



# OHIO VOTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OHIO **WINTER 2015**

**Attend LWVO's 61st State Convention!**  
**1920 to 2015: Celebrating 95 years of**  
**Empowering Voters and Better Government**

**WHEN:** May 15-17, 2015 (Friday-Sunday)

**WHERE:** Downtown Cincinnati at the Hyatt Regency Cincinnati, 151 West Fifth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

**THEME:** 1920 to 2015: Celebrating 95 years of Empowering Voters and Better Government

## **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

Friday, May 15

- Evening – Welcome Reception with appetizers & cash bar at Hyatt Regency
- Dinner on your own – Convention Committee is planning event sign-ups for group outings & list of things to do around town

Saturday, May 16

- 9:00-11:15am Concurrent Workshops
- 11:30am-12:45pm Welcome lunch with speaker
- 1:00-4:00pm Plenary I
- 4:15-5:15pm Concurrent Workshops
- 6:00-8:00pm Dinner Banquet with Keynote Speaker, to be held in the Continental Ballroom of the Hilton Netherland Plaza
- Late evening Caucus Meetings (workshop rooms may be reserved in advance)

Sunday, May 17

- 8:00-8:45am Continental breakfast & tables of interest
- 9:00-10:00am Concurrent Workshops
- 10:15am-1:00pm Plenary II
- Adjourn (lunch on your own)

## **Invitation to 2015 LWVO Convention**

From Helen and Don Rhoad, Co-Presidents, LWVCA

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area, we are delighted to invite you to join us in Cincinnati for the 2015 LWV Ohio Convention on May 15-17 (Friday-Sunday) at the Hyatt Regency Cincinnati, 151 West Fifth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

Here are some of the reasons you should attend:

- Help celebrate **LWVO's 95th anniversary!**
- Attend the plenary sessions featuring **noteworthy and thought-provoking headline speakers!**
- Participate in **a diverse array of workshops** where you can hear what others are doing and share your own comments as well!

Make this **a family trip!** The Southwest Ohio area offers many diverse activities that you'll want to experience and enjoy. We'll send more information soon about your options.

When we made our surprise marching-band pitch at the last Convention to come to Cincinnati this year, we committed to make this event a stimulating and memorable experience. Our Convention Planning team, led by Nancy Dawley and in collaboration with LWVO, has been hard at work to ensure that your attendance at the 2015 LWVO Convention will be the best ever.

So save the dates, make your reservations, and get ready for a marvelous weekend in Cincinnati! Visit the LWVO website at [www.lwvohio.org](http://www.lwvohio.org) or call the state office at 614-469-1505 for registration and hotel information. Looking forward to seeing you in May!



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## Register Today for LWVO Convention!

**Online Registration is Open! Visit us at [www.lwvohio.org](http://www.lwvohio.org).**

If you do not have internet access, please call the LWV Ohio office at 614-469-1505 to register.

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### Registration Fees:

**Whole Weekend - \$150 Saturday only - \$100 Sunday only - \$50**

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### Meal Tickets:

**Friday Pre- Convention Meet and Greet - \$30**

**Saturday Keynote Luncheon - \$35**

**Saturday Keynote Dinner - \$45**

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### Promotions:

**Early Bird Discount:** \$5 off if you register before **April 15th**.

**Student and New Member Discount:** \$5 off for students and new members who joined within the last 12 months or join at Convention.

**Registration closes on Friday, May 8th: There will be an additional late fee of \$20 starting May 8th, including for walk-ins.**

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### Hotel Information:

LWVO has negotiated a special room rate at the Hyatt Regency where we are holding Convention:

\$139 for single, double, triple, or quadruple occupancy. Free WiFi.

Convention attendees must make their own reservations at the hotel.

**Please note: The cut-off for our special rate is on Wednesday, April 15.**



## LWV Ohio Monthly All- Member Calls

Get involved from the comfort of your home or office!

