



®

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS
EDUCATION FUND

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ANNUAL REPORT

2013 – 2014

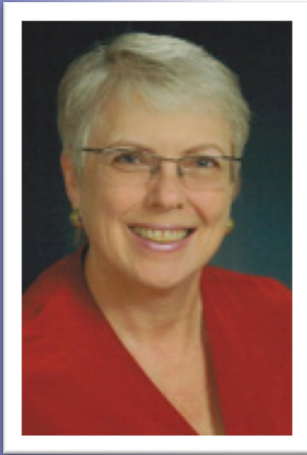


Local Leagues of Texas

- Amarillo ★ Austin Area ★ Bay Area ★
- Brazos County ★ Caldwell County
- ★ Collin County ★ Comal Area ★
- Corpus Christi ★ Dallas ★ Denton ★
- El Paso ★ Houston Area ★ Irving ★
- Kerrville Area ★ Lubbock County
- ★ Marshall/Harrison County ★ Midland ★
- Richardson ★ Rio Grande Valley ★ San
- Antonio Area ★ San Marcos Area ★
- Sherman/Grayson County ★ Tarrant
- County ★ Tyler/Smith County ★ Victoria
- ★ Waco Area ★ Wichita Falls ★

*95 Years of
Making Democracy Work!*

Message from the President



I am privileged to present the 2013-2014 Annual Report of the League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) and the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund (LWV-TEF). The report highlights our efforts in Advocacy in the Public Interest, Citizen Education (voter service), Service to Local Leagues, as well as financial information.

This year, the League worked vigorously in Texas to **protect** and **empower** voters by continuing to **fight against barriers to voting** and, at the same time, to work on **positive reforms**. Court rulings substantiate the importance of efforts by LWV-TX to protect voting rights for all Texans. The Texas photo ID law continues to work its way through the Courts, and although the Supreme Court has allowed the law to continue in effect for the 2014 election despite a blistering dissent by all three women on the Court, the law was struck down by a Federal District Court. The Fifth Circuit and the Supreme Court have yet to rule on the merits of the law, but the

League stands ready to continue in this important fight.

During three Special Legislative Sessions in 2013, the League continued to work to protect women's reproductive rights. **We called, we wrote, and we testified** – even into the early morning hours. We were not successful, but we continue our work. We did, however, succeed in passing a Constitutional Amendment to provide funding for the Texas Water Development Board.

Through the League's Voters Guides, media releases, handouts, public forums, and websites, LWV-TX and local Leagues actively **prepared voters** for photo ID requirements at the polls as well as for both the 2013 Constitutional Amendment Election and the 2014 Primary and Primary Runoff Elections. With **statewide coverage** in VOTE411.org for 2014, LWV-TX and local Leagues covered more races, candidates provided additional information, and more voters built a ballot specific to their own address.

We continued our partnership the national League and local Leagues in the Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) program. Many of the participating local Leagues are **thriving with increased activities, membership, and visibility in their communities**.

Our office in Austin has undergone significant changes. In 1984, LWV-TX purchased two condominium office units at 1212 Guadalupe, one block from the Capitol in Austin. For many years we leased one of the units to other non-profit organizations. This year we sold the extra unit and added the proceeds to our long-term reserve funds.

During this fiscal year, we lost several of our stalwart members. Long time League leaders Gwen Essinger (Houston Area) and Sondra Ferstl (Denton) left a portion of their estates to the League. We mourn their loss and are grateful for their gifts of continuing support.

Of course, the work goes on. Representative democracy depends on voters selecting elected officials and is undermined when politicians select voters. **As we have done for 95 years, we will be "agitating and educating" for the active, informed participation that makes democracy work here in Texas.**

I want to thank everyone who has stood with the League over the past year and will continue to work with us in the future. It is my honor and privilege to serve you as President of the League of Women Voters of Texas.

Elaine Wiant
President and Chair

About Us

The League of Women Voters of Texas is a nonpartisan political organization. We **never** support or oppose political parties or candidates. We do promote informed and active participation in government and we influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League acts on issues after its members have studied the issue and adopted a position.

