



DELAWARE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Delaware

Fall 2015
President: Jill A. Fuchs

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www.lwvdelaware.org

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

League Of Women Voters
HOLIDAY LUNCHEON
COME ONE COME ALL

December 11, 2015 from 11:00 to 2:00
Looking Glass Restaurant at POLY TECH
823 Walnut Shade Rd, Woodside, DE

**A STATEWIDE FUN EVENT FOR
NEW CASTLE, KENT AND
SUSSEX LEAGUES**

**A perfect holiday venue to socialize with current League
members and introduce friends and family to League**

Holiday Buffet ~ \$25.00

<i>Crab Imperial</i>	<i>Tossed Salad, Hot Vegetable, Rolls,</i>
<i>Chicken Marsala</i>	<i>Fruit Bowl, Assorted Desserts</i>
<i>Vegetarian Baked Ziti</i>	<i>And Beverage</i>

----- Clip here -----

Send check to LWVDC to Christine Stillson by **Dec 4, 2015**
138 W. Camden Wyoming Ave, Wyoming, DE 19934
Contacts: 697-8600 ~ <mailto:clstillson@verizon.net>

Name(s): _____

Payment enclosed @ \$25.00 per guest \$ _____

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Fellow League Members: As we approach the Holidays I am reminded of how generous you all are with the amount of time and service you give to League business. There are so many different issues that you take an active role in striving to make Delaware a better place to live.

New Castle, Kent and Sussex county Leagues are in the process of conducting two major studies. It is my hope that the results of these two studies yield a path to definitive action for all Leagues around the country.

The attacks taking place around the country on our voting process which is limiting rather than adding voting opportunity to our fellow Americans cannot be ignored.

Left: Jill Fuchs holding the Public Service Achievement Award that the LWV of Delaware and its local Leagues received at Common Cause of Delaware Tribute Awards Dinner 11.19.2015.

The lack of humane policies in so many areas of government concerns us all. Improving environmental, social and judicial justice are goals we strive to achieve. You are making a difference. You should stand tall in the knowledge that you are taking action and continue to fight the good fight.

When I accepted the role of President I had several issues I hoped we could focus on:

- I recognize the need for Civic Education given the amount of distortion regarding the facts of our country that are taking place today. Our goal of achieving a grant to bring adult classes to all three counties is a great start.
- I want to ask what we can do to restore faith in our democratic process and how to motivate every registered voter to exercise their right to vote and to believe that we can make a difference.
- I wanted to promote fellowship among all three Leagues. Hence our Holiday Luncheon. This affords members from all over the state to enjoy an afternoon of fellowship and have an opportunity to hear about the various projects that are going on around our State. You may find a topic that you are passionate about that is being addressed in another county that you could join.
- Make your reservation for December 11th The Looking Glass Restaurant at Polytech.

In Service,

Jill A Fuchs, President

LWVDE Acting on Public Policy Issues

Advocacy Corps Update



- **Gun violence:** At a recent meeting, George Higgins, executive director of the Coalition against Gun Violence, attended to brief the AC on two bills related to gun safety including better collection of evidence (bullet casings) in gun related crimes where there is no victim. Typically, police don't bother to collect that evidence, but casings can be identified in a federal database that helps solve cold cases. Another bill would make it a crime if guns in the home are not secured so that children and persons prohibited from owning them can access them. LWVDE is supporting both. The Coalition coordinated legislative efforts last spring resulting in passage of SS1 for SB 83, that protects victims of domestic violence. Sandy testified in favor of the bill in June.

Land Use/Transportation: Successful Panel on Port Expansion was held in Wilmington

Longshoremen's Hall. A stimulating evening of presentations and questions and answers was enjoyed by about 85 people, on the topic, "Perspectives on Expansion of Delaware Ports." Able panelists included John Flaherty, President of the Delaware Coalition for Open Government (facilitator), Gene Bailey, Administrator of the Port of Wilmington (long-term contract), Dr. Mike Casson, Director of the University Center for Economic Development & International Trade (economic considerations), Dave Carter, President of the Delaware Audubon Society

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(environmental considerations, including Coastal Zone Act), Bob Byrd, lobbyist with the Byrd Group (Evrz site), Sen. Bob Marshall, Chair of the Senate Labor & Industrial Relations Committee (current Port of Wilmington site), Kimoko Harris, Business Agent with ILA Local 1883 (RiverEdge site). Following nine-minute presentations by each panelist, written questions were submitted to Mr. Flaherty, the facilitator, who in turn asked one or more of the panelists to respond. Mr. Byrd shares the following link to development of the Evraz site

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IArW8n7Vyko> Dave Carter has shared these documents. Summary of program can be found at www.lwvdelaware.com.