The state League hosts a conference call on the first Tuesday of every month. Much like tele-townhalls, 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:

**Calls occur on the first Tuesday of each month**

**at 12:00 PM (noon) until 1:00 PM**

**Call (toll-free): 866-740-1260**

**Enter PIN Number: 4691505#**

Each month features a different topic. Previous call topics have included education funding, redistricting reform, voter protection, campaign finance, and fracking. Check the state League website – [www.lwvohio.org](http://www.lwvohio.org) – for next month's call topic.

## Come to LWV Ohio Statehouse Day!

Join us for the LWV Ohio Statehouse Day on Tuesday, **March 31, 2015**. Workshops and sessions will be held at the Riffe Center, and the keynote luncheon will be held in the Statehouse Atrium.

We will have a day full of wonderful speakers including our keynote speaker, Professor Erin O'Brien. The title of her talk is "Turning Empty into Half Full: Why States Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies and the Promising State-level Reforms that Increase Turnout."



League members may remember Dr. O'Brien from the excellent presentation she gave at the LWVUS Convention in Dallas last summer. Dr. O'Brien is Chair and Associate Professor of Political Science at University of Massachusetts Boston as well as co-director of the Boston Chapter of the Scholar Strategy Network. Her research and teaching interests focus on voting access policymaking in the United States, the politics of poverty and social welfare policy, and gender in political participation and representation. She is also a regular commentator on American politics and public policy for outlets including NPR, Christian Science Monitor, Real Clear Politics, New England Cable News (NECN), The Boston Globe, Boston Herald, and SIRIUS Radio's POTUS channel.

All Statehouse Day attendees will have the option of requesting a meeting with their legislator through the LWVO office and can be teamed up for the meeting with a member of the Lobby Corps, if desired. A detailed Statehouse Day agenda will be available soon at [www.lwvohio.org](http://www.lwvohio.org). You can RSVP online at [www.lwvohio.org](http://www.lwvohio.org) or complete the form below and return it to the State office.

### LWV Ohio Statehouse Day – Tuesday, March 31, 2015 – Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Local League \_\_\_\_\_

Fee: ☐ \$40 Member ☐ \$45 Non-member ☐ \$25 student

Lunch ☐ Yes ☐ No Note: This will help ensure we have an accurate count for lunches.

Special dietary needs (e.g., Vegetarian) \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to meet with your legislator? ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Please make checks payable to LWVO and send this form with payment to:**  
**LWV Ohio • 17 South High Street, Suite 650 • Columbus, Ohio 43215**  
**For information call: (614) 469-1505**

## See Your League Grow in Members and Leaders – Join the Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) Program Today!

Wish your League could spread the workload around more? Wish there were more trained League leaders available to step up? Wish your League could do all it wants to do to be a vibrant part of your community?

Your League can make those wishes come true! The LWV Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) program – a program proven to be successful in membership recruitment and retention, leadership development, and sparking renewed energy in many Leagues — is now accepting applications for 2015-2017 on a first-come, first-served basis.

### What is the MLD Program?

The foundation of the MLD program is a strong partnership among the 3 levels of League:

-- Local Leagues' MLD Teams -- State MLD Coaching Team -- LWVUS MLD Coaching Team

Here's what participants are saying about the MLD Program:

"The MLD experience was a light bulb moment for us--providing focus and tools for membership development. We started asking our friends and neighbors, and inviting the community to join at our events and, surprisingly, the memberships started rolling in." **Susan Hesselgesser, Executive Director, LWV Greater Dayton Area**

"MLD has provided the Tallmadge League with an opportunity to develop ideas to grow our local League with the help of our MLD liaison. We have benefited from her sharing how other Leagues are increasing membership and look forward to developing the leadership component of the program." **Tammy Shomo, President, LWV Tallmadge**

"A key benefit of the MLD program is that it provides participating Leagues with strategies and resources to support and train new League leaders so that they have the experience and confidence to take on enhanced leadership roles." **Nancy Brown, President, LWV Ohio**

**We invite Leagues not yet in the MLD Program to join** and learn effective and easy-to-use best practices that make a League's impact stronger through membership growth / retention and leadership development. **The deadline for applications is March 27<sup>th</sup>.**

**Participating Leagues receive ongoing coaching and support from the LWV Ohio coaches. A training April 17-18 will provide new MLD teams with the opportunity to work directly with their coaches and receive information and tools** to recruit new members, engage current members, develop new leaders and become more visible in the community. Lodging, meals and materials for the training will be provided at no cost to your League except for a registration fee of \$25 per MLD Team member. *Note:* Teams of Leagues already participating in MLD are encouraged to join in the MLD training on Saturday, April 18 (mid-morning to mid-afternoon) at no charge.

The League of Women Voters has never been more needed – and growing our membership and developing leaders will increase Leagues' impact in our communities. Applications for interested Leagues and more information about the MLD program are available on the LWV Ohio website ([www.lwvohio.org](http://www.lwvohio.org)) in the Member Area or from LWV Ohio Executive Director Carrie Davis at [cdavis@lwvohio.org](mailto:cdavis@lwvohio.org) or 614.469-1505. **The deadline for applying is March 27, 2015** — and applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

## The MLD Coaching Team Wants You!

Imagine if you joined an outstanding League team that . . .

- Helps Leagues grow in membership and funding;
- Helps Leagues with support, ideas and guidance;
- Helps League leaders with training and mentoring before they lead; and
- Helps Leagues' voice become as strong and powerful as possible!

You can!! LWV Ohio is now recruiting League members to join the phenomenal Ohio coaching team for 2015-2017. Each coach acts as a mentor, cheerleader and communicator to two local Leagues — with a total monthly time commitment of about eight hours per month working with their MLD teams and the state coaches, primarily via conference calls.

“It’s a lot of fun to help a local League work on their plan for new members and mentoring new leaders, and I get to celebrate with them as they grow. I’m lucky to be an MLD coach and recommend coaching to anyone who enjoys being part of a team.” **Marlene Muse, MLD Coach from LWV Cincinnati Area**

“The two MLD teams I coach have accepted the challenge to be intentional with planning and to implement proven tools in order to enhance League membership, leadership and visibility. Together we benefit League with our caring, sharing and most importantly, with our humor. MLD coaching is a worthwhile effort that delivers measureable improvements and overall benefit for League. I always get more from it than I give.” **Pat Simons, MLD Coach from LWV Hudson**

Those joining the MLD coaching team this spring will receive training April 17-18 in Columbus (mid-morning, Friday to mid-afternoon, Saturday) with hotel and meal expenses covered by LWV Ohio.

An overview of the MLD program, the coaches' role and the application to become an MLD coach (with specific responsibilities outlined) are available on the LWV Ohio website ([www.lwvohio.org](http://www.lwvohio.org)) in the Member Area or from LWV Ohio Executive Director Carrie Davis at 614.469.1505. You may also contact Carrie with questions or for further information.

Join the Ohio MLD Coaching Team and help Leagues grow!

## Current MLD Teams: Save the Date – Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>!

LWV Ohio invites all current MLD team members \* to reconnect face-to-face with their coaches and other MLD teams to share their experiences, problem solve, and discuss diversification strategies -- as well as learn from, laugh with and become re-energized by each other.

All members of 2013-2015 local MLD Teams are invited to “MLD Renewal Day” on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, from mid-morning to mid-afternoon in Columbus.

Current MLD team members will receive more information in February – but please save the date and plan on joining us in Columbus on April 18<sup>th</sup> for an informative and fun day. Participation is free and LWV Ohio will provide teams with lunch and materials. Questions? Contact LWV Ohio Executive Director Carrie Davis at [cdavis@lwvohio.org](mailto:cdavis@lwvohio.org) or 614.469.1505.

\* Current MLD teams include those from LWV Chillicothe-Ross County, Cincinnati Area, Clermont County, Greater Cleveland, Metro Columbus, Greater Dayton, Delaware County, Hudson, Kent, Lake County, Marion, N. Portage County, Oxford, Tallmadge, Toledo-Lucas County, Wayne County, and Greater Youngstown.



## Annual Campaign 2015

It's that time again! But this year, we aim to keep our campaign short and sweet. It will begin on March 1st and end March 31st. The State League depends heavily on the support of individual donors to continue our critical work. We have not raised membership dues in 5 years, and the only way we can continue to keep dues affordable is with the generous support of our donors large and small throughout the year. Foundation support has been on the decline nationwide and here in Ohio and we depend on YOU, our donors, to keep us strong.

We especially need your help this year on our advocacy, or 'O', side to continue our critical work on redistricting. Please help us pass State Issue #1 on the fall ballot to reform state legislative districting. We have come so far, now we need a concerted effort in the home stretch. And remember, we will also be advocating for a fix on Congressional redistricting. Also, as the new two-year session of the Ohio Legislature begins, we will be hard at work lobbying on LWVO positions including free, fair and accessible elections.

Our work on the education front continues as well. We want to know what Ohioans expect from our public education system. To that end, we are partnering with the Akron Beacon Journal and local leagues to produce a series of community education forums around the state in 2015.

Did you know that 3 out of 5 people in Ohio report they don't have enough information to make a good choice when voting for judges? Also this year, we will be launching the next phase of our judicial education project. We are partnering with the Ohio Supreme Court, the Ohio State Bar Association, and the Bliss Institute for Applied Politics.

These are a sampling of the many exciting and important projects that are going on at the state level. We greatly appreciate your support at whatever level you are able to give.

### 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

Thank you!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to:  
League of Women Voters of Ohio  
17 S. High Street, Suite 650  
Columbus, OH 43215

## New Developments in Judicial Voter Education & Reform

By Nancy G. Brown, LWVO Judicial Lobbyist

The League has joined with the Ohio Supreme Court, the Ohio State Bar Association and the Bliss Institute of the University of Akron in an effort to develop a statewide judicial voter guide that will provide information about all judicial candidates in the State. In addition, the Guide, which will be housed on a website at the University of Akron, will provide information about the courts. This information will be available for use in League voter service including Voters' Guides. It is hard to vote intelligently for a judge for a particular court, such as probate or appellate court, without a basic understanding of what these courts do.

In conjunction with this effort, the Bliss Institute conducted a poll of Ohio voters. The poll found that three fifths of registered voters said that the major reason that they didn't vote for judges was because of lack of information about the candidates. A site where this information is readily available should be welcomed, although there will be a challenge to publicize it and make it user friendly. The poll also indicated considerable interest by many Ohioans in considering other ways of selecting judges, suggesting that Ohioans may not be as wedded to judicial elections as some have assumed.

The League has long sought to change the way Ohioans select their judges and the polling results coupled with the growing problem of money has encouraged us to renew our efforts. The ramification of money in politics extends far beyond the judiciary, but it is particularly pernicious when it relates to judges because it undermines their independence in appearance if not in fact.

In February we convened a meeting with interested parties, including the Chief Justice and other representatives of the Supreme Court, the Ohio State Bar Association, the Bliss Institute and various national groups active in judicial reform, including Justice at Stake, the Piper Fund and the Brennan Center.

The upshot of the meeting is that we intend to meet with various stakeholders around the State who might be interested in some aspect of judicial reform, be it appointment retention elections or some of the other alternatives which might improve the current situation, such as a commission to screen judicial candidates, enhanced disclosure coupled with stricter recusal rules, or private financing. Reform will not be accomplished overnight, but we are hopeful that a long term strategic effort can produce results.

## LWVO Supports Redistricting Reform on Fall 2015 Ballot

By Ann Henkener, LWVO Redistricting Specialist

At its January meeting, the LWVO board discussed the redistricting reform measure (HJR12) that was passed by the legislature in December. The LWVO Board voted to support the redistricting reform proposal that will be on the November 2015 ballot as Issue 1.

The proposal meets many of the criteria in the LWVO position:

- LWVO's position on redistricting calls for a bi-partisan redistricting board. The proposal calls for a redistricting commission made up of the Governor, Auditor, Secretary of State and 2 majority party appointees and 2 minority party appointees. There must be bi-partisan approval of any plan that is to last for the entire decade. This is a big step forward because not only is the commission bi-partisan, but there is a requirement that both parties approve the maps.
- LWVO's position encourages citizen participation. The proposal calls for 3 public hearings around the state to seek input after the commission selects proposed maps and before it makes final selections. It also requires that all meetings be open to the public and that they be broadcast electronically in a medium readily accessible by the general public.
- LWVO's position calls for districts to be compact and follow local political boundaries as much as possible. The proposal strictly requires districts to be within a single county or to be made up of people in counties next to each other. If that isn't possible, the commission must respect municipal, township and ward boundaries. This should produce districts that make more sense to voters who are already familiar with the local political boundaries.

There is bi-partisan support for this proposal. The League is looking forward to working with traditional coalition partners, as well as other supporters of the ballot issue, in educating voters about the way this proposal could give us representatives who better reflect voters' political values.

It should be noted that Issue 1 only addresses how districts are drawn for the Ohio Legislature, not Congress. The League will continue to work for Congressional redistricting.



## From the President's Desk

*Nancy G. Brown*

The League can play a significant role both in informing Ohioans and encouraging discussion of key issues that affect Ohioans. One such issue is public education. Over the years, efforts by the League and others to address problems with the funding of public education in Ohio produced victories in the Court, but regrettably did not translate into solutions to the problems of unequal access to education and inadequate education for many Ohio children. These problems are still with us. Recent years have seen different funding formulas, the expansion of testing, and the explosion of “public” charter schools, with little oversight as to how funds are used or how well Ohio’s children are being educated.

In an effort to foster discussion of the issues facing public education today, Leagues around the State, in conjunction with the Akron Beacon Journal and journalism students, will be hosting public forums on education. The forums will first address the purpose of education and what should be the role of government. We will then consider that we mean by public education – from traditional schools to vocational schools to charter schools, etc., and who should set the standards. And finally, we will look at what expectations and accountability should apply to all the different types of schools that receive public money. These forums will be conducted by trained volunteer League facilitators.

It is our hope that these forums will be publicized widely and will be attended by a large spectrum of the community offering an opportunity for local Leagues to reach new audiences. And we envision that many local Leagues may consider this merely the first step in an effort to educate members and their communities about the problems facing education in Ohio. We hope to have the first forums in the spring with additional forums in the fall. If your League is not yet involved and is interested in participating, it is not too late. Please contact Carrie at the LWVO office ([cdavis@lwvohio.org](mailto:cdavis@lwvohio.org) or 614-469-1505) for more information.

Of course, our efforts are not confined to discussion. The League is reviewing the Governor’s budget proposal and we plan to use our positions on education to lobby for improvements. This is one of our priority areas and will get attention over the next few months. We also have a small task force considering the specific steps that the League can take using its existing education position to advocate effectively to address problems with charter schools in Ohio.

If advocacy is your passion or you just want to learn more about what is going on in the legislature, consider joining the Lobby Lunch calls from 12 to 1 on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Lobby Lunch has met in Columbus for years, but we have recently recognized that few Leaguers can attend an hour meeting in Columbus, Ohio. By making Lobby Lunch a phone call rather than an in person meeting, it is now open to all League members from Marietta to Toledo. Please call the office if you want to be notified of upcoming Lobby Lunches.





*Carrie L. Davis*

## Executive Director's Column: Celebrating 95 Years of the League of Women Voters

On February 14, 1920, the League of Women Voters was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt during National American Woman Suffrage Association convention. Six months later the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, giving women the right to vote after a 72-year struggle. The Ohio League of Women Voters will also celebrate our 95<sup>th</sup> birthday this year, on May 5. Throughout the year, we will highlight some of League's more notable accomplishments.

### Here are some fun facts about the League's first 95 years

- The League was founded by suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt and was charged with “finish[ing] the fight” to ensure that every eligible voter has free and fair access to the polls.
- Another of the League's early leaders was Eleanor Roosevelt, who helped establish the first policy agenda. As the League's Vice President of Legislative Affairs, she lobbied for reforms in Congress and worked tirelessly to strengthen women's role in politics, helping mobilize women voters through the League's nonpartisan training and lobbying work. “I've always found that the best workers in a political party frequently are graduates of the League of Women Voters,” she wrote in 1953.
- The League's first major advocacy success was passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921, a groundbreaking law providing federal funding for maternity and child care.
- Following World War II, the League helped lead the effort to establish the United Nations. The League of Women Voters was one of the first organizations in the country officially recognized by the United Nations as a non-governmental organization, and we maintain an official observer U.N. status today.
- In 1952, the League joined NBC and Life magazine in sponsoring the first-ever televised U.S. presidential debate. We served as the official presidential debate sponsor from 1976-1984.
- McCarthyism and the witch hunt period of the 1950s inspired the League to help educate Americans on their individual rights and liberties as guaranteed by the Constitution. LWVUS President Percy Maxim Lee testified before Congress in 1955 against Senator Joseph McCarthy's abuse of congressional investigative powers. “I believe tolerance and respect for the opinions of others is being jeopardized by men and women whose instincts are worthily patriotic, but whose minds are apparently unwilling to accept the necessity for dissent within a democracy.”
- Between 1950 and 1970, the League increased its effectiveness in regard to both public education and advocacy, prompting Senator George Aiken to remark, “Only 135,000 of them? I thought there were millions.”

Sources: “10 Ways the League of Women Voters Has Helped Improve Our Country” originally posted on the LWVUS blog at <http://lww.org/blog/10-ways-league-women-voters-has-helped-improve-our-country>; “The League of Women Voters Through the Decades!” available online at <http://library.lww.org/content/league-women-voters-through-decades>; “Eleanor Roosevelt: First Lady, League Leader, Pioneer” available online at <http://lww.org/blog/eleanor-roosevelt-first-lady-league-leader-pioneer>

## Thank You to All of Our Donors!

A sincere thank you from all of us at LWVO to each and every donor who gave to support both our Women's Equality Day and End of Year Campaign in 2014! Every single dollar contributed helps us continue our critical voter education and advocacy work.

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## To Get More From LWV OHIO in 2015

1.

### CHECK OUT THE MEMBER AREA OF [www.lwvohio.org](http://www.lwvohio.org)

You will find recent Ohio League Leader Updates and important information for local Leagues and members.

2.

### JOIN THE CONVERSATION

The first Tuesday of every month at noon, join us for an all-member conference call to discuss an issue of importance to the League with members across the state. Topics have included redistricting, money in politics and education funding.

3.

### BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ACTION ALERTS AND E-NEWS UPDATES!

All League members receive E-News updates to keep them connected to the work of LWV Ohio. Periodically, when legislation or policy is on the move, LWV Ohio will reach out to you and your local League to take action. We count on you to amplify the voice of LWV Ohio with your phone calls, emails and letters.

4.

### SIGN UP FOR THE LEAGUE LEADER UPDATES

The League Leader Updates, LWVO's monthly e-newsletter filled with updates on everything from membership to advocacy to finance/grant opportunities to voters' service to upcoming events, is now accessible to **all** League members. Simply email [lwvinfo@lwvohio.org](mailto:lwvinfo@lwvohio.org) or call 614-469-1505 to subscribe.

5.

### "LIKE" US ON FACEBOOK AND "FOLLOW US" ON TWITTER

LWV Ohio posts breaking news and member updates on Facebook and Twitter regularly. Get news quickly and easily share it with your friends and network.

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