Membership in the League is open to all women and men. Voting members must be citizens 18 years of age or older. The LWV-TX includes 27 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, volunteers contribute tens of thousands of hours (worth more than \$1 million) to conduct issue studies, voter service projects, and advocacy based on League positions. Financial contributions to LWV-TX enable us to help local Leagues in their service to their communities and strengthen League advocacy efforts in the public interest.

LWV-TX is a 501(c)(4) advocacy and membership organization; 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 non-partisan, factual information about voting, government, and public policy to Texans. Contributions to the Education Fund support studies, publications, dissemination of information about issues that affect Texans, and projects to encourage and increase informed voting. Contributions also underwrite training and other services to strengthen local Leagues and ensure that League guidelines and nonpartisanship are upheld.

LWV-TEF is a 501(c)(3) citizen education and research organization. Donations to LWV-TEF are tax deductible as charitable contributions.



2013 - 2014 Board of Directors

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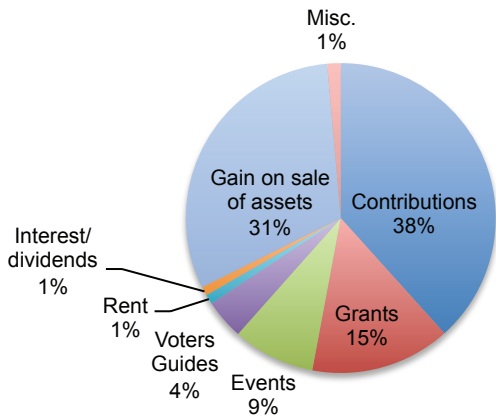
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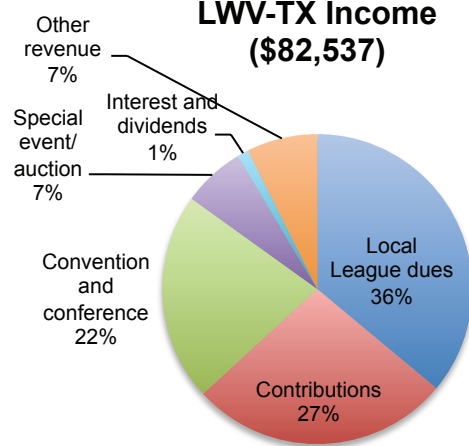
Financial Information

LWV-TX and LWV-TEF are both steadily growing with an eye towards the future in Texas. The work of both LWV-TX and LWV-TEF is critical in addressing the continued challenges to civic engagement. During this fiscal year, the sale of one of our office condo units and several bequests made significant contributions to the League's long-term financial stability. Contributions have been building since 2009, giving the League the necessary foundation to do this important work on the state level. We are grateful for the generous support of both members and non-members. Thank you!