- Peggy Schultz also presented a **statement to the Open Space Council** in September addressing a **revision of the Land Protection Action Standards and Criteria**. “We believe that the effects of sea level rise on all properties currently designated as SRAs [State Resource Areas] and all properties proposed for designation as SRAs ought to be considered through careful examination of DNREC’s inundation maps. Any lands which will be inundated under the most conservative of the scenarios ought to be removed from the SRA list/maps.”
- Sandy Spence **testified at Office of Management & Budget hearings for the Court System and the Department of Elections**. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Leo Strine, focused on requests for pay fairness by converting part-time employees (who do not get benefits) but work full-time hours to full-time status, stable technology funding, and capital funds to new Family Courthouses in Kent and Sussex Counties. He expressed concern that in recent years, the Judiciary has had to increase fees to support operations, stating that “Justice is not optional.” Based on an LWVDE position calling for uniformity in the operation of the Family Court System, Sandy supported the capital request. She also urged expansion of drug and mental health courts for all non-violent offenders based on another LWVDE position.
- At the **Department of Elections budget hearing, Commissioner Elaine Manlove described continuing progress in operations of the Department due to in-house technology improvements**. Under legislation enacted in 2014, the Department now oversees the three county offices. She said budget increases were needed only for election-related expenses and a rent-escalator. Sandy spoke up to commend the agency, pointing out that Delaware has achieved near universal registration through systems set up to accept digital transmission of registrations from the Department of Motor Vehicles and state service agencies. These systems have enabled Delaware to register 90% of eligible voters, comparable to the highly touted universal registration programs in Oregon and California.
- President Jill Fuchs joined several other **state presidents in signing on to a statement by LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and its Science Advisory Board on the Assessment of the Potential Impacts of Hydraulic Fracturing for Oil and Gas on Drinking Water Resources**. The statement pointed out that “As hydraulic fracturing has expanded throughout our country, communities have been forced to make decisions without access to reliable information about the potential risks to health, safety and the environment. The research reported in this draft is not the comprehensive and definitive study Congress funded in 2010.” The statement urged the Advisory Panel to restore integrity to the final report and to its legacies by implementing several League recommendations.
- In other actions, Leslie Ledogar is **monitoring progress of a Clean Water Task Force** set up under Senate Concurrent Resolution 30, Linda Barnett is representing the League in an **Advisory Group strategizing on the continuing effort to repeal the death penalty**, Letty Diswood has worked with Mickey McKay to develop a small format version of the **LWVDE Policy Positions**, and several League members attended both a hearing of the **Access to Justice Council** set up by Chief Justice Strine and a day-long conference sponsored by the **Coalition to Dismantle the New Jim Crow**, both at the Chase Center in Wilmington.

Help Wanted!

Do you have an interest in the financial health of the LWV of Delaware? We are looking for a person to chair this committee. To find out what this committee does call Jill Fuchs at 302-300-8171 email: jillandkenny@verizon.net.

A LWV of Delaware Campaign Finance Committee has been formed to educate members and work to reform Delaware's campaign finance system. They are seeking members from LWNCC, LWVNC and LWVSC. Please contact Nancy Powell at powellnanc@gmail.com if you are interested.

THE FOCUS IS ON JUSTICE ISSUES IN DELAWARE

Save the date! League Day in Dover March 23, 2016. Plans are underway for next year's lobby day in Dover. That day will focus on priority criminal/racial justice issues such as solitary confinement, pre-trial detention and other hot topics. Following lunch, members will be urged to visit their Senators and Representatives to deliver packets of League position papers on priority issues. The meeting will return to the Duncan Center this year.

The New Jim Crow Inspires Action and Advocacy. Study groups that read the book by Michelle Alexander formed *The Coalition to Dismantle the New Jim Crow* in New Castle County and another group, *the Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice*, organized out of a book group sponsored by the LWV of Sussex County. The New Castle group held a full day event November 14 at the Chase Center on the Riverfront attended by a number of League members from throughout the state.

