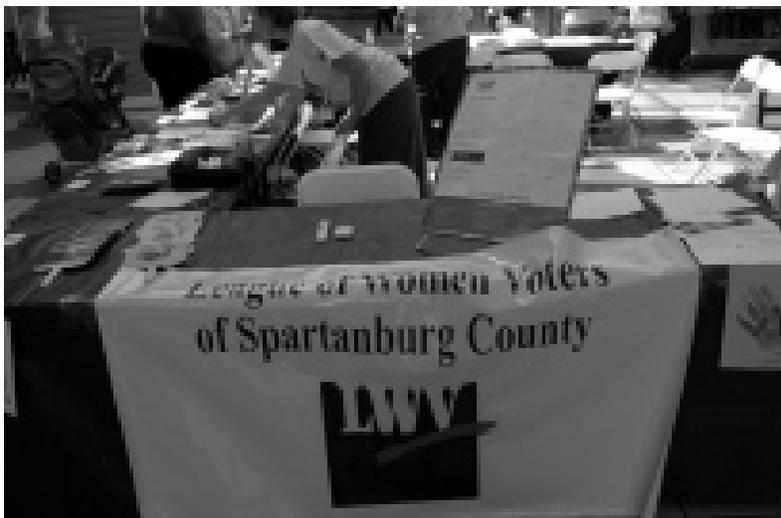
By Linda Bilanbone, LWV/Spartanburg County, Co-Chair, Census 2010 Complete Count Committee

LWV/Spartanburg County 2010 Census Partnership hard at work at Westgate Mall

The LWV of Spartanburg County took on the U.S. Census with a vengeance during 2009-2010! We could do nothing less. As President Mary Deku is an old hand at helping to create that very important database for the effective functioning of democracy - the count of every citizen once every 10 years.

With President Deku's experience and members' enthusiasm, the League became a **Complete Count Committee**. We submitted a five-part project involving fraternal, civic/nonprofit, civil rights and faith-based organizations to the national partnership. Two components were fully funded and two received abundant promotional materials. Events included: a promotional luncheon for nonprofit directors in February (to give them information about the Census to pass on to their clients); seminars; fairs; distribution of materials at senior citizen centers, churches and community centers; a radio promotion day; and a promotion day at the mall.

We were careful to ensure we had Spanish-language materials - bags, T-shirts, brochures - which we distributed at stores and other locations where Spanish-speaking residents were likely to be



present. Several thousand people attended events or received materials.

Throughout the project, the League got exposure in parts of the community where we are usually less visible - including among young people who are undergraduate members of the fraternal groups with whom we worked.

We saw that various media were used to

promote participation in the Census. We put information on our website; distributed 1,142 shirts with Census logos throughout the community; sent public service announcements to radio stations 107.3 JAMZ and 1530 WASC; sent announcements to more than 50 churches for their bulletins; distributed over 3,000 business cards with Census information. And the Spartanburg *Herald-Journal* printed information and put it on their website.

In the feverish, ongoing activity we didn't let anyone forget who we were! The League banner and other League items were displayed at each venue of the project. Getting out in the community and interacting with everyone from the Jack and Jill organization to Omega Psi Phi was a wonderful way to spread the good word about the League at the same time that we accomplished the

truly important work of promoting participation in the census. And it worked! Did you know that South Carolina rose from being 49th in the percentage of population who returned their census questionnaire to 23rd? We're SURE we were part of that success!

Making Room for New Members

By *Janie Shipley, LWVSC VP, Member Services*

The Membership Recruitment Project is off and running! It was kicked off in July with representatives from seven South Carolina local Leagues that applied to participate, and accepted the challenge. Other participants in the workshop held at the Inn of USC in Columbia included a staff member of LWVUS, the SC coaching team, representatives of LWVSC and LWV of the Columbia Area. Each local League is now underway with membership activities. The seven local Leagues and their coaches are: Charleston and Clemson (Rebecca Lambert), Columbia and Darlington (Sue Myers), Georgetown (Joyce Franklin and Rebecca Lambert), Greenville and Hilton Head Island (Joyce Franklin). Janie Shipley serves as the State Coordinator. Working with the SC state coaching team is national coach Gini McGirr from Arizona.

