



# League of Women Voters of Texas Impact Report

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## *Local Leagues of Texas*

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



*Over 95 Years of Making Democracy Work!*

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# Celebrating the Past, Embracing the Future



Voting is the most powerful tool we have to make our voice heard. It is the core of our democracy. Making Democracy Work® requires determination. The movement that fought for 80 years to secure the right to vote for women, founded the League of Women Voters to help new voters engage with their government. For 96 years the League of Women Voters of Texas has worked year after year to empower all eligible voters to participate in our political system. As we embrace the future, we realize that to accomplish our goals we must engage the public in new ways.

2015 has been a year of expanding our social media presence and branching out in new technologies. We are tweeting and pushing out posts on Facebook, Tumblr and Pinterest. Focusing on the public as our primary audience, we unveiled an updated website in October featuring videos, lots of photos, and new information for Texas voters. In addition to the traditional print and online versions, the 2015 Constitutional Amendment Voters Guide information was available on videos posted on YouTube and a smart phone application.

We made a difference! The turnout was just over 11% of registered voters – the highest turnout for a Constitutional Amendment election since 2005. Although 11% is certainly not something to celebrate, it is an improvement to be noted.

We will continue the fight in 2016. Through our unwavering commitment to Making Democracy Work®, the League is building on our legacy, empowering people to make their voices heard in the political process, and ensuring that our elections are free, fair and accessible for all voters.



PRESIDENT

“Everybody counts in applying democracy. And there will never be a true democracy until every responsible and law-abiding adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed has his or her own inalienable and unpurchasable voice in government.”

*Carrie Chapman Catt*



# The League 2014 • 2015

## AT A GLANCE

### WHO WE ARE

Women and men of all ages working to empower Texans to tackle the most important issues facing our communities and to work improve our state government and to shape better communities.

26 Leagues working throughout Texas in 35 of 36 Congressional Districts, 29 of 31 State Senate Districts and 146 of 150 State Representative Districts.

Our 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.

### OUR MISSION

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

### DISTRICTS WE COVER



Those districts which are *not* covered are shaded in dark gray.

### WHAT WE STAND FOR

We empower people at the local, state and national level to challenge obstacles to free, fair and accessible elections and advocate for public policies that reflect the needs of their communities.

The League of Women Voters of Texas never supports or opposes political parties or candidates.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Elaine Wiant, President
- Laura Blackburn
- Grace Chimene, RN, CPNP
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# Informing

## TEXAS VOTERS



### REACHING NEW VOTERS



- 1 National Voter Registration Day was a success for LWV - Tyler.
- 2 LWV - Comal assisted high school and college students with voter registration.
- 3 LWV - Irving and LWV - Houston registered over 24,000 new citizens this year.

- 4 During the September Houston Area Naturalization Ceremony, LWV - Houston immediately registered 1,103 new citizens as new voters.

Photo Credit: Tom Berg, VP for Civic Engagement, LWV-Houston Education Fund

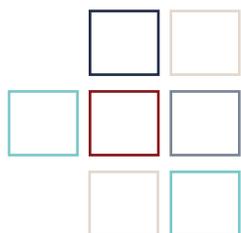
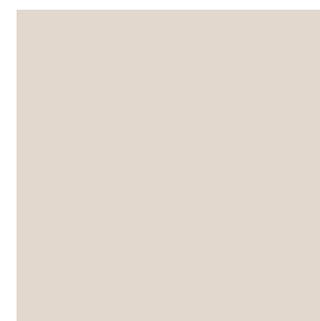


- 5 Social Media for the November 2015 Constitutional Amendment election garnered unprecedented voter attention: 23,000 Facebook hits, 12,000 Twitter "impressions," and 11,000 YouTube views.
- 6 More than 300,000 printed Voters Guides in English and Spanish reached Texas voters through local Leagues, LWV-Texas, and newspapers, including 22,000 to 128 public libraries not served by local Leagues.



■ Texans viewed the Voters Guides on VOTE411.org, LWV-Texas.org, and local league websites over 861,541 times. This was a tremendous increase from the 2012 election.

LWV-Texas awarded grants to six local Leagues to increase voter registration and turnout and to expand the voting population. Projects included Spanish translation services, GOTV (Get Out The Vote) kits, educational materials on photo ID, voter registration drives and candidate forums.



### LEARNING ABOUT ISSUES



- 7 The Texas League initiated a study on "Pay Day and Title Loans in Texas." The study focuses on the current regulations on payday and auto-title lenders in Texas and the accessibility and impact of these loans in the community. Researched by seven League members representing local Leagues throughout the state, the report is now available on our website.

# Advocacy

IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST



LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
VOTERS OF TEXAS

EXPERTISE, COMMUNICATION, COORDINATION &  
STRATEGIC ACTION ACHIEVE POSITIVE RESULTS

## 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature 140 Days

- Expertise** • 21 issue experts around Texas following 511 bills • Hosted legislative briefing on Online Voter Registration
- Coordination & Strategic Action** • Feb 13 Lobby Day –75 members came to Austin, braving ice storms and the coldest day of winter, to talk with their legislators • Issue experts report every 2 weeks • Issue experts draft testimony and 14 local Capitol Corps volunteers present testimony for 66 hearings • 398 personal constituent visits with legislators
- Communication** • 11 Legislative Newsletters with updates in 26 issue areas • 12 Action Alerts
- Results** • 160 bills of the 511 LWV-TX was following were successfully passed or defeated, for a 31% success rate



### Online Voter Registration

As of October 2015, 26 states plus DC have implemented Online Voter Registration (OVR). Three more states have passed OVR, but have not yet implemented it. LWV Texas made progress in the 84th Texas Legislative Session in educating legislators on the benefits of modernizing

the voter registration system. The League hosted a Legislative Briefing featuring an expert from the Pew Charitable Trust. Rep. Celia Israel's bill, HB 76, had 75 co-authors. In addition to the visits with House Elections Committee members, the League also initiated a collaborative Facebook and Twitter presence to promote OVR education and advocacy. The Online Voter Registration in Texas Facebook page has almost 1,400 "likes." These direct outreach efforts and social media postings contributed significantly to the turnout of 89 individuals in support of OVR at the Elections Committee hearing. During the Interim, the League will continue to promote OVR by reaching out to legislators in their home offices.



**LOBBY DAYS**  
Despite winter storms, over 75 Leaguers came from around the state to learn about the issues and lobby our legislators.

Our priority  
issues in  
2015

EDUCATION

ELECTION  
LAWS •  
TEXAS  
VOTING  
RIGHTS

WOMEN'S  
HEALTH

WATER

# Local Leagues

IN ACTION

## DALLAS



■ One hundred and sixty two third grade boys and girls at the International Leadership School in Garland, learned the history of government – from the time of the pharaohs, up to our modern American democracy – then voted in a mock election. There was 100% voter turnout! They also learned what would have happened if some of them had skipped the election because they forgot or didn't think it was important - a different person won! They promised to remind their parents to vote in the upcoming election if they were eligible.

## COLLIN COUNTY



■ More than 100 LWV members, mayors, council members, commissioners, city managers, and other city and county staff celebrated the leadership of eight Collin County women in public administration at a luncheon in March.

## AUSTIN AREA



■ The Austin Area moderated 21 candidate forums in the months leading to the November 4 election. This represented 98 candidates vying for the Austin Independent School District Board, the Austin Community College Board and the first single member districts of the Austin City Council.

## HOUSTON AREA



■ The LWV-HA “Rising Star” group organized a big push to register Houston area high students. Committed to the goals of the League, these young professionals were able to register students in HISD and other 4 area school districts!

## BAY AREA



■ Diane Sheridan, Peggy Hill and Laura Blackburn attending the LWVUS national convention.



LWV-Texas' twelve seasoned Leaguers employed monthly coaching sessions on ways to leverage their community forums and events to generate even more visibility and more members.

League members gathered in San Antonio, Irving and Lubbock to share best practices, discuss ways to promote the state study on Payday Lending and Auto Title Loans in Texas, and strategize about increasing voter turnout in Texas.

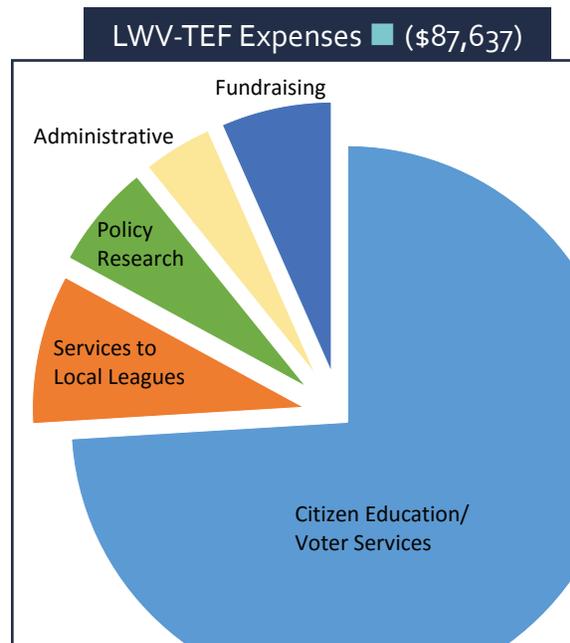
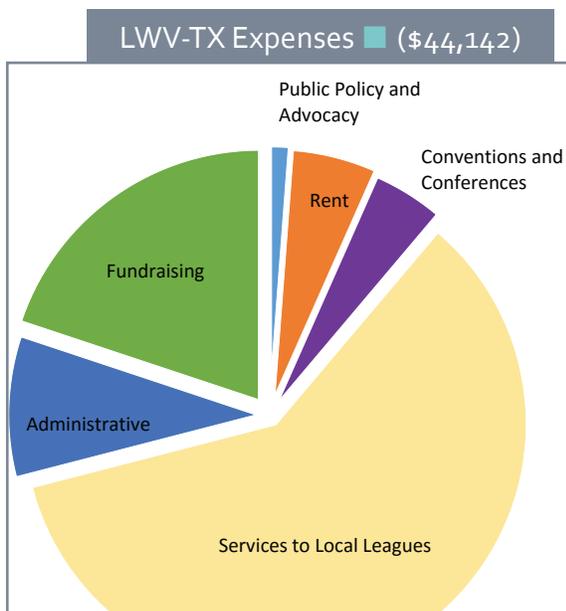
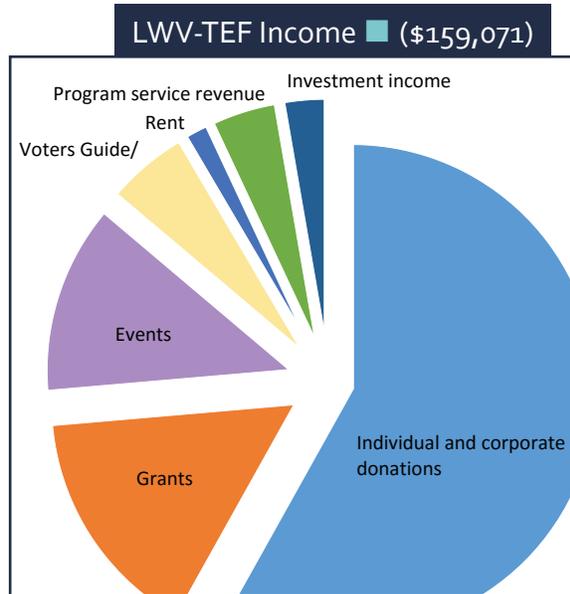
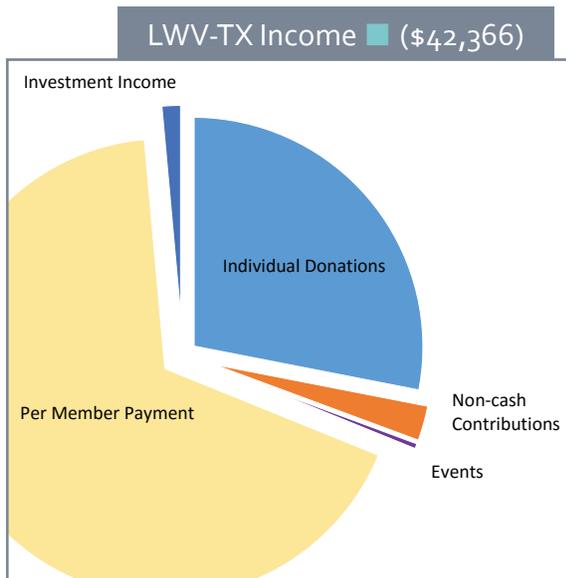
PHOTO: LWV members from Lubbock, Midland, and Amarillo strategizing and planning at Regional Training.

# Financial

## INFORMATION

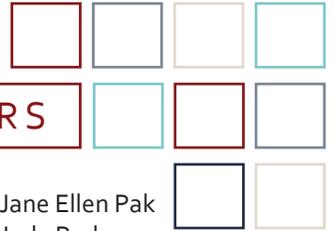
LWV-TX is a 501 (c)(4) non-profit, non-partisan political organization that promotes participation in government and seeks to influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League neither supports nor opposes political parties or candidates. Neither LWV-TX dues nor contributions may be deducted as charitable donations.

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



# Thank you

## TO ALL OF OUR DONORS



### \$10,000 & above

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LWVUS

### \$4,000 - \$9,999

Estate of John Johnson  
Betty Sanders  
Elaine Wiant

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