LWVDE Immediate Past President Charlotte King who also chairs the Southern Delaware group presented a joint statement of the League and the Alliance at an October 22 hearing of the state Criminal Justice Council in Georgetown. "Our overarching concern," she said, was addressed in an October 19 *News Journal* report: "More than 200 children are locked behind bars in Delaware – and 76 percent of them are black. In Delaware's prisons, African-Americans make up 56 percent of inmates. Yet only 22 percent of the state's population is black." She went on to suggest that Delaware is not alone. "We believe that our leadership at both the national and state levels wants to change that and we want to help make change happen.

Charlotte's testimony listed the top priorities adopted by both the LWV and the Southern Delaware Alliance. She outlined those priorities:

1.a) Advocating for major bipartisan federal legislation, the "Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015" (S. 2123). The Judiciary Committee has now released that bill for consideration by the full Senate. It includes a wide range of reforms including providing more judicial flexibility such as reducing the length of mandatory minimum sentences and reserving them for serious drug felonies and violent crimes, bolstering re-entry programs, banning solitary confinement for juveniles, providing for sealing juvenile records and easing expungement of those records, making parole possible after twenty years for juveniles sentenced to life imprisonment.

1.b) Urging the introduction of and advocating for Delaware legislation to mirror what is in the federal bill. The federal legislation applies only to federal prisons and prisoners. However, the vast majority of prisoners in the U.S. are in state and local prisons.

2. Actively monitoring progress of a solitary confinement study required by a joint resolution of the General Assembly and advocating for implementation of its recommendations. "As you know," she told members of the Criminal Justice Council, "Amendment VIII to the U.S. Constitution prohibits cruel and unusual punishment. We believe that solitary confinement, in most situations, is cruel and could even rise to the level of 'torture.' This is particularly true when applied to children and the mentally ill."

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3. Advocating for the reduction in the number of inmates held in pre-trial detention.

Department of Correction Commissioner Robert Coupe told three League members in June that 25% of male prisoners and 40% of the women are in pre-trial detention. He confirmed that at the hearing. Charlotte's statement noted an article in the Columbia University *Human Rights Law Review*. "Pretrial detention is the time period that you are incarcerated between being arrested and your trial. Detention is only supposed to be used to ensure that the person will not flee prior to trial or pose a danger to other people. It is not supposed to be used to punish or rehabilitate that person."

She went on to question whether available resources are so stretched that poor suspects are encouraged to accept plea deals and she quoted an ex-prisoner who joined the Southern Delaware Alliance. He told the group that treatment in the prison where he was held was so awful that many of those in pre-trial detention plead guilty when they are innocent, just to get out.

Noting that the Criminal Justice Council has a statistical analysis division with data about what is taking place in the state of Delaware and around the country, she listed several questions raised by the League and the Alliance.

A copy of the statement is available on the LWVDE website.

LWVDE Grows Social Media Communities

The League of Women Voters Delaware continues to build our Facebook and Twitter pages. Our Facebook community is up to **122** members comprising a state senator, policy director, a state representative, media members, a DOJ director, community partners such as Common Cause, and countless educators and citizens from all walks.



Our Twitter community was slower to build momentum than Facebook, but currently has **163** members.

[find us on facebook](#)

We have approximately **30+** Leagues following us nationwide. In addition, we have legislators, candidates for political office, media members, as well as average citizens and community partners. The "Elect Hillary Campaign" is recently following us, too!

[follow us twitter](#)

These online communities are a great way to stay current with the tons of information that bombard us every day. Twitter provides a quick digest of the nation's leading headlines, while Facebook gives us an open forum where we discuss the important issues of the day. All posts and points-of-view are welcome, as long as our nonpartisan and inclusive policies are being respected.

Thank YOU to all who have made a financial contribution to the League of Women Voters of Delaware and to the LWV Education Fun. Listed below are contributors since the Summer VOTER.

Sheila E. Cassells, Letty and Larry Diswood, Mary Field, Sue Claire-Harper (All Saints' Parish Thrift Shop), Sandy Hendrickson, Marjorie Johnson, June R. Kleban, Janet and Brian Kramer, Meta Little, Ronald E. Martin, Lois Myoda, Katharine Olinchak, Paula J. Schneider, Frances Sippel-Wetmore, Sandra Spence, Sarah Straughn, Patricia H. Todd, Philip Troxler, Sherry L. Wenger, Joan T. White.

Thank YOU to all our VOLUNTEERS who spend their time and money advocating and educating for the issues we all care about. There are no reimbursements for mileage, gas or food.

A HUGE THANK YOU.



Be prepared for the next rain storm! And consider how carrying this umbrella around will add visibility to the League of Women Voters.

The high quality umbrella features a nifty push button to both open *and* close and has the League *logo* and text reading “*Be informed & VOTE*” on a blue background. They are for sale for \$18.

Contact: Sandy Spence 302-841-2882 cell or sandyspence325@gmail.com to buy yours with funds going to the state League.

How to Make a Gift to the League Grow

By donating to the LWVDE Endowment Fund at the Delaware Community Foundation (DCF) you can make a gift that continues to give and grow. Our Endowment Fund, with a current balance of \$12,435, has achieved full status as a permanent fund by reaching DCF’s \$10,000 minimum. This means that we can receive income each year to support our educational activities. Currently, DCF funds pay out 5% of the average fund balance over the previous twelve quarters. Endowment funds at DCF are professionally managed to ensure the funds remain strong over time.

The Board established our fund to ensure long-term financial stability and a permanent source of funding. It also enables members to donate not only cash, but non-cash assets such as stock and real estate, insurance benefits, gifts through your will or trust, gifts that pay you income for life, or gifts of retirement plan assets.

Because our Fund is part of our 501(c)(3) Education Fund, all donations are tax deductible. One League member donates stock that she inherited years ago. As a result, the current value is so much higher than the original value that most proceeds would be taxed, were she to sell the stock. Instead, she can take a charitable deduction for the current market value.

If you’d like to write a check, just make it out to the Delaware Community Foundation and write League of Women Voters Endowment Fund in the memo field. You could mail it directly to the League office where it will be recorded and forwarded to the DCF. For information on how to contribute stock or other kinds of assets, add the Fund to your will or trust, or donate other forms of gifts, contact David Fleming, Senior VP for Development, at 302.504.5224 or dfleming@delcf.org.

Give a gift that keeps on giving! Donate to the League’s Endowment Fund.

Action Alert: Congress Threatens the Clean Power Plan

By: Elisabeth MacNamara 11/17/2015



Earlier this year, the Obama Administration finalized the Clean Power Plan, which protects public health, creates thousands of efficiency-related jobs, reduces electricity bills for Americans and delivers power reliably.

Unfortunately, members of the House and Senate are attempting to permanently block this important regulation.

Join me and urge Congress to oppose all attempts to overturn, limit or undermine the Clean Power Plan.

The Clean Power Plan developed, with the input of thousands of stakeholders, is the single biggest step we have ever taken to tackle climate change. It puts in place commonsense limits on carbon pollution from power plants and provides the flexibility states need to develop their own plans to meet pollution reduction targets. **Congress seeks to undo all of the health and economic benefits of the Clean Power Plan and bar the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from**

issuing similar standards in the future. Blocking these commonsense safeguards puts polluter profits before the health of our children. This means that Americans would continue to be exposed indefinitely to carbon pollution and the impacts of climate change.

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Climate change is a global catastrophe on a historic scale that will change the course of human life. Tell Congress it's time to support people, not polluters.

The League of Women Voters has been at the forefront of the movement urging the Obama Administration to move forward with this life-saving regulation. *League members have already submitted tens of thousands of comments to the EPA to ensure a strong final regulation, and we need you to raise your voices on this important issue yet again. Please join the League in urging your members of Congress to oppose these resolutions that put the health of our children and families at risk, threaten the quality of our air, and strip the EPA of the tools to address dangerous carbon pollution.*

Elisabeth MacNamara

A PRICE ON CARBON- Stepping up Our Game in Reducing Carbon Emissions

by C. Tolman Nov. 17, 2015

The earth's climate is changing. We can see this in record-setting temperatures (2015 is setting a new high temperature record), superstorms (Sandy and Patricia), biblical rainfall and floods (South Carolina), prolonged droughts accompanied by unprecedented wild fires (California), rapidly melting glaciers around the world (including Glacier National Park), and accelerating sea level rise. Though some people deny that it's happening – including some of our political leaders - the vast majority (97%) of climate scientists agree that:

- Earth's climate is changing.
- The major cause is human activities – especially the burning of fossil fuels – coal, oil and natural gas, which all contain carbon.
- Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th Century, the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) has increased by more than 40%, and is increasing more every year.
- The consequences are going to become increasingly expensive and dangerous the longer humanity delays vigorous action to greatly reduce the rates of emission of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases.

[The Economists' Statement on Climate Change](#) in 1997 by 2500 economists, including nine Nobel Laureates, said, "The most efficient approach to slowing climate change is through market-based policies ... such as carbon taxes or the auction of emissions permits." Also see the [Carbon Price](#) article in Wikipedia.

At the LWVUS 2014 Convention, the Delaware League held a caucus titled, **Stepping up Our Game in Reducing Carbon Emissions**, and led the successful passage by the delegates of the following resolution:

The LWVUS should support a price on carbon emissions that will increase in stages, as part of an overall program to improve energy efficiency and to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy, fast enough to avoid serious damage to the climate system.

The convention delegates left open the question of whether the price should be set by carbon taxes, as it is in the Canadian province of [British Columbia](#) (covering electricity generation, home heating and transportation fuels), or by the auction of emission permits, as it is in the nine states – including Delaware – that are members of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative ([RGGI](#)), which covers only electricity generation, or by some combination of the two.

The LWVDE 2015 Convention authorized a study called the Delaware Price on Carbon (DEPOC) Study. As described in the [LWVDE Summer 2015 VOTER](#), the eight members of the study group include Chad Tolman, Pat Todd, Peggy Schultz, Elizabeth Sifter (DeIPL), Dick Bingham (DNS Advisory Committee), Lance Noel ² (a new PhD from the UD Dept. of Ocean, Earth and Atmosphere), Gary Witt (a professor of economics at Syracuse University in NY), and Linda (Diz) Swift (a geologist and member of the LWV of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville, CA).

In the Voter article Chad suggested that the study address the following issues:

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- What have other states, provinces and countries done to put a price on carbon, and what have been the results?
- What are the pros and cons for Delaware of cap-and-trade vs. a carbon tax or fee?
- How should the funds raised in Delaware be used?
- What would be the economic effects of the increasing price?
- Who are the key people we should contact for advice and support? (e.g., Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) staff, faculty at the University of Delaware, members of the state legislature, Delaware's Congressional delegation, leaders of environmental organizations, leaders of carbon price action in other states and provinces, others?)
- What other organizations would we want to collaborate with? (e.g., Delaware Interfaith Power and Light (DeIPL), [Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club](#), [Delaware Audubon Society](#), Delaware Nature Society (DNS), others?) Could the study provide an opportunity to involve young people in working on an important environmental issue?
- What should we do to inform and educate members of the League, other environmental organizations, the public, and members of government? The DEPOC Study group is meeting monthly using a combination of conference calls and [GoToMeeting](#) - software that allows participants to speak and hear through their computers as well as to present written or graphical information on the screen.

According to Phil Cherry, the Director of DNREC's Division of Energy and Climate, transportation fuels account for about 40% of Delaware's CO₂ emissions, about 30% comes from electricity generation, while industry and home heating account for most of the rest. Thus, reducing the amount of transportation fuel burned is an important part of what the state needs to do to reduce its total carbon emissions. Significantly, in the [Climate Framework for Delaware](#) report,² made public by state agencies early in 2015, the authors of Appendix C (titled GHG Mitigation Quantification and Assumptions) indicated that federal Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) Rules for Light and Heavy Duty Vehicles would provide the largest source of carbon emission reductions needed for Delaware to meet the 30% emissions reduction target (relative to 2008) by 2030 that the state agencies recommended. This was in spite of a 2008 report³ that fuel and automobile efficiencies cannot keep up with population growth and an increase in vehicle miles travelled (VMT).

Because RGGI is doing a good job of reducing carbon emissions from electricity generation in the nine members states,⁴ including Delaware, and emissions will be reduced further by the EPA's [Clean Power Plan](#), it is expected that the focus of our study will be on reducing carbon emissions from transportation fuels. By the fall of 2016 the DEPOC study group will be able to write a report with recommendations for legislation at the state level, and hold consensus meeting with the local Leagues in all three counties. Since the Delaware legislature meets only from January 1 through July 31, our committee hopes to see legislation introduced early in 2017, when Delaware will have a new governor. Since we have a geographically small state, we will also want to explore regional transportation initiatives with nearby states.ⁱ

In addition to the Delaware study, a steering committee that includes Chad, Diz Swift (LWVCA), Eleanor Revelle (LWVIL) and Launa Zimmaro (LWVMA) is working to promote carbon pricing by state and local Leagues across the country. Diz has created a [Price on Carbon website](#), which describes what is happening with carbon pricing in the U.S. and around the world, various options for setting the price, and how the funds raised are being used. The website has been endorsed by the LWVUS for use by all state and local Leagues. Eleanor is the Chair of the LWVUS Climate Change Task Forceⁱⁱ and the webmaster for the [League's Toolkit for Climate Action](#), and has added a Putting a Price on Carbon page to the Toolkit. Launa is working actively on carbon pricing with the Massachusetts League.ⁱⁱⁱ

¹ Lance has since left the study group to take a post-doctoral position in Denmark. Before going he sent us a paper based on his thesis work titled [A cost benefit analysis of a V2G-capable electric school bus compared to a traditional diesel school bus](#).

² The **Climate Framework for Delaware** report was developed by 12 state agencies in response to Governor Markell's Executive Order (EO) 41: *Preparing Delaware for Emerging Climate Impacts and Seizing Economic Opportunities from Reducing Emissions*. It was developed by three workgroups dealing with Mitigation, Adaptation and Flood Avoidance. EO 41 is shown in Appendix A.

³ **Projected Growth in CO₂ Emissions from Cars and Light Trucks**. Source: Reid Ewing et al., *Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change*, Washington, D.C.: The Urban Land Institute. 2008. At: http://www.uli.org/ResearchAndPublications/Reports/~/_media/Documents/ResearchAndPublications/Reports/GrowingCooler.ashx

⁴ A study by the Analysis Group of RGGI's second 3-year compliance period (2012-2014) was published earlier in 2015, titled, (Continued on page 9 **Price on Carbon**)

(Continued from page 8 **Price on Carbon**)

The Economic Impacts of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative on Nine Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States. At: http://www.analysisgroup.com/uploadedfiles/content/insights/publishing/analysis_group_rggi_report_july_2015.pdf

⁵ In addition to a price on carbon, another potential boost for carbon reduction resulting from VMT is legislation introduced in the Delaware legislature in June of this year, SB 130, and supported by the LWVDE. This bill, called the Complete Community Enterprise Districts bill, provides for a denser than normal configuration of homes and businesses in urban core areas, with an emphasis on multiple modes of transportation. Entities that apply for and receive Complete Communities Enterprise District status will receive special consideration by the Delaware Dept. of Transportation (DelDOT) as their projects are implemented. (See Reid Ewing, et al, above, regarding support for denser development, as well as a paper, *Regional Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory*, published by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission <http://www.dvrpc.org/energyclimate/inventory.htm>)

⁶ Chad is also a member of the Climate Change Task Force, a committee of the LWVUS.

⁷ A report prepared for the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources titled, **Analysis of a Carbon Fee or Tax as a Mechanism to Reduce GHG Emissions in Massachusetts**, was issued in December, 2014. At: http://climate-xchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/DOER_Carbon_Fee_Study_12-19-14.pdf

Leading the League into our 2nd Century Through Our 2016 Election Plan

By: Elisabeth MacNamara 11/13/2015



On Tuesday, we brought together supporters, policymakers and members of the media to introduce [Dr. Wylecia Wiggs Harris](#) as our newest executive director and to bid a fond farewell to our previous executive director, [Nancy Tate](#) who led the League for 15 years.

I was honored to stand by Wylecia's side as [she introduced herself to our friends and supporters](#). While reflecting upon the League's storied past, Wylecia also laid out her vision for the League's future and our second century:

One cannot step into this position without an appreciation, a respect and a reverence for those who have come before me. They are the giants upon whose shoulders I now stand. It is because of them, because of their legacy, that I am able to see our future.

We are an organization with a formidable history, and I am honored to be the keeper of that legacy as we move into our next hundred years. That vision and path for change starts with next year's election. [In my remarks](#), I outlined how the 2016 election will be the most important in a generation: the next president will likely choose one or more new U.S. Supreme Court Justices and we know the court will have a huge impact on issues critical to the League, such as campaign finance reform and voting rights.

It will be the first federal election without the full protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, meaning the risk of voters being disenfranchised by anti-voter laws is the highest it has been since the days of Jim Crow.

It will also be the most expensive presidential election in history. Hundreds of millions of dollars have already been poured into the election, and we still have a year to go! What's worse, the majority of the money is coming from a tiny group—a mere 159 families are behind \$176 million in contributions.

The League of Women Voters is the only organization with the expertise and grassroots network to make sure that the 2016 election is decided by the voters, not deep-pocketed special interests.

Our goals for 2016 are simple:

- Grow the vote – by registering a quarter of a million voters, educating them about voting procedures, and preparing them to arrive at the polls with everything they need to cast their ballots
- Protect the vote – by working with local elections officials, organizing poll watching programs, and continuing to fight against voter suppression efforts at the state and local level
- Empower the vote – by providing six million voters with election information, through our nonpartisan voters' guides and other printed materials, our candidate forums and debates, and through our online tools—especially VOTE411.org

These goals are inextricably linked. We can register new voters, but unless we empower them with information and ask them to vote, we're going to have trouble getting them to the polls on Election Day. And if we get them to the polls on Election Day, and they have a bad experience—because their polling place has moved or their identity is questioned or the machines are broken so they have to vote provisionally, we're going to have a harder time getting that voter to come back next time.

Growing the vote is the greatest weapon we have if we want to combat the influence of money in politics. It's how we take the power from the few and put it back in the hands of the many – each voter who shows up at the polls diminishes the influence of every dollar spent trying to swing an election. I won't pretend that the fight will be easy, but together we can succeed. In fact, the only remedy for the flood of money in our elections is a flood of voters at the polls.

As Wylecia said, "The League's perspective is as relevant as it ever has been. Voters today don't need less education. Election officials don't need fewer partners. Our democracy doesn't need fewer advocates." Under Wylecia's leadership and commitment to keep the League of Women Voters as a defender of democracy for the next 95 years, I know we can create a democracy where all voters have reliable information and easy access to the polls. A democracy where politicians are held accountable to voters, not campaign donors. A democracy where our public policies reflect the will of everyone in our communities.

[Elisabeth MacNamara](#) [Nancy E. Tate](#) [Wylecia Wiggs Harris](#)

CALENDAR

Thursday, November 19, 2015 5:30 pm	Christiana Hilton	Common Cause: Good Government Tribute Awards Dinner. Tribute Award Presentation to the Delaware League of Women Voters, including the Sussex, Kent, and New Castle County Chapters. For further information, see .
Thursday, December 3, 2015, 6 - 8:30 pm	TBD Note. No November Board meeting.	State Board Meeting. Monthly meeting of the state board of directors held the third Thursday most months. All members are welcome. Please contact the LWVDE office at 302-571-8948 if you plan to attend.
Thursday, December 3, 2015, 4-6pm	Beebe Medical Center 18947 John J Williams Highway Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971	Money in Politics--Options for Reform. Room: McCurry Conference Room This is the complex off Route 24.
Tuesday, December 8, 2015 1:30 - 3:30 pm	Home of Peggy Schultz 302-598-9427 (cell) or schultz_peggy@yahoo.com	Land Use/Transportation Committee meeting.
Friday, December 11, 2015 11 am - 2 pm	Looking Glass Restaurant Polytech High School 823 Walnut Shade Road Woodside, DE 19980	Joint LWV Annual Holiday Luncheon. The Kent County League will host a luncheon for the three county leagues of Delaware. TBD whether consensus will be incorporated into the day's events.
Monday, January 25, 2016 11:30 am + 1:00 pm	Michael's Restaurant 1000 Churchman's Rd Newark, DE 19713	LWVNCC Hot Topic Lunch. Discussion and taking consensus on Money In Politics Study.
Wednesday, Jan 6,	LWV Advocacy Corps	All are welcome! Contact Sandy Spence at 302-841-2882 for details.
Wednesday, March 23, 2016 8:30 am - 3:00 pm	The Duncan Center, 500 Loockerman St Dover, DE 19904	SAVE THE DATE: League Day in Dover 2016. Annual legislative day. Morning program relating to key criminal justice issues followed by Lunch and visit to Legislative Hall to meet with your legislators.

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