Below are the five primary goals of the Membership Recruitment Initiative which are guiding the state coaches and local Leagues in their activities:

1. Attain a net increase in membership of at least 5 percent in participating local Leagues.
2. Elevate the awareness for and importance of membership recruitment throughout the participating Leagues

(i.e., full-board/membership engagement).

3. Implement sustainable strategies and techniques to successfully recruit members at the grassroots level.
4. Establish a year-round League presence in the community, including being highly visible.
5. Understand better how the levels of League can best work in partnership (and what is needed to foster and sustain that partnership) to increase membership at the grassroots level.

To achieve these goals, there is a strong emphasis on leadership development in addition to membership recruitment as a means of strengthening the organization. The program focuses on “best practices” to gain members, increase visibility and help community members see the importance of having a strong, active League in their local community. One of the best practices is an intentional and consistent approach to “direct outreach”, that is communicating a membership message to a target audience at every opportunity.

Recently, the LWV of the Charleston Area sponsored a very successful celebration of the 90th Anniversary of League of Women Voters and the

Ratification of the 19th Amendment. Stacey Lindbergh, Chair of Charleston’s Membership Committee had a moment in the program, just before the keynote address by South Carolinian Inez Tenenbaum who is currently serving as Chair of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Stacey spoke briefly about the benefits of League membership. She told the 180 attendees about the opportunities that League members have to impact their local community and, in the process, the opportunities to engage with people who have different viewpoints. She closed by inviting attendees to join the League in making a difference in the Charleston area. Also included in the printed program was a listing of current projects the Charleston Area League is working on, and a membership form. Five new members joined that evening, helping top off a wildly successful event.

Delivering a membership message from the podium and including membership information in the printed program may seem like simple efforts, but they are often overlooked. They are considered “best practices” in helping spread the word about benefits of the League of Women Voters and attracting new members to join our efforts to safeguard democracy and improve our communities.

Congaree National Park

LWVSC joined 35 other organizations in thanking Congressman Clyburn and Senator Graham for recently requesting \$1.4 million to enable the National Park Service to complete acquisition of the 1,840-acre Riverstone Tract at Congaree National Park. The FY 2011 appropriation – requested by these two South Carolina legislators and in President Obama’s budget – will enable the Park Service to promptly purchase the remaining 434 acres, thus completing Riverstone acquisition.

Congaree National Park is a major natural, recreational and cultural asset to South Carolina. It attracts visitors from

across the U.S. and more than 100 nations to see its forest and wildlife and to enjoy the outdoors. Everyone from schoolchildren to university scientists uses the park as a living classroom and research center. The park protects and celebrates the region’s culture and history.

Riverstone is the largest tract remaining to be acquired within the park’s congressionally authorized boundary. Recognizing the tract as a key priority for acquisition, the Park Service identified \$500,000 in existing funds in 2008 to purchase 156.25 acres. Congress appropriated \$2.69 million in FY 2009

and \$1.32 million in FY 2010. This enabled the Park Service to purchase 837.75 acres of the Riverstone tract in 2009, and 412.5 acres in March 2010.

This summer, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, in its FY 2011 appropriations bill for the Interior Department allocated \$1.4 million for Congaree NP land acquisition. Stay tuned as this legislation proceeds through the House and the Senate. While you wait, enjoy a fall outing at Congaree National Park, one of the jewels in South Carolina’s crown.



Child Welfare Crisis

By Rita Paul, LWVSC Director, Child Welfare

We all agree that our children should live in a safe and healthy environment, nourished and cared for by loving adults. Unfortunately, more often than we wish the adults with whom children live do not provide this safe and healthy environment. When this happens children must be moved to another environment that will provide these needed protections. Our General Assembly mandates that the Department of Social Services (DSS) provide that protective mission "to ensure the safety and health of children who cannot protect themselves." Providing protective and healing environments to children who have been traumatized for year's costs money.