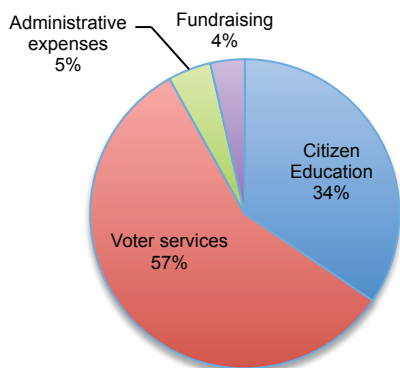
**LWV-TEF Income
(\$131,337)**



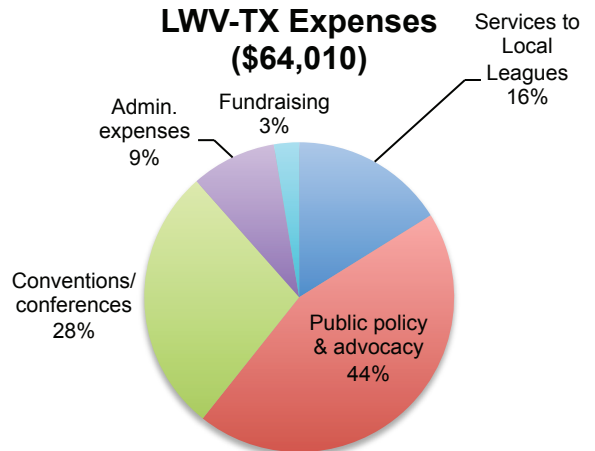
**LWV-TX Income
(\$82,537)**



**LWV-TEF Expenses
(\$108,273)**



**LWV-TX Expenses
(\$64,010)**



Citizen Education

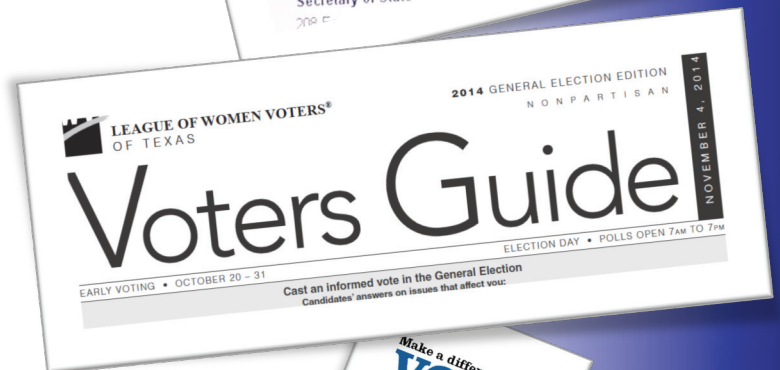
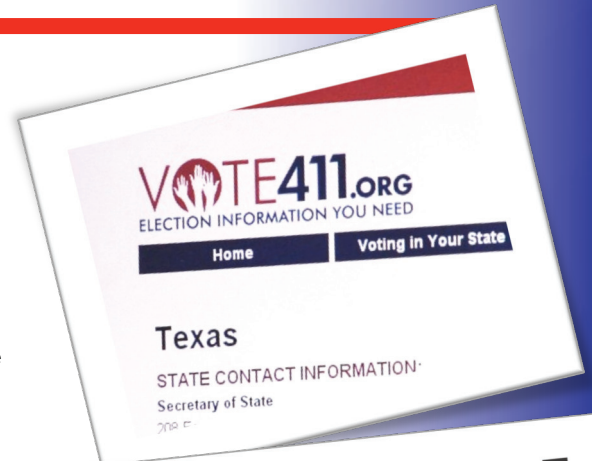
Citizen Education includes informing citizens about the voting process, the candidates, and the issues on the ballot (Project Voter), and the League's study of relevant topics leading to adoption of positions and advocacy (Project Citizen). This year was especially challenging due to the implementation of the photo ID law.

Project Voter

- Distributed *Voters Guides* in English and Spanish for the November 2013 Constitutional Amendment election. More than 669,000 *Guides* reached Texas voters. 287,600 printed *Voters Guides* were made available through local Leagues, LWV-TX, and newspapers, including 22,000 to 128 public libraries not served by local Leagues. 381,500 were downloaded from League websites.
- Distributed *Voters Guides* in English and Spanish for the 2014 primary and primary runoff elections. More than 1.5 million *Guides* reached Texas voters. 255,200 printed *Voters Guides* were made available through local Leagues, LWV-TX, and newspapers, including 22,000 to 128 public libraries not served by local Leagues. For the primary and primary runoff elections, the *Voters Guide* was downloaded 1,245,600 times from LWV websites.
- Helped fund statewide coverage of 2014 elections on VOTE411.org and supported participation by local Leagues in primary and local elections. The *Voters Guide* on VOTE411.org was viewed more than 12,000 times for the primary and primary runoff elections.
- Received LWVUS grant to expand distribution in English and Spanish of educational and voter materials, to increase voter registration and turnout, and to expand the voting population. Pass-through grants were awarded to six local Leagues for projects ranging from Spanish translation services to GOTV kits, printed materials on photo ID, voter registration drives and candidate forums.

Project Citizen

- Published a Facts and Issues, Human Trafficking in Texas, which is available on the LWV-TX website.
- Adopted a new position on human trafficking, based on year-long study and consensus, at convention in April 2014, which will be advocated during future Texas legislative sessions.
- Approved a new study of "Pay Day and Title Loans in Texas" at convention in April 2014, for completion by early 2015. A committee has begun research for a summer 2015 publication of a Facts and Issues on the subject.



Service to Local Leagues

The League of Women Voters of Texas' Service to Local Leagues team provides support to assist local Leagues' to recruit and retain members and to develop their members into active and effective community leaders. This includes formal and informal training, coaching, and access to tools and resources. 2013-14 was a year of many accomplishments for the Leagues in Texas! Service to Local League activities included:



- LWV-TX partnered with LWVUS and other state leagues on the Membership and Leadership Development Initiative (MLD) -- recruiting, matching and training state coaches to mentor local Leagues.
- 12 local Leagues participated in the Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) initiative – many significantly increasing their membership.
- Provided customized board training and leadership consultation to local Leagues.
- Provide 3 regional seminars in summer 2013 in Arlington, Kerrville, and Lubbock.
- Conducted workshops at LWV-Texas convention on Membership and Leadership Development (MLD).
- Recognized 50-year Leagues and 50-year members at the State Conference.
- Recognized local Leagues' accomplishments in membership growth, innovation, fundraising, and effective use of community resources at State Conference also.
- Highlighted accomplishments of local Leagues in the Texas VOTER and the monthly LWV-Texas information email.
- Increased access to current LWV-Texas publications by updating and posting them at www.lwvtexas.org
- Continued to host local League webpages at www.lwvtexas.org.
- Mentored individuals in several Texas communities in the process of organizing new local Leagues.
- Supported members-at-large through visits, calls, League advisors, and periodic mailings and publications.
- Several Leagues strategically streamlined their operations by expanding their geographic reach or merging with other Leagues. LWV-Arlington Area merged with LWV-Tarrant County; LWV-Plano/Collin County changed its name to LWV-Collin County to better reflect its county-wide focus

Advocacy in the Public Interest

Advocacy in 2013 focused on three Special Legislative Sessions and our successful support of Proposition 6—a Constitutional Amendment allowing for the transfer of \$2 billion from the Rainy Day Fund to the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas for use by the Texas Water Development Board.

Advocacy for Proposition 6 included:

- Working with other statewide groups
- Holding a press conference on Sept. 16, 2013 in Austin announcing our support of Proposition 6. TV coverage occurred in both Austin and Houston
- Including an article in the LWV-TX Voter to explain our support of Proposition 6
- Providing local Leagues with “Vote for H2O” wrist bands
- Providing local Leagues with background materials and a sample press release



Advocacy in the 2013 Special Sessions related to transportation and abortion. Issue chairs called legislators, wrote emails and testified, even after midnight. Unfortunately, new restrictive abortion legislation still passed, but the issue received world-wide attention. Legislation continues to be litigated in the courts, and this issue will be back.

A proposal for a constitutional amendment about transportation was added to the agenda. The proposal would divert one-half of the oil and gas production taxes to the State Highway Fund that would have gone to the Rainy Day Fund. It was passed by the voters in the November 4, 2014 General Election.

Other Advocacy Accomplishments:

- Followed developments on more than two dozen issues in four different areas: Government, Administration of Justice, Social Policy/Human Resources, and Natural Resources
- Worked to educate voters on the constantly-changing Voter ID requirements
- Tracked legislative priorities through interim legislative committees, the Sunset Commission and the Legislative Budget Board
- Presented comments to Interim Committees
- Updated members on advocacy at our state convention with three issue chair presentations and a workshop on the “Art of Advocacy”
- Worked in collaboration with other groups and organization in preparation for the 2015 Legislative Session.



Thank you to our Donors

*If we have made an error in recognizing
your support, we extend our sincere apologies.
Please notify our State Office at 512.472.1100.*

\$5,000 and Above

Dougherty Foundation
Estate of Gwen Essinger
Estate of Sondra Ferstl
Harold Simmons Foundation
Linda Krefting
League of Women Voters
Education Fund
Betty Sanders
Texas Bar Foundation

\$1,000 to \$4,999

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