

League of Women Voters of the Greater Capitol Area
May 2017

Annual Pot Luck Dinner
Wednesday, June 7
5:30-7:30
Baker Library, Bow

All over the country leagues are welcoming new members and being asked by community groups to provide the basic information on how to become more involved in their government. The league has been encouraging active engagement by citizens for 97 years and maybe never at a more important time than 2017. Our Concord league has also added new members and we welcome their interest and support.

Now it's time to get together with league friends, get started on our proposed new state-wide study on education and enjoy some good food. This is one of our favorite meetings of the year and we hope everyone will spend the evening with the league. One of our members will give you a call to ask what you'll bring to fill out our menu but if you miss our call, come and bring whatever you want. It's a great time to bring along a friend or neighbor to see what the league is all about.

Our speaker will be Mary Heath, the two-term NH rep from Hillsborough District 14 in Manchester. Mary was the Deputy Commissioner for the Dept. of Ed from 2004-2009. A retired educator she has served on the Election Law committee of the House and is the Deputy Democratic Floor Leader of the House. She will speak on the role of the State Ed. Dept, the success and challenges facing education in NH today.



League of Women Voters of New Hampshire
Biennial convention
Saturday, June 3 – 9:30 am registration and coffee
Slusser Center, Hopkinton
\$18 – includes lunch – pay at the door

Morning speaker: Frank Edelblut, NH Commissioner of Education
Afternoon: Update on the women's prison and issues/barriers for women leaving incarceration.

Current League position

Education: Action to support access to equal basic education opportunities for every student in New Hampshire.

The League believes that the state of New Hampshire bears a constitutional responsibility for the promulgation of education.

The state should set minimum standards and guidelines for elementary and secondary education and should provide assistance, both technical and financial, to ensure that all districts meet those minimum standards.

The League also believes that state support for elementary and secondary education should be a high priority in the state budget but that local control should be maintained over local school budgets.

State funds should be used to reduce the basic educational inequalities among school districts.

State mandated programs should be directly funded by the state.

Adopted 1980, Updated 2013.

This position does not allow us to address some of the current issues in education including those relating to charter schools, school vouchers, school choice, public money going to private schools or post-secondary education. We hope to study the funding structure, the roles and responsibilities of the NH Education Commissioner, the state board of education, the Governor, the legislature, and the State Education Department as well as those aspects of education that most concern our members.

And we're not the only ones who are studying....last week HB356 passed the Senate (passed the house earlier) which establishes a committee to study education funding and the cost of an opportunity for an adequate education, establishing a committee to study the organizational structure of the Department of Education and the duties and responsibilities of the commissioner of the Dept. of Education, and relative to the duties of the commissioner of the Dept. of Ed. (Note: The proposed amendment conferring greater authority on the Commissioner of Education was not considered.)

It's a perfect time for the league to do our research, engage the community and form an education position that will add our voices to making our educational system the best it can be.

League Priorities for the 2017 session of the New Hampshire Legislature

When the league reviewed the proposed bills, we knew voting rights were in the spotlight and they have remained there all during the session. Our league president, Liz Tentarelli along with state board member, Nancy Maraschio, have observed hearings, testified, asked questions and raised significant considerations to the myriad of bills relating to voting. SB3 will undoubtedly pass and it has been called the "voter prevention bill". On Tuesday, May 16 the latest amendment to this bill was passed which is 18 pages long and the most confusing amendment ever!

Everyone has now heard about President Trump establishing an election commission to investigate widespread voter fraud in American elections. Despite evidence to the contrary, President Trump continues to rail against the thousands of illegal voters in New Hampshire. NH Secretary of State Bill Gardner has been appointed to this commission despite his repeated claims that voter fraud is not rampant in NH.

The League of Women Voters of the US issued the following statement.

"President Trump's 'Election Integrity Commission' is an unnecessary distraction from the real work to protect against foreign hacking and interference in our electoral process. The real purpose of this effort is to justify President Trump's false claims of widespread voter fraud in the 2016 elections.

This effort begins with a deep credibility gap. Commission members' views on elections are well known and have been discredited as political ideologues with dangerous agendas. This is part of a wider effort to suppress the vote, keep certain politicians in power, and undermine our elections by spreading falsehoods.

Today's announcement is just another distraction from the real issues, and we expect that any findings or recommendations from this Commission will only be used to make it harder for people to vote in the future.

The White House is attempting to bury this Commission at a time when the nation and Congress are consumed with this administration's own Russia scandal.

The real problems with our electoral system are the suppressive laws that prevent eligible voters from access to the ballot. False claims of voter fraud have been used to push through more restrictive voting laws including voter ID, proof of citizenship requirements and limiting or reducing early voting opportunities.

This administration is laying the groundwork to usher in widespread discrimination in our systems of voting and manipulate our democracy."



Peg --



Guest speaker will be Hedrick Smith, Pulitzer Prize-winning former New York Times reporter and editor and Emmy award-winning producer/correspondent.

He produced a series for PBS called "Campaign Finance; Abuses and Reforms", which highlighted the issue of influence of campaign contributions on American sugar policy, an experiment in public financing of campaigns in Maine and why the 1974 campaign finance reform act has worked out so poorly.

Cocktails, hearty appetizers, socializing and an amazing silent auction make for a great evening. Please mail your check to NH Rebellion, 4 Park Street, Room 301, Concord, NH 03301.

