



DELAWARE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Delaware

Winter 2013
President: Carol Jones

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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 DAY IN DOVER Wednesday, March 27, 2013

The Outlook at The Duncan Center: 302-674-3031 500 West Lockerman Street, Dover, 19904

Public Education Trends and Issues Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Delaware

The future of our community, state and nation rests upon the quality of our public education system. Our democracy relies on schools to provide us with informed citizens prepared for adulthood in the community and the world of work. As each of us is a stakeholder in our public educational system, we seek broad participation in 2013 League Day dedicated to key public education issues. The program is designed to inform and to encourage discussion of key Delaware education issues in small groups with invited experts. Join us in this opportunity to learn about trends and issues in Delaware's public education as we work together for continuing improvement.

8:30 – 9 AM Registration and refreshments

PROGRAM

9 AM Welcome: Carol Jones, President, League of Women Voters of Delaware

Moderator: Charlotte King, Advocacy Corps Chair, will introduce and frame the issues.

9:15 AM Keynote Speaker: The Honorable David P. Sokola, Senator.

Sen. Sokola has chaired the Senate Education Committee for many years and has a broad perspective on our educational system. He is also a member of the Southern Region Education Board, a 17 state consortium, and has served as President of the Legislative Advisory Council of SREB.

Q & A

10:00 AM Workshop A Delaware education trends, including innovations, charters and privatization

Coordinators: Bill O'Connor and Charlotte King, League of Women Voters

Expert: John H. Carwell, Charter School Officer, Delaware Department of Education

10:00 AM Workshop B: Public education funding and equalization issues

Coordinator: William Garfinkel, League of Women Voters
Expert: Mark Dufendach, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Polytech School District

10:00 AM Workshop C: Accountability and transparency at school, district, and state levels

Coordinator: Mickey McKay, Chair, LWVDE Open Government Committee

Experts: Pat Sine, (Retired) University of Delaware, Director, Information Technologies, Client Support and Services, James E. Hosley, Director, Center for Education Excellence, Caesar Rodney Institute, Dr. Nikky Castle, Senior Advisor, Center for Education Excellence, Caesar Rodney Institute

11:30-12:00 FEEDBACK FROM WORKSHOP REPRESENTATIVES

Closing Statement, Carol Jones for LWVDE

12:15–1:30 BUFFET LUNCH with legislators

VISIT WITH LEGISLATORS AFTER LUNCH

Sandy Spence, Coordinator. Attendees are encouraged to attend legislative committee hearings in Legislative Hall in the afternoon and to meet with their own legislators about high priority issues.

REGISTRATION FORM AND COSPONSORS ON PAGE 7

*The UN Commission on the Status of Women and
the League of Women Voters*

Jackie Christman, MD (LWVNCC) is attending the UN Forum on the Status of Women" as one of 20 nationwide observers from the LWVUS. The League was invited to consult at the first meeting regarding the establishment of the UN in 1945 by then President of the United States Harry Truman and has been a vital force in the UN ever since. Jackie will have a report for us following the end of this year's Forum and you will find it on our web site and in our next VOTER. Congratulations, Jackie. We are proud that you have been honored to be chosen as a LWVUS observer and we look forward to your report.

Each year the Commission on the Status of Women, a 45-member United Nations committee-of-nations convenes in NYC to examine the world-wide progress being made in reaching the human rights goals of the Declaration of Beijing, the document formulated in 1995 following the Fourth World Conference on Women which was held in that location.
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/index.html>

The Beijing document of the Fourth World Conference on Women is extremely important.
(<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html>) It assists in bringing world convergence in thinking about the many challenges facing women. It guides consideration of approaches to meeting and overcoming human rights violations against women and empowering women. It respects men and children and offers seminal thinking and problem solving in the interests of all. Some of the problems being addressed as a result of the world-wide attention include: violence against women, sexual violence, and gender equity for women, political equity for women, empowerment of women, etc. These and more specific goals are carried out at the UN through UN Women
<http://www.unwomen.org/focus-areas/>

At the 56th Conference on the Status of Women meeting this year, the League of Women Voters will be present among many other NGO's as observers to the meeting. In 1945, the League of Women Voters was invited by President Truman to serve as a consultant to the U.S. delegation. Since that time, the League has had a continued presence at the UN through its UN Observers. <http://www.lwv.org/issues/united-nations-observers>
jjchristman@usa.com

UPDATE ABOUT ENERGY RESOURCES

GRASSROOTS ACTION PRIORITIES

The LWVUS Toolkit for Climate Action web site now has a new page titled **GRASSROOTS ACTION PRIORITIES** (http://participate.lwv.org/c/9217/p/salsa/web/commo/public/content?content_item_KEY=5228) encouraging state and local leagues to work to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and the development of renewable energy. A link on that page ([post them here](#)) will take you to another page titled,

LWV Delaware -- Promoting a Comprehensive Energy/Climate Change Plan for Delaware describes what the Delaware League has done in the areas of energy and climate change. It can be found at http://participate.lwv.org/c/9217/p/salsa/web/commo/public/content?content_item_KEY=9715

The link on that page to [LWVDE Studies](#) takes you to our LWVDE web page with more details on our studies on State Revenue Sources, Energy, Climate Change, Land Use/Transportation and Property Tax Reassessment

We are working with other organizations like the Sierra Club to strengthen the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS), which requires that an increasing percentage of the electricity sold in Delaware come from renewable energy sources like wind and solar - reaching 25% renewable energy by 2025 with 3.5% of the total electrical energy from solar PV (the so-called solar carveout). The Delaware Chapter of the Sierra Club has posted petitions to members of the Delaware legislature that League members sign online. One is for strengthening the PRS (<http://delaware.sierraclub.org/content/petition-rps>) and the other is for adopting a comprehensive energy/climate plan (<http://delaware.sierraclub.org/content/petition-ecclplan>) with the features that came out of the LWVDE study.

Chad Tolman
LWVUS Climate Change Task Force member

RALLY TO REPEAL THE DEATH PENALTY IN DELAWARE

Held Tuesday, March 12 at Legislative Hall in Dover



Above L-R: Charlotte King, LWVDE Advocacy Corps Chair, Janet Kramer, LWVDE Justice Chair, and Kathleen MacRae, ACLU of Delaware Executive Director reviewing testimony at rally.



Advocates to repeal the death penalty in Delaware are waiting in line to testify in Legislative Hall.



League members at the Rally L-R front to back: Roberta Ray, Janet Kramer, Esther Shelton, Joyce Johnson, Nadyne Rosin, and Charlotte King.

PROPOSALS TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

Article from **Newsworks. Org.** WHYY, Mark Eichman

Delaware Governor Jack Markell revealed a package of five measures designed to prevent gun violence in the state in reaction to last month's shooting massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut.

Markell marked the one month anniversary of the second deadliest school shooting in U.S. history by taking the wraps off his agenda to reduce gun violence. He expects plenty of debate over these measures in the General Assembly.

"I respect the 2nd Amendment, but the measures that we propose today are entirely constitutional," he said.

Markell pledged that no member of his administration would question the intentions of any lawmaker who disagrees with his agenda. "I expect a robust debate, but I believe this is not a debate about the 2nd Amendment."

Background checks

The agenda includes background checks for all gun sales. Markell says 60 percent of gun sales happen with licensed dealers and the requisite background checks, but that means 40 percent of sales are between private citizens, sales that don't require background checks. Markell says a system that doesn't check four out of 10 gun purchases is a system that is broken.

"In Delaware, over the past seven years, about 3,500 applications for gun transfers or permits were denied because the applicant failed a background check. There's nothing to stop those applicants from obtaining a gun if they choose to purchase from someone other than a licensed dealer." State Rep. Valerie Longhurst will sponsor the background check bill.

Reporting lost or stolen guns

In an effort to help police track guns used in crimes, Markell wants to implement a mandatory reporting requirement for lost or stolen weapons. He says all too often police questioning a gun owner about why their gun was at the scene of a crime, only to have the owner say the gun had been stolen some time ago. Quoting a 2002 study, Markell says 1.7 million firearms were stolen from 1993 to 2002. He says more than one million of those guns were still missing as of the time of the study. Almost 300 guns were reported stolen in Delaware last year.

Currently, gun owners have no requirement to report lost or stolen weapons. "Without mandatory reporting, there's very little the police can do when an owner says, 'I lost my gun,' even if they suspect the owner really sold it to a criminal," Markell said.

(Continued on page 4 **Gun Violence**)

(Continued from page 3 **Gun Violence**)

Under Markell's plan, gun owners would have 48 hours to report a loss or stolen gun. Seven other states and the District of Columbia have similar requirements. State Senator Margaret Rose Henry will be the prime sponsor of this bill.

Ban on large magazines

Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn presented the third piece of the gun agenda, a ban on the sale, purchase, transfer or delivery of a large-capacity magazine. Denn says a study of 30 mass shootings in the U.S. over the past 40 years showed a common denominator — large-capacity magazines. "It is the essential piece of equipment for a criminal who wants to shoot a lot of people," Denn said.

Denn says it is often when gunmen have to reload that police or someone else is able to intervene to stop a mass shooting. He says reducing the number of bullets in a magazine would require a shooter to reload more often and create more opportunities for intervention.

Specifically, the legislation would limit magazines to 10 bullets for handguns and 5 bullets for a rifle or shotgun.

Assault weapons ban

Delaware Attorney General Beau Biden outlined the final two parts of the agenda, and maybe the most controversial. That includes the fourth part of the plan which calls for a ban on automatic and semi-automatic weapons that were designed for military use and equipped with military features.

Biden, who served in the Delaware National Guard for a tour of duty in Iraq, says that's where those types of weapons are useful, not here on the streets of Delaware. "The military-style weapon that is assigned to me resides in an armory under lock and key because it's needed only in one place and that is Iraq and Afghanistan," he said. He says they are weapons of mass destruction that are meant for battle.

Biden admits that getting the assault weapons ban will be a fight. "This will not be a Democrats versus Republican issue," he said. "I stand here before you saying it does not infringe upon the 2nd Amendment, which I strongly believe in."

No guns near schools

The fifth point in the plan would ban the possession of a gun within 1,000 feet of a school. "We need to do more to protect our students, especially when there's a discussion about arming more people in our schools," Biden said. People who live near schools would be exempt from the prohibition while on their own private property.

Biden says this measure would create a safe school zone and give parents more peace of mind when dropping off their children at school that they will not become the next victims of gun violence.

Markell said the state also needs to address the way it helps young people struggling with mental illness and improve school safety. He plans to cover those topics in more detail in this Thursday's State of the State Address.

ACTION ALERT!

The LWV is a member of the Delaware Coalition Against Gun Violence (DCAGV). There will be a press event on Tuesday, March 19, 2013 at 1:15 p.m. in the Senate Hearing Room to announce the formation of the DCAGV, exciting Delaware polling data related to guns, and our support for smart gun laws. We need people to come out and show their support for criminal background checks on all gun purchases.

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens. The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety.

The League supports licensing procedures for gun ownership by private citizens to include a waiting period for background checks, personal identity verification, gun safety education and annual license renewal. The license fee should be adequate to bear the cost of education and verification.

The League supports a ban on "Saturday night specials," enforcement of strict penalties for the improper possession of and crimes committed with handguns and assault weapons, and allocation of resources to better regulate and monitor gun dealers.

LOBBY WORKSHOP

The Delaware Coalition for Open Government, the Greenwatch Institute and the Delaware Sierra Club invites you to a workshop on ways to be an effective advocate in the General Assembly. Please respond to this email if you plan to attend.

The workshop will be held on **Wednesday, March 20, 2013, 9:15 a.m. till 11:00 am.**, in the Legislative Hall Cafeteria, (located in the basement), Dover, DE.

The workshop is free and open to the public.

Information on various lobbying techniques, methods, and practical ways that citizens can impact the legislative process to advance their agendas in the General Assembly will be discussed.

Finnian McCabe, Regulatory Affairs Specialist for Flexera Solar, Bobbie Hemmerich, LWV of Sussex County, Independent Advocate for Manufactured Housing and **Richard Schneider of the Coalition to Protect the Fisheries**, will discuss bill drafting, tracking a bill's progress, reaching agreement on issues and securing support for a bill - especially when one lacks financial resources.

If his schedule permits, **State Representative John Kowalko, Delaware House of Representative Energy Committee Chair**, is expected to address the participants on the many issues that compete for a legislator's attention.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants can attend committee hearings as well as a session of the General Assembly.

A copy of the **Lobby Handbook**, compiled by the League of Women Voters of Delaware and printed with funds from the Delaware Commission for Women, will be available, along with **'tips on meeting with and writing to your elected officials,'** compiled by the ACLU, will also be available.

http://lwvdelaware.org/about_action.html#TheLobbyHandbook

John D. Flaherty, President, Delaware Coalition for Open Government, 302-319-1213

HOT OFF THE PRESS!

THEY REPRESENT YOU 2012-2014

is now available on the League website:

www.lwvdelaware.org.

For LWV of NCC **THEY REPRESENT YOU** also lists some cities and towns found at:

www.lwvdelaware-newcastlecounty.org

League of Women Voters of Delaware Statement (made at Rally 3/12/2013)

Repeal of Delaware's Death Sentence

In 2006, delegates to the League of Women Voters of the United States convention adopted the position on the death penalty: "The LWVUS supports the abolition of the death penalty."

Today the League of Women Voters of Delaware is one of the six original members of the Coalition to Repeal Delaware's Death Sentence and strongly supports the repeal of the death penalty in Delaware because it does not function as an appropriate punishment for the following reasons:

1) The death sentence may cause an **innocent person** to be executed by the state. An error cannot be corrected if the death penalty is carried out on an innocent person. Thus far, 142 persons in the United States, convicted of murder and sentenced to death, have been exonerated after new evidence showed them to be innocent or for numerous reasons such as age before 18 or mental illness at the time of the offense were resented. (*Delaware executes more frequently than California, the state with the largest death row in the country.*)

2) The death penalty **does not serve the interests of family members of victims** since the necessary and lengthy appeals process postpones the realization of justice and so, can retard the healing process. On average the appeal process in a death penalty case lasts twelve years.

3) The death penalty is **extremely expensive**, due to the so-called precautions and extra measures taken to insure that only appropriate defendants receive the death penalty. The prosecution alone of a death penalty case costs on average \$3,000,000 above the cost of a life sentence for an inmate who remains in the highest security prison for 40 years.

4) The death penalty is **not a deterrent**. *States without the death penalty, such as Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan have crime rates equal to or less than that of Delaware.*

5) In practice, the death penalty is **unfair**, it targets the poor and other vulnerable people such as those who are mentally ill, intellectual disability, brain-damaged, and members of an ethnic or racial minority group. (Continued on page 6 **Statement Repeal Death Penalty**)

(Continued from page 5 **Statement Repeal Death Penalty**)

(70% of the Delaware's death sentences involved cases where the victim was white although the majority of people murdered in Delaware are black. In addition, in Delaware nearly any 1st degree murder could become a capital murder case because Delaware's death penalty statute is one of the broadest in the country. Consequently Delaware also has a larger death row population (17) than more populated states such as Indiana, Virginia, Kansas, and Washington and ranks fifth per capita in death sentences among states with capital punishment.)

6) The nations with which the United States most identify—the nations of the European Union and Canada, for example—have abolished the death penalty and consider it a violation of human rights. *(Delaware ranks third per capita in executions among states which allow death sentences.)*

7) Reform has been tried and has not worked. In 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the death penalty statutes of 40 states. The Court held that extensive jury discretion over death sentences resulted in arbitrary sentencing and therefore resulted in cruel and unusual punishment. However, in 1976, after many states enacted reforms that limited discretion of juries; the Supreme Court held that the death penalty was constitutional. However the reforms have been shown to be ineffective to stave the arbitrary nature of the sentencing. As distrust of the system has grown, the death penalty is again infrequently applied and a host of arbitrary factors still strongly influence who lives and who dies.

The League of Women Voters of Delaware strongly recommends the Delaware legislature repeal Delaware's death penalty.

ACTION! Call your legislator. Support Senate Bill 19. See page 8.

The LWV DE has for many years worked to improve the justice system in Delaware. You are invited to take part in DELAWARE CENTER FOR JUSTICE FORUM ON PRE-TRIAL DETENTION.

Pretrial detention is a significant driver of Delaware's prison population, with almost 25% of our prison population comprised of those who have not yet been sentenced. What can be done to ensure that we are detaining only those defendants who pose a risk to public safety or who might not show up for trial? How can we balance public safety with the need to conserve our limited taxpayer dollars? To explore these issues with us, you're invited to our annual public education forum!

Please join us at **Visions of Justice XII: Bail and Delaware Communities: Strategies to Improve Public Safety and Strengthen Neighborhoods, which will be held on Tuesday, March 19th from 8:30am to 1:00pm at The Queen in Wilmington, DE.**

The morning session is open to the public (pre-registration required) and will include an exploration of the serious impact of pre-trial detention on communities and the role that poverty plays in individuals' ability to post bail. Presentations will include a keynote address regarding the use of validated risk assessment instruments that can assist judicial decision makers in formulating bail decisions, remarks from Chief Magistrate of the Justice of the Peace Court Alan Davis about Delaware's progress in formulating risk assessment practices, and personal comments from local community members who have experienced pretrial detention.

The afternoon session is by invitation only for the judiciary and will include an interactive training designed for judges and judicial stakeholders. This session, developed by the National Judicial College and the Pretrial Justice Institute, is designed to help judicial officers make more effective bail decisions. It covers the legal framework for the bail decision including statutes, case law and standards, and reviews current bail-setting practices and their impact. It describes how the use of a validated pretrial risk assessment tool can lead to better outcomes. Participants will have the opportunity to participate in bail setting exercises and engage in discussion with faculty and colleagues about how to best assure safe, fair and effective bail practices.

This will be the first Visions of Justice forum to take place after the Delaware Center for Justice and the grass-roots non-profit criminal justice reform organization Stand Up for What is Right and Just (SURJ) merged in February 2012. The two organizations partnered previously for more than a decade on VOJ, and SURJ has continued its work in criminal justice policy reform in its new home at DCJ. SURJ's activities are largely funded by the Public Welfare Foundation, and have focused on justice reinvestment and pretrial justice reform in DE, marked by the passage of Senate Bill 226 and the publication of *Bail and Pretrial Detention: Opportunities for Reform in Delaware*, in November 2012.

Funding for this forum is provided by the Public Welfare Foundation, with additional partial funding from the Delaware Criminal Justice Council. **For questions about the event, please contact DCJ's advocacy coordinator, Kirstin Cornell, at kcornell@dcjustice.org.**

Public Education Trends and Issues
Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Delaware

COSPONSORS



Delaware Council on Gambling Problems, Inc



REGISTRATION DEADLINE FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2013

WORKSHOP PREREGISTRATION – Select one; workshops run concurrently

_____ Workshop A: Delaware education trends, