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# League of Women Voters of Texas League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund

## LOCAL LEAGUES

- Amarillo
- Arlington
- Austin Area
- Bay Area
- Brazos Valley
- Comal Area
- Concho Valley MAL
- Corpus Christi
- Dallas
- Denton
- El Paso
- Gainesville
- Galveston Area
- Hidalgo Co.
- Houston Area
- Irving
- Johnson Co. MAL
- Kerrville
- Lubbock
- Marshall/Harrison Co.
- Midland
- Montgomery Co.
- Plano/Collin Co.
- Richardson
- San Antonio Area
- San Marcos Area
- Sherman/Grayson Co.
- Tarrant Co.
- Tyler/Smith Co.
- Victoria
- Waco
- Wichita Falls
- Wimberley Valley MAL

# Annual Report 2007-2008



## 2007-2008 Board of Directors

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**A Message from the President**

Since its founding in 1920 by suffragists, the League of Women Voters has worked to encourage informed and active participation in government by registering voters, encouraging citizens to vote, and providing nonpartisan information.

The challenge for the League of Women Voters is to reach underrepresented populations: young adults, people of color, and people in rural areas. LWV-TX and local Leagues distribute *Voters Guides*, which are also posted in English and Spanish on the LWV-TX website. Thanks to funders such as the Harold Simmons Foundation, Hatton Sumners Foundation, LWVEF-Open

Society, and the Dodge Jones Foundation, we distribute print *Voters Guides* to libraries in some areas where there are no local Leagues. We offer an electronic version of the *Voters Guide* to small town newspapers. To reach younger and more diverse voters, we provide students, faculty and staff at 50 Texas community colleges and universities the online *Voters Guide* by connecting them to our website. The League works with the Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic to provide an audio version of the *Voters Guide*.

We take seriously our mission to encourage all to be active, informed participants in civic life. There should be no barriers to voter participation. While preventing voter fraud is impor-

tant, it can not come at the expense of suppressing voter participation. In that regard, Texas League members adopted a state study, "Voting Procedures to Increase Voter Participation." The scope is to study vote-by-mail, Internet voting, same-day registration, election-day centralized voting, overseas ballot procedures, other procedures which might increase voter participation, and procedures that are barriers to voting.

Although the League is probably better known for our Voters Service, LWV-TX is a multi-issue organization and has positions in the areas of government, administration of justice, social policy/human resources, and natural resources. We use these positions to bring about change at the state level of government. Local Leagues may use these state positions in addition to their local positions to advocate for change locally.

The Wimberley Valley member-at-large unit was formed as the first step in becoming a new local League. Orange County is among other areas from which inquiries have been made to form new Leagues. We welcome new Leagues to help us accomplish our mission. We also take every opportunity to remind people that the League of Women Voters is NOT for women only.

Indeed, the League of Women Voters is known for our nonpartisan, unbiased information for elections as well as our well researched and thoughtfully reached positions on issues. We take pride in Making Democracy Work.

*Karen Nicholson*

Karen Nicholson,  
President and Chair

**CITIZEN EDUCATION**

**Project Voter**

- Published a *Facts & Issues*, "Mandated Achievement Testing in the Public Schools of Texas."
- Distributed *Voters Guides* in English and in Spanish for the November 2007 Constitutional Amendment election and the March 2008 primary election.
- In cooperation with local Leagues, made available 234,000 *Voters Guides* in print, on the LWV-TX web site, and through newspapers for the primary election.
- Provided audio taped versions of the *Voters Guides* for blind and visually impaired citizens upon request.
- Distributed nearly 18,000 *Voters Guides* for the primary election to libraries across the state that are not served by local Leagues.
- Applied for and received funding from the LWVUS Education Fund, through the Program on Constitutional and Legal Policy of the Open Society Institute, to provide additional information on judicial independence, the Texas judicial system and all statewide judicial candidates in the March 2008 primary election *Voters Guide*.

**Project Citizen**

- Adopted positions on Public School Testing and Accountability at convention in April 2008. These positions will be advocated during future Texas legislative sessions as well as to the State Board of Education.
- Adopted a new study of "Voting Procedures to Increase Voter Participation" at convention in April 2008, for completion by

early 2010. A committee has begun research for a summer 2009 publication of a *Facts and Issues* on the subject.

- Produced publications for members and the public: *Program Perspectives: A Guide to League Issues 2008-2010* and *We Support*.
- Presented the 2008 Environmental Awareness Awards at the state convention in the following categories: *Catherine Perrine Award* for League member – Julia Marsden of Austin, *Individual* – Margaret DeMoss of Fort Worth, *Non-Profit* – New Town Neighborhood Association of Marshall, *Corporate/Business* – Harris Methodist Hospital of Fort Worth, *Government* – City of Austin, *Media* – *Austin Chronicle*.

**ADVOCACY IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST**

- Supported HJR19, a resolution calling for a constitutional amendment that requires votes by individual legislators in the Texas Legislature to be recorded. LWV-TX had been active on this issue for six years. The amendment passed in November 2007 by an extraordinary margin.
- Tracked legislative priorities through interim legislative committees.
- Spoke at a press conference in January 2008 in opposition to efforts to introduce voter identification requirements that might impede and discriminate against minorities and low income people trying to participate in elections.
- Testified at an interim committee hearing regarding

proposed changes to the English curriculum in Texas public high schools.

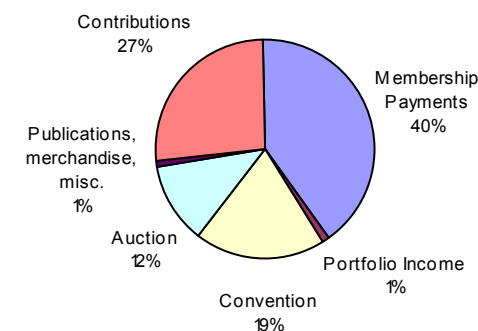
- Tracked other legislative priorities during the non-legislative year, including juvenile justice, air quality, water resources, and redistricting.

**SERVICE TO LOCAL LEAGUES**

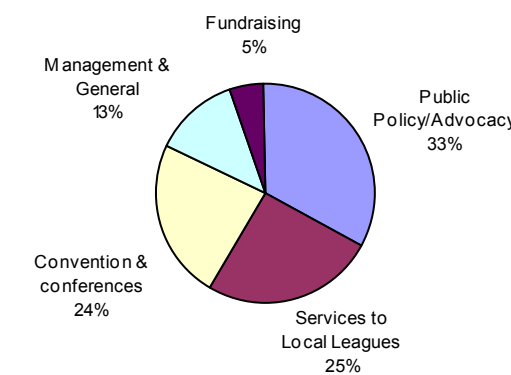
- Completed the formation of a member-at-large unit in the Wimberley Valley.
- Continued to work with citizens who wish to organize local Leagues where none exist.
- Served members at large (members in areas where there is no local League) with periodic mailings and publications.
- Supported local Leagues with customized leadership training on site.
- Offered workshops with leaders from LWVUS on membership and program at our state convention
- Enabled local Leagues to help each other by including articles in the Texas VOTER about their accomplishments and sharing ideas that other Leagues could adopt.
- Completed posting all LWV-TX League publications on the website for easier access by members and the public.
- Provided regular organizational tips to local Leagues via emails.
- Provided a link for local Leagues with the LWV-TX website or offered a customized local League page on the LWV-TX website at no cost.
- Provided local Leagues with CDs to use in a power point presentation regarding League Principles and Program.

**2007-2008**

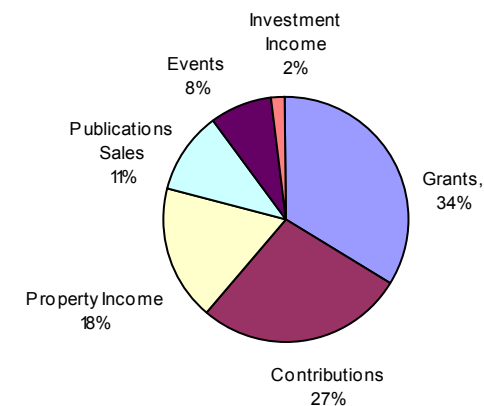
**LWV-TX Income - \$124,747**



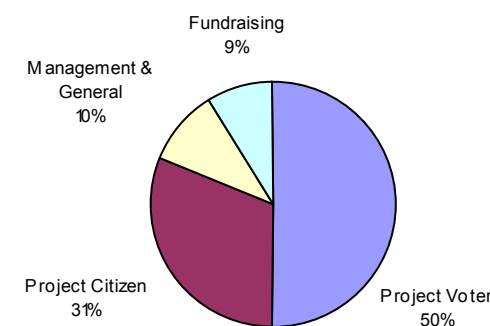
**LWV-TX Expenses - \$105,760**



**LWV-TEF Income \$106,772**



**LWV-TEF Expenses - \$124,496**



**The League of Women Voters of Texas**, a nonpartisan political organization, promotes informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Although the League neither supports nor opposes political parties or candidates, it acts on issues its members have studied.

Membership in the League is open to all women and men. Voting members must be citizens 18 years of age or older. LWV-TX includes 31 local Leagues as well as members at large in communities that do not have a local League. LWV-TX was founded in 1919, one year prior to the passage of the amendment to the U.S. Constitution that gave women the right to vote. With assistance from the state office and its full-time staff of two, volunteers contribute several hundred thousand hours (worth more than \$4 million) to conduct League studies, voters service projects, and advocacy based on League positions. Financial contributions to LWV-TX enable it to promote membership in the League and strengthen League advocacy efforts in the public interest.

*LWV-TX is classified as a 501(c)(4) organization by the Internal Revenue Service; neither dues nor contributions may be deducted as charitable donations.*

**The League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund** is making democracy work by providing nonpartisan, factual information about voting, government, and public policy to Texas citizens. Contributions to the Education Fund support studies, publications, dissemination of information about issues that affect Texans, and projects to encourage and increase informed voting. In addition, contributions to LWV-TEF support services to strengthen local Leagues and ensure that League guidelines and nonpartisanship policies are upheld. Gifts may be designated for specific projects approved by the trustees or for the overall voters service and citizen education activities of the fund.

*LWV-TEF has been classified as a publicly supported educational trust in accordance with Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is not taxable as a private foundation, as defined in Section 509 of the code. Therefore, donations to the LWV-TEF may be deducted as charitable contributions.*