As the national and state recessions have added additional levels of difficulty, DSS has seen a massive increase in demand for their services as families have lost jobs and health care coverage, but at the same time the funding for their mandated services have been cut. To make matters worse, Congress is debating the reauthorization of TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) funds. DSS is projected to serve more than one

million citizens this year. While the majority of clients are served through the SNAP (food stamp) program and the job assistance Family Independence (FI) program, the child protection program is at risk because that is where the majority of DSS state dollars are located (and where a shortfall will be experienced) thus creating the need for TANF funds to be increasingly used for non-child welfare clients. In short, the rise in caseloads in the SNAP and FI programs has put major pressure on the TANF funds, which has put the Child Welfare Program at greater risk funding wise. Nearly 28,000 children are reported for child abuse and neglect in SC each year and 5,000 of them have to come into Foster Care for safety reasons.

The League recently wrote a letter to our state congressional delegation encouraging them to act quickly to reauthorize TANF. Certainly waiting until 2011 or longer to reauthorize will have dire consequences.

In talking with DSS staff, it is also apparent that we need to work with policy makers at both the state and national levels to identify dedicated funding for the child

welfare program as opposed to the current funds at the state and national level that are cobbled together for child welfare services. All states are experiencing these funding issues and it appears that there is some discussion beginning on the need to look at this funding.

One other issue that bears mentioning is that DSS has 25% fewer child welfare staff than it did three years ago, but performance standards from the federal level have increased, not decreased. States must measure up on standards or be penalized. There is a national movement to ask Congress to hold any penalties to states for their programs in abeyance until 2014, when most experts believe caseloads will be lessened.

I will continue to follow these issues and report as more information develops. In the meantime, it is imperative that we keep reauthorization of TANF funds before our federal delegation. We are moving to a situation that none of us imagined our state would be in - where our children will not be safe.

Fill the Gap!

South Carolina Gubernatorial Appointment Project (SC GAP)

"If you, like me, have ever felt the door closing because you are female, then you know how extremely important this project is, especially in a state like South Carolina where we rank 50th for women in politics," wrote one applicant to SC GAP.

Today, only a few women serve in South Carolina government as senior gubernatorial appointees and on boards and commissions. SC GAP wants to help change that. With a coalition of organizations across our state, including LWVSC, SC GAP is encouraging capable women to submit their resumes as candidates for senior-level positions.

Register today and tell all your talented friends that we are looking for women who are ready, willing and able to serve. Visit http://scelectswomen.com/sc_gap/ for more information, including a list of state boards and commissions that are available and instructions on how to submit a resume.

Our goal is to deliver to the governor-elect the resumes of women qualified to fill each appointed position. We estimate that more than 900 seats on boards and commissions will be open before the end of 2011. Many appointments are made from specific congressional districts. So far over 150 women's resumes are in our database to serve on state boards and commissions and that's great, but to meet our goal we need several hundred more women to come forward. Districts 3, 5 and 6 (<http://www.sciway.net/maps/south-carolina-congressional-districts.html>) are underrepresented.

Boards and commissions cover a wide array of issues, and SC GAP needs to add

women with specific areas of expertise or interest in: agriculture, disabilities, labor, marine science, international affairs, energy, safety, science, insurance and athletics. We also are looking for women with career specialties such as pharmacy, cosmetology, massage, veterinary medicine, and construction.

Participation on boards and commissions can be a first step on the path to running for office. The involvement of committed women will enhance the caliber of state government and help bring policymaking into balance.



The League of Women Voters - *Political Yet Nonpartisan After 90 Years*

By Mary Lynn Conway, LWV/Spartanburg County

At the inaugural meeting of the League of Women Voters in 1920, Carrie Chapman Catt stated:

In the League of Women Voters we have an anomaly: We are going to be a semi-political body. We want political things; we want legislation; we are going to educate for citizenship. In that body we have got to be nonpartisan and all partisan. Democrats from Alabama and Republicans from New Hampshire must work together for the same things.

Her words resound in 2010. In their wisdom, the leaders of the League established a base of durable principles and guidelines that have stood the League in good stead for 90 years, earning the respect of the public and the political arena alike. Our founding mothers understood the need for our organization to be nonpartisan.

Through the years, this strong position has ensured that the League's voice is heard above the tumult of party politics. The nonpartisan policy has added strength to the League's positions on issues, made

possible wide acceptance of our services to voters and given our organization enduring credibility.

In this time of hyper-partisanship, an organization that rises above the fray is desperately needed to facilitate civil discourse and respect for the opinions of others. Without this, our democracy will not only cease to thrive, it possibly may crash and burn.

We must be extremely careful to sustain our image of nonpartisanship. The general public and elected officials need to be reminded that the League is

nonpartisan and what that means. While individual League members are encouraged to participate fully in the party of their choice, state and local League board members who are visible in the community, e.g., local League presidents and voters service chairs, must hold themselves aloof from political involvement. As the League's visibility increases during this election season, we need to be on guard to uphold our principles. If we are seen as partisan it will diminish our strength.

LWVSC STATE BOARD NOMINEE RECOMMENDATION FORM

I nominate the following person for a position on the LWVSC Board of Directors or the LWVSC Nominating Committee: (self-nominations are welcome) Use additional paper or duplicate as needed.

POSTMARK DEADLINE: February 15, 2011

Name _____	League _____	
Street Address _____	City/State _____	Zip _____
E-mail address _____	Home or cell phone _____	Business Phone _____

1. Please check (X) the qualities that this nominee possesses:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility, openness to change | <input type="checkbox"/> Active participation in development activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Critical thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding of board-staff interactions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strong people skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Effective communications (verbal, written) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responsiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Interest in state and/or local League activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good time management | <input type="checkbox"/> Commitment to League's financial health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys challenges | <input type="checkbox"/> Experience in organizational budgeting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visionary | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized skills (foreign languages, technology, etc. Please explain _____) | |

2. Additional comments supporting this nomination, including the unique cultural perspective (*geographic, age, gender, race, ethnicity*) and/or exceptional leadership skills this nominee could bring to the LWVSC Board of Directors or Nominating Committee:

3. Summary of nominee's League, non-League and/or professional background (Optional: attach a brief biography, if available):

Nominated by:

Name _____ League _____

Address _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Signature _____

Return to: (Electronic submissions are encouraged.) Frances L. Elmore 4205 Byrnes Blvd Florence 29506 or e-mail: djmfle@aol.com



Why We Do What We Do - *Agenda for Action*

By JoAnne Day, LWVSC VP, Issues and Action

When you receive an action alert message from the state League do you every wonder why we are advocating for or against some legislation or policy? It's because the League members have studied the issue and arrived at a consensus regarding the issue. Local League meetings are held and members discuss the results of the consensus study, consider consensus questions and reach a collective opinion regarding the questions. We study issues to formulate an informed position in order to take action.

Another way that League members arrive at a position regarding a particular issue is through a similar process called concurrence. Concurrence is different from consensus in that members consider whether to concur with a position arrived at by a study already done by another League or Leagues (local, state or national). The concurrence position is presented (including background material)

at Convention, and the members vote to accept or not accept the position. If the position is accepted it becomes part of the League program for action. Depending on the complexity of the position more or less education and information may need to be presented to the membership. Consensus studies require the increasingly scarce resources of time and money, so concurrence may become a more frequently used method for arriving at positions as Leagues increasingly capitalize on work already done by others.

So, the planning for the state League's action agenda for 2011-2013 will begin this fall. In November the state League Board will discuss and approve state program planning materials to be sent to local leagues, including consensus and concurrence information. There are two consensus studies this year: water quality and school governance. Two concurrence items have also been proposed for

consideration: Clemson's on regional planning and Charleston's on illegal drugs. Local Leagues will hold meetings in January and February to study and consider the consensus questions. Local leagues will then return the results of these meetings in the form of program planning reports to the state board by March 1, 2011. At the March meeting the state board will review the reports from local leagues and vote on whether to recommend new positions from the state studies and/or the concurrence items. This report on program planning is what delegates will receive and vote on at the state convention, May 14-15, 2011. In keeping with League principles and our bottom-up philosophy, the membership at the grassroots will decide on our League program and our priorities for the coming year. It is a process and legacy of which the League of Women Voters can be rightfully proud.

School Governance - *Who Decides?*

By Holley Ulbrich, Chair, LWVSC School District Governance Study

As your state League works on consensus questions on school governance study issues, we need your help. As you know, right now many decisions about local school districts are made in Columbia by the legislative delegation, which consists of representatives and senators who represent some part of the county in which the district or districts are located. These decisions about the size and composition of the school board, splitting or consolidating school districts, and the degree of fiscal autonomy take place through local legislation, with only members of the delegation voting and other legislators simply voting "present." This situation is a relic of the old days when the legislative delegation managed all kinds of local affairs, including passing the county budget as a "supply bill." It is further complicated by the fact that county delegations cross county lines. Some legislators representing part of your county may not live in the county. In the Senate, where votes are weighted by the share of a county that a senator represents, some voters in the

county are effectively unrepresented.

Local school boards are elected by their citizens to manage the affairs of the school district. While the state rightfully has a major financial say because of its large contribution to funding, issues of structure are different. Structure means the number and sizes of districts and the size, composition, and method of selection of school board members. When the Home Rule bill passed in the 1970s, citizens got to choose the form of government for counties and municipalities. School districts were not included. Citizens had no say then and still have no say in matters of school governance. The consolidation of school districts in Sumter County, the removal of three at large positions from the Pickens County School Board, the refusal to permit election of school board members in Dillon County, and the recent legislative changes in the composition of the school board and its fiscal authority in Fairfield County are graphic illustrations of how that power is used without

requiring citizen input.

At the same time, these delegations are responding to perceived problems or issues in their counties. They exercise this authority in part because no one else has been designated to take on the responsibility. Perhaps your county and school district or districts haven't had any problems, and you have a good relationship to your legislators. That doesn't mean that there aren't problems elsewhere in the state, or that your own situation could change in the future.

The difficult question for the governance study is this: If that power is removed from (or somehow shared by) the legislative delegation, who should be responsible for initiating change? Is there a role for binding referenda? Who gets to initiate a referendum? Is there a role for the State Department of Education, who took over the Allendale County Schools a few years ago? Or the county council? Think about these questions and be prepared to give your answers when South Carolina LWV members consider consensus questions later this year.

Illegal Drugs in South Carolina

By Sharon Fratepietro, LWV/Charleston Area Criminal Justice Director

From May 2009 to May 2010 the League of Women Voters of the Charleston Area (LWVCA) undertook a study illegal drugs in South Carolina.

We started with a public program called "The Criminality of Drug Use." It featured three current or former South Carolina police chiefs and an ex-offender, all knowledgeable about current government drug prohibition policies. Then our members researched the issues, wrote the study report and publicized it. We put the report online and offered to send it by mail. Next a committee of members designed a consensus questionnaire modeled after one in a drug study by the LWV/Texas. Our membership met again to discuss the study report, focusing on issues in the consensus questionnaire. Then members answered the questionnaire in person and online, and at our annual membership meeting, we reached consensus on a list of positions about illegal drugs in our state.

You can find those positions, and the complete drug study report and a summary version, on-line at www.lwvcharleston.org. The first position, on which all others are based, is that illegal drug use should be considered a health issue, and drug addiction should be addressed by treatment, not incarceration.

Soon it will be your turn to get involved. First, early next year, the LWVCA will ask your local League, at its

program planning meeting, to recommend that the state League allow the positions to be voted on by concurrence at the LWVSC convention in May. (This does not mean that you necessarily agree with the positions, just that you want the concurrence question to be raised.) Then, if you attend the convention, we ask that you vote to concur that the LWVCA positions should be adopted by the state.

In the months before the program planning meetings, we hope each League president will schedule a membership meeting to discuss the report and positions (a casual potluck gathering might be a nice way to do this). We will send each president some educational information on the positions issues each month to share with members. And a Charleston League member will be happy to visit your League and discuss the report and positions, if invited.

Keep in mind that the LWVCA drug study is not breaking new ground. Many Leagues have done studies on illegal drugs in the past, and some new ones are taking place right now. Except for Hawaii, those studies have been limited to one or a few issues. The LWVCA study may be the most comprehensive so far.

Also, the reason for doing a study and having positions is to enable a League to advocate for or against, or comment on important issues. Without having self-educated, well-reasoned positions, the

League must be silent. Until now, no League in South Carolina has been able to support or oppose specific drug policies. For instance, we could not comment on drug sentences when the South Carolina Sentencing Reform Commission met last year. In another example, should a legislator propose a bill to legalize medical marijuana in the state (it's now legal in 14 other states), we currently have no basis for comment. (Rep. Bill Mescher, R-Berkeley County, introduced this bill a few years ago, but he died suddenly and so did the bill.)

Third, illegal drugs have a tremendous effect in South Carolina on many related matters – jail and prison populations; social, judicial and financial costs; illness and the loss of worker productivity; drug-related violence and vehicular accidents; family breakups with children in foster care, and much more.

We know you'll find the drug study report fascinating. Just to mention two of our findings, consider the following: Drug use in South Carolina is so pervasive that every year more than 1,000 drug tests of state prison inmates are positive (Chapter 4). South Carolina probably has the harshest law in the nation regarding pregnant women who use illegal drugs (Chapter 5). You won't find this information in the press, but you need to know about it and a lot more in the report at www.lwvcharleston.org.

Full Disclosure Needed in Political Campaign Financing

The evidence of big spending by special interests and newly-formed organizations that don't disclose is growing rapidly. The DISCLOSE Act, which would require disclosure of the sources of this election advertising, failed in the U.S. Senate recently after passing the House earlier this year. The League is working hard to advocate for the legislation. Secret campaign cash should have no place in our American democracy. But now we are seeing huge sums of money from secret sources going into campaign advertising, much of it the negative advertising that poisons the airways.

Special interests are spending millions and millions of dollars in this election and

it threatens to drown out the voices of individual voters. And because of changes in the law, there are no disclosure requirements - even foreign government corporations could be funding these ads.

The League of Women Voters has been calling attention to secret money being spent on political advertising for months, but the U.S. Senate has refused to act to require disclosure, even after the House of Representatives passed a strong disclosure bill.

Now we are seeing the largest campaign expenditures in history, even as organizations accept tens of thousands of dollars from both American and foreign corporations. Essentially, these

organizations are functioning as Political Action Committees but without having to follow the laws requiring disclosure of their donors. It should come as no surprise that they lobbied against the DISCLOSE Act in Congress, which would have stopped manipulation of elections by fly-by-night anonymous hit groups, and prevented the infusion of undercover expenditures.

These activities are detrimental to our democracy. Voters deserve to know who is paying for election advertising. The League of Women Voters calls on all candidates to disavow secret advertising and asks our local media outlets not to accept ads unless the names of the true donors are made public.



2010-2011 LWVSC State Policy Action Focus

Voter Access –

Carole Cato, Director, ccato@att.net

For the 2011-2012 legislative session, LWVSC will continue our emphasis on taking the initiative and introducing new ways to look at issues. For the greatest impact, all of our messages must be simple, easily understood, and reinforced on a regular basis to ensure that everyone -- officials and citizens -- understand and grow the ability to make more informed decisions about the critical issues for our democracy.

LWVSC advocacy will continue its focus on increasing voter access and ensuring voting systems that are secure and reliable. Action will include defeating another, even more determined, effort to implement Voter Photo ID; passing separate legislation to establish a substantial Early Voting period; and educating citizens and public officials about the unreliability of our state's electronic voting system which cannot be audited or recounted.

K-12 Education –

Jon Butzon, Director, jbutzon@sc.rr.com

A reliable, consistent, and adequate system of funding for South Carolina's public schools is a top priority. The League will focus efforts on bringing about the necessary reforms to make this system of funding a reality in the near term.

Early Care and Education/Child Welfare –

Rita Paul, Director, ritagpaul@hotmail.com

The LWVSC will continue its support for high quality and affordable childcare, including support of a quality rating system with particular attention to inclusion of group size in childcare regulations. The League will remain focused on the many needs of South Carolina's children by engaging with and supporting the work of The Children's Trust in its advocacy efforts and will continue to ensure that child welfare issues are addressed in collaboration with other League positions such as Juvenile Justice and K-12 Education.

State and Local Taxation –

Holley Ulbrich, Off-Board Director, holleyu@nctv.com

There are three important tax policy issues in the next legislative session.

1. The ITA study committee will be reporting back to the General Assembly with their recommendations for addressing the problems with the ITA created by Act 388. The present system redistributes state education funds, including property tax relief, in ways that discriminate against poorer districts. We will be monitoring their recommendations and hope to see this inequity corrected in 2011.
2. The recommendations of the Tax Realignment Commission will be in the hands of the General Assembly in November. We are certain that they will be recommending broadening the base of the sales tax, including more coverage of services, in exchange for a reduction in the rate. They may be including reinstating the sales tax on food at a lower rate. We will consider the full set of recommendations when they are issued and decide what we as a League can support. Certainly we can support a higher tax on gasoline, a broader base for the sales tax that includes some services, and phasing out the sales tax cap on cars.
3. There will probably be another effort to eliminate the corporate income tax, depending in part on the outcome of the governor's race. We oppose that effort. It makes little if any difference in attracting industry, but is a substantial and unnecessary revenue loss.

Criminal Justice/Juvenile Justice –

Robin Kimbrough-Melton, Director, rkimbro@clemson.edu

On the criminal justice side, sentencing reform will continue to be a priority. Now that Sentencing Reform Legislation has passed in South Carolina, the question is whether any subsequent proposals will be introduced to further implement the goals

of the Act. We will watch proposals on drug policy, no-parole, middle courts, etc. At the federal level, we are watching the National Criminal Justice Commission Act, which passed the House in late July. The Act would create a blue ribbon, bipartisan commission of experts charged with undertaking an 18-month top-to-bottom review of the nation's criminal justice system and offering concrete recommendations for reform.

In the juvenile justice area, we are interested in the "disturbing schools" statute. Attempts to modify it last year were unsuccessful. The statute accounts for the bulk of referrals to the DJJ system. We also are interested in research that has focused attention on racial disparities in the treatment of youth in the school system. Although this is an education issue, it is also relevant to juvenile justice since failure at school is a pathway into the juvenile system. A recent report of the Schott Foundation examined the disparities in graduation rates for black males. Moreover, a New York Times article on September 13, 2010 reported that black boys are nearly three times as likely to be suspended as white boys, and black girls were suspended at four times the rate of white girls. Closely related to these issues is our interest in positive behavioral supports. PBS is an empirically validated, function-based approach to eliminate challenging behaviors and replace them with prosocial skills. Use of PBS in SC schools could help decrease the use of suspensions and other punishments and lead to systemic as well as individualized change.

Natural Resources –

Peggy Brown, Co-Director, pegjobrown@yahoo.com

It appears we will have plenty of state legislation to consider and educate on the coming session. Below is a preliminary natural resources "watch list":

continued on page 11 –

STATE POLICY

continued from page 10 –

WATER

- Legislation requiring septic tank certification upon home sale to control fecal pollution from improper septic systems from entering surface waters across the state.
- “3 Strikes” bill would improve and enforce action on any wastewater treatment utility that has repetitive overflow violations. The bill addresses overflow spills into watersheds, prevents continuation of band-aid fixes and require municipalities and industries to proactively monitor and upgrade waste treatment facilities when 3 or more overflows spills occur within one year.
- Water phosphate bill would restrict the use, sale or manufacture of cleaning agents containing phosphates, including household dishwashing detergent.

SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK -

Another attempt will be made to remove the “death and the sunset clause” requiring that Conservation Bank funding be reduced to zero any time there are across-the-board cuts to state agencies and the ending of the program in 2013.

ENERGY - Legislation for an energy portfolio standard, as well as an offshore drilling ban and an energy conservation tax credit.

RECYCLING - Legislation would create jobs in the recycling industry, limit the need for landfill space, and educate residents on recyclables as assets. It may call for enacting a recycling mandate for holders of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) permits for bottles and cans and a possible landfill ban on recyclable ABC waste.

RESTRUCTURING DHEC - The Department of Health & Environmental Control is charged with protecting public health and the environment, but critics claim its decisions permit excessive pollution. Legislation would make DHEC more accountable to the public and improve oversight of agency operations and decisions.

NUCLEAR - Suzanne Rhodes, Off-Board Director, suzrhodes@juno.com

LWVSC will complete the update of Mary Kelly’s Nuclear State publication. This update will include reports on the current status of Yucca Mountain, the “Third Generation” reactor strategy under review by the National Regulatory Commission, Savannah River Site

activities, and industry proposals for the future of nuclear energy.

Reapportionment -

Sarah Leverette, Director, saraheleverette@gmail.com;
Suzanne Rhodes, Off-Board Director, suzrhodes@juno.com.

LWVSC is working to ensure transparent redistricting initiatives by the state legislature that are based on principles of fairness, One Person One Vote, and avoidance of community division. LWVSC may work with others (e.g., a university) to develop a redistricting strategy in South Carolina based on 2010 Census data, and is researching the possibility of utilizing Brennan Center for Justice resources, including software linked to the Brennan Center.



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

IMPORTANT LEAGUE DATES:

October

Voter Education Month

23rd Saturday, 5:00-8:00 p.m., *Wild Side: A Celebration of the Life and Work of Jimmy Chandler*, Hobcaw Mansion at the Hobcaw Barony Property, Georgetown

24th Sunday, *United Nations Day*

November

2nd Tuesday, *Election Day*

20th Saturday, 10:00-3:00 p.m., LWVSC Board Meeting, 1600 St. Julian Place, Columbia. *

December

Program Planning materials sent to local Leagues and Members-At-Large

15th *Bill of Rights Day*

SAVE THE DATES:

✓ *Regional Advocacy Trainings Workshops:*

Lowcountry - December 4th, Midlands - January 22, Upstate and Pee Dee - *to be confirmed*.

✓ *Advocacy Day*, February 23, Columbia

✓ *LWVSC Biennial Convention*, May 14-15, 2011, Sumter.
Hosted by: LWV of Sumter County

** All members of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina are welcome to attend LWVSC board meetings.*



LWV SC Voter

Post Office Box 8453
Columbia, SC 29202

The SC Voter

Fall 2010
Volume 62 Issue 2

Established in 1951, the League of Women Voters of South Carolina is a nonpartisan, political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a League member. All members receive the National Voter, the SC Voter, and a newsletter from their local League.

President: Barbara Zia
Editor: Laurel Suggs
Published by: *The League of Women Voters of SC*
PO Box 8453
Columbia, SC 29202
Phone & Fax:
(803) 251-2726
Website: www.lwvsc.org

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- Voter Qualifications and ID Requirements**
- Election Dates**
- Absentee Ballot Information and Early Voting Options**
- Contact Information for Election Officials**
- Data on Candidates in Federal, State and Local Races**
- Ballot Measure Information and more!**



The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



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Website: www.lwvsc.org

Join the League today!