



OHIO VOTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OHIO **SUMMER 2018**

BIG REDISTRICTING NEWS!

Issue 1 passed overwhelmingly! Thanks so much for all of your hard work that led Issue 1 to passing with nearly 75 percent of the vote and majority support in all 88 counties. The amazing, inspiring effort of Leaguers and Fair Districts activists allowed our all-volunteer effort to accomplish what seemed impossible - force the legislature to compromise. Overwhelming bipartisan support of this type is almost unheard of in today's polarized political climate. Thank you for your work in making our government more representative!

To recognize the enormous achievement of passing redistricting reform, LWV Ohio and our members were presented with the "Strengthening Democracy" Award at the LWVUS Convention in Chicago this past June. Based on a vote by LWV membership, the award recognizes advocacy that strengthens our democratic institutions.

In other redistricting news, in May LWV Ohio signed on alongside the A. Philip Randolph Institute as co-plaintiffs in a lawsuit claiming that the current Ohio congressional districts are unconstitutional. If successful, the suit could result in new, fairer congressional districts for the 2020 elections. Although the lawsuit was filed before the Supreme Court's disappointing June rulings in the Wisconsin and Maryland gerrymandering cases, the initial complaint was designed to address some of the weaknesses in those cases and has since been amended to be even stronger.

These major steps do not mark the end of work on redistricting advocacy, however. While the lawsuit will take months to develop there is other important work in the meantime to curtail gerrymandering. A fair and complete Census is the cornerstone of a fair redistricting process, as maps built on faulty data cannot be representative. Consequently, LWV Ohio will be producing materials for Census education and advocacy, so stay tuned for how you can have an impact in your community. Additionally, both redistricting reform proposals require robust public oversight and participation to be successful, so stay engaged!

If your local League wants materials or to host an event on redistricting next steps or the Census, contact Nazek Hapasha at nhapasha@lwvohio.org.



STATE ADVOCACY UPDATE

Activity before the Ohio General Assembly went on summer break was a mixed bag, with progress on a number of bills that LWVO supports, but bad news on other measures.

- Senate Bill 135, to provide \$114.5 million funding for counties to replace aging voting machines, has been passed by both chambers and signed into law by the governor. LWVO has consistently supported funding the replacement of old voting machines, most purchased over 10 years ago.
- Senate Bill 4 has been signed by Governor Kasich, which will make it easier for survivors of human trafficking to have their criminal records expunged of charges related to being trafficked, allowing fuller reintegration and healing.
- Senate Bill 299, to provide \$30 million for the preservation and protection of Lake Erie, has also passed and was signed by the governor. While this alone is not enough to protect Lake Erie, it is a good start.
- Senate Concurrent Resolution 21 also passed the Senate; this resolution encourages Congress to pass legislation enabling the Appalachian Petrochemical Hub, a proposed development in Southeastern Ohio that carries enormous public health and environmental risks. This does not require passage through the House or the Governor's signature.

The legislature has now finished most of their business until the post-election "lame duck" session. This is a time of frantic activity before the end of the General Assembly session, and legislators often pass a number of controversial bills. The legislation below could move in November or December, so keep an eye out for action alerts.

- House Bill 114, which would eliminate Ohio's renewable energy standards and energy efficiency and reduce setbacks that make wind farms unworkable, did not pass out of committee before summer break. LWVO supports decreasing wind setbacks as a standalone bill, but not legislation that guts the clean energy standards.
- Senate Bill 145, also known as the "method ban," which would prohibit the abortion procedure most commonly used after twelve weeks' gestation, has been quiet for a while but could move from committee to the House floor quickly. Similar provisions in other states have been ruled unconstitutional or blocked by courts, including recently in Mississippi in March 2018.
- House Bill 393, to provide for the sale of oil and gas drilling waste as a commercial product for use in ice and dust control on roads without sufficient controls, was scheduled for a vote on the House floor which was canceled. The makeup of this so-called "brine" is kept secret but has been shown to contain carcinogens and other dangerous chemicals, and have high levels of radioactivity.
- House Bill 228, a "stand-your-ground" measure, was also expected to pass in June but has been put on hold. This bill would significantly expand the legality of using deadly force in public places.
- Senate Bill 250 has the potential to significantly restrict protest of energy facilities by escalating penalties for and expanding the definition of criminal mischief and trespassing. The sponsors claim the purpose is to protect energy infrastructure from tampering, but the language as written could be interpreted far more broadly.
- Governor Kasich's proposed gun safety reforms could also see action in the lame duck session, though the new Speaker of the House expressed opposition to the "red flag law," the provision allowing courts to have firearms temporarily removed from people displaying concerning behavior.
- In light of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision upholding Ohio's voter purge, Secretary of State Husted floated the idea of having the procedure written into law. No such legislation has been introduced, but such a proposal could move quickly in the lame duck session, either as a standalone bill or an amendment added surreptitiously to other legislation.

If you are interested to join the LWVO Lobby Corps, please contact Jennifer Miller at director@lwvohio.org.

The Voter newsletter is going green!



Did you know you have the option to receive the Voter by email? Call the state office at (614) 469-1505 to opt in to email delivery and let us know your preferred email address!

TRIBUTE TO MEG FLACK

- By Ann Henkener

The entire League of Women Voters of Ohio/Education Fund extends its thanks to Meg Flack for her incredible contributions. After five years of leading the Ohio League's Membership & Leadership Development (MLD) Program Coaching Team, she is retiring.



Meg Flack

Because of Meg's leadership, the MLD Program and its Coaching Team have been incredibly valuable resources for Ohio Leagues seeking to grow and engage their membership and enhance their leadership. The team has helped Leagues become ever stronger in empowering their communities to make democracy work. The Coaching Team has consistently reflected the highest standards of commitment to their work.

In addition to her service as Chair, Membership & Leadership Development Program (2013-17), Meg was LWVO/EF President (2009-2011) and Co-President (2011-2013). She also served on the LWVO/EF state board in numerous capacities: Secretary and Chair of Advocacy Committee (2007-09); board member (2005-13); Death Penalty Study Committee (2003-2005); and lobbyist on capital punishment issues (2005-08).

Meg holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy and Management as well as a Doctorate in Sociology. She has a long history of community volunteerism and has held leadership positions with Court Appointed Special Advocates of Franklin County (CASA), VOICES for Children and Families, and the Junior League of Columbus. In 2007, she was appointed by Gov. Ted Strickland to the Ohio Judicial Appointments Recommendation Panel.

We are inspired by and celebrate Meg's contributions to the League's work in promoting and maintaining our democracy and wish her well in her future endeavors.

"There are no words to convey how much the opportunity to work with you has meant — nor to say how much I will miss working with you. I deeply believe that the MLD program has made a true difference — that would not have happened without the outstanding commitment, insights, perspectives and creativity of our MLD coaches. To all our current and former MLD coaches and the local League MLD teams who have so generously shared your time and talents : heartfelt thanks. Best wishes for continued success — and also to the LWVO board and staff, whose support has been crucial to our MLD team's and local Leagues' success."
- Meg Flack

REFLECTIONS ON THE LWV NATIONAL CONVENTION

- By Alison Ricker and Mary Kirtz Van Nortwick

Nearly 50 individuals represented Ohio at the LWVUS Convention at the end of June. See the co-president's column for a brief report on actions taken. Here is a compilation of post-convention survey responses from attendees and delegates:

1. Based on actions and information at the Convention, what is one essential issue for LWV Ohio action?
 - Equal Rights Amendment
 - Diversity, equity, and inclusion policies & strategies
 - Big plans for August 26, 2020
 - National Popular Vote
 - Voter services

2. What convention information will you share with your local League? (in addition to issues listed in response to question #1)
 - Fundraising strategies
 - MyLO website platform
 - Becoming solely a 501(c)3 organization
 - Civil discourse training
 - Importance of data collection to demonstrate LWV impact
 - "Transformation Journey" of the LWVUS

3. What national convention sessions/information should we include in the 2019 state convention (in addition to issues already listed above)?
 - Actions to abolish the Electoral College
 - Automatic voter registration
 - Strengthening democracy: open records, fair courts, money in politics, implementing redistricting, election protection, etc.
 - Vote 411: proud of Ohio's implementation and use; expand its coverage
 - Speakers Rosie Rios, Ashley Allison, and Elaine Weiss

Ohioans agreed it was an inspirational convention, if sobering in the amount of work there is still to do to make our democracy work for all residents. Long term strategizing is essential – e.g., what should LWV look like 20 or 25 years from now? – as well as recommitment to our non-partisan principles. Our thanks to everyone who participated!

HEAR FROM OUR AT-LARGE UNITS:



Rita Kipp

"This was my first LWV National Convention. I was excited to go and the experience did not disappoint. As a voting delegate, I had a voice in shaping the budget, selecting new officers and other leaders, and determining the national program of action and advocacy over the next two years. Many of us took a break from the convention on Saturday to join tens of thousands in the streets to rally for Families Belong Together. "America was built by refugees," read the sign that I liked best.

My two favorites among a number of excellent speakers at the convention were Rosie Rios and Elaine Weiss. Rios, the 43rd Treasurer of the United States, spoke with humor and passion (and without notes) about a campaign to place images of real women on the US currency and also in public statuary. Weiss, author of *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote (2018)* described the long struggle of LWV founder Carrie Chapman Catt and others. I can't wait to read the book.

There was much to learn and bring back home. Among those lessons, a panel and a training session on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion resonated most strongly with me. I will be sharing ideas with others and brainstorming about strategies to expand the reach of the League in our community.

Because mine is an At-large Unit rather than a Local League, my name badge was not like the others: It did not specify where I am from (Licking County). Rather, it simply read "LWV Ohio" as if I represented the whole state! Perhaps that explains why my heart especially filled with pride as 50 of us from Ohio jumped up together as one and cheered when the LWVUS award for Strengthening Democracy went to LWVO for the Fair Districts = Fair Elections campaign and for educating voters about Issue 1."

- Rita Kipp, LWV of Licking County Unit



From left to right, Colleen Benelli Reed, Susan Baker and Karen Schwarzwald

"Greetings from Findlay Hancock County! Newly formed in January 2018, our group began conversations and held an organizational meeting in October 2017. We received support, encouragement, and advice from women who had been active in a local league chapter in the mid - 1980s. Any new organization has growing pains; movement forward is

taken in baby steps but we are committed to promoting the mission of the League of Women Voters to encourage informed and active participation in government. We are interested in encouraging voter participation. We want to register new voters but we believe a big challenge is getting people involved in the political process. We are recruiting new members and would love to hear suggestions from other local leagues!" - Colleen Benelli-Reed, LWV of Findlay Unit

2018 STATEHOUSE DAY RECAP



"From its beginning, the League of Women Voters has been on the right side of history. On issue after issue. It's always a good time to make some more history. I look forward to witnessing the fruits

of your continued good work." -Mike Curtin, LWVO Statehouse Day

Thanks to all who attended our annual Statehouse Day on Wednesday, April 11! In addition to an informative and inspiring keynote address from Mike Curtin in which he paid tribute to the League's work over the years, we heard updates from the LWVO Lobby Corps, learned about efforts across the state to inform and engage young people, learned how the NAACP and local Leagues can form effective partnerships, and worked to bring civility back to our communities. Statehouse Day also served as the premiere for an exciting new project from LWV Metro Columbus: their video, "Make Calls Not Comments," encourages young people to contact their representatives' offices and make their voices heard.

For materials and information from Statehouse Day, visit the Statehouse Day 2018 page on our new LWVO website (lwvohio.org).



From left to right, Beth Taggart, Interim Executive Director, Mary Kirtz Van Nortwick, Co-President, Jennifer Miller, Executive Director, Alison Ricker, Co-President.

FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS' DESK

We have just returned from the LWVUS Convention where, on behalf of every one of you, LWVO received the Strengthening Democracy Award for our collective work on the Fair Districts=Fair Elections campaign and the passage of Issue One – a wonderful exclamation point marking the success of so much passionate, collaborative, effective work by thousands of volunteers! We owe you all our deepest thanks and return newly energized to focus on the various ways we, both at the state and local levels, can make democracy work for all: expanding Vote411 to underserved areas, setting up ways to help citizens verify their vote, following through with our lawsuit as an additional step to help redistricting reform achieve its objectives, and, as always, working on voter education through our guides and campaign events for the general election.



*Mary Kirtz Van Nortwick,
Alison Ricker*

We are so glad to have our new executive director, Jen Miller, on board as we head into what promises to be a tumultuous election season. Her grasp of LWV's principles and fundamentals has been impressive, and we have no doubt that LWVO will thrive under her capable management. If you have not yet had a chance to meet her, we are sure that an opportunity to do so will present itself soon – she has been traveling around the state in an effort to meet as many of our members as possible, so stay tuned!

Receiving the award was a highpoint of the Convention, but certainly not the only moment of celebration. We were joined by nearly 50 Ohio delegates who participated in every aspect of the Convention, from workshops to early morning and late night caucuses and plenary sessions packed with essential business, inspiring resolutions and presentations. State Board member Alfreda Brown, LWV Kent, was compelling in her talk on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and former executive director Carrie Davis spoke persuasively of the need to show, with data, the collective impact of League across the country. The entire body of some 900 delegates and attendees stood and cheered for several minutes after we reaffirmed the League's commitment to work to pass the Equal Rights Amendment and to abolish the Electoral College.

Also at the convention, we heard Elaine Weiss, author of "The Women's Hour," remind us of our history, one in which women were derided, punished, even tortured, for wanting the right to vote. What is most important is the fact that, in spite of all the forces aligned against them, the suffragists persisted and finally succeeded. We know that there is still much to be done, especially at a time when many issues we have fought for since 1920 are eroding before our eyes. Our overwhelming win this year on congressional redistricting reform as well as in the 2015 vote on state redistricting reform affirms that the vast majority of voters believe in good governance. On their behalf, let us continue to fight for our principles, our policies, our positions – as it was for the suffragists, persistence is the key to success.

— Alison Ricker and Mary Kirtz Van Nortwick

Get involved from the comfort of your home or office!

LWV Ohio Monthly All Member Call

The state League hosts a conference call open to all members on the first Tuesday of every month at 12 noon. The monthly call is a great way for League members across Ohio to connect, share ideas, get updates on hot topics, and plan action.

Here's how to join the discussion:
Call (toll-free): 866-740-1260
Enter PIN Number: 4691505#.

Watch your email several days in advance for an announcement of that month's call topic. Calls typically end just before 1pm.

LWV Ohio Lobby Corps Call

LWVO's volunteer Lobby Corps meets via phone twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 12 noon. Any member may join the call. It's a great way to hear what is happening in the Statehouse and about lobbying. New lobbyists are always welcome.

Here's how to join the discussion:
Call: 605-468-8003
Enter PIN Number: 742886#.

Calls end by 1pm. You are certain to learn something new about pending legislation and lobbying activities.

DONATE TO THE ANNUAL CAMPAIGN!

It is not too late to give to this year’s Annual Campaign! The State League depends heavily on the support of individual donors to continue our critical work. We have not raised membership dues in over eight (8) years. One of the ways we can continue to keep dues affordable is through the generous support of our donors throughout the year. When we say, we could not do it without you - we truly mean we could not do it without the support of every one of our members. When we say every dollar matters – we truly mean even every dollar matters. A \$1.00 donation can:

1. Send two (2) campaign letters
2. Send our quarterly Voter to a member without email
3. Print (12) Vote 411 information cards
4. Make three (2) buttons for campaigns like Fair Districts = Fair Elections

Every. Dollar. Matters.

Our Annual Campaign goal for 2018 is \$25,000 and we are almost there! Your contribution will enable us to continue our groundbreaking work like urging our legislators to take immediate action to redistrict before 2020. Your dollars also provide the opportunity for LWVO to help educate Ohio voters, advocate for human rights, and protect our democracy. Our efforts to make sure ALL citizens are well informed and can vote are just as important today as ever. Thank you in advance for your continued support.

Donate today!

Yes, I want to support the work of the LWVO!

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other _____

Gifts can be made payable to:

- LWVO (non-tax deductible)
- LWVO Education Fund (tax deductible)
- Split evenly between LWVO and LWVO Education Fund

You can also donate at www.lwvohio.org and click “Donate.”

Thank you!

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FROM THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JEN MILLER



Jennifer Miller

I feel so honored to join this organization where so many members selflessly pour their talents and time into making Ohio a better place. In my first three months, I bore witness to the League’s transformative power through the overwhelming passage of Issue 1. I’ve visited with greats like Peg Rosenfield, Mary Lazarus, and Joan Lawrence to get a deeper sense of how bipartisan and strategic this organization has always been. And it’s been a true joy to meet members at local League events and at national convention. Our staff, lobbyists, leaders, and board members are impressive.

We have so much to celebrate as we approach the 100th anniversary of woman’s right to vote, but we also must press forward. Voting rights, voter education, and election administration remain as important today as they were a century ago, and the League’s ability to bridge partisan political divides is needed now more than ever. Our great challenge is how we continue our current work while also building the infrastructure to be even stronger 100 years from now.

I think we meet that challenge by doubling down on recruiting diverse Ohioans to join us as members and by training a new generation of leaders to carry forth our shared mission. We must remain steadfast advocates for safe, modern, fair, and accessible elections, while continuing our role as watchdog at the Ohio Statehouse. We must strengthen partnerships with and support for local Leagues. Finally, we must better tell our story and fundraise so that we truly can sustain ourselves into another century.

This work is daunting, but I look forward to doing it together.

Yours In League,
Jen Miller

Bon Voyage Brigid, and Welcome Nazek!

It’s bittersweet to bid farewell to Brigid, our savvy and dedicated Program Associate. She’s off to fulfill a lifelong dream of living in NYC. We are proud of you and know you can accomplish anything you dream! Thanks for your service to LWVO. Good luck!

Please join me in welcoming Nazek Hapasha, our new Program Associate. She recently obtained her MPA from OSU. She previously worked for the City of Delaware, serves on the Noor Islamic Center board, and has two kids. Welcome!

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

A heartfelt thank you to the following people for supporting the 2018 Annual Campaign. We are truly grateful for your generosity and dedication to our mission and organization:

Lucy Abu-Absi	Marion Gillette	Marlene and Bill Muse
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The League of Women Voters of Ohio/Education Fund also offers thanks to the many donors who wish to remain anonymous for their generous support.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OHIO

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For membership information, call (614) 469-1505, email lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org, or visit us online at www.lwvohio.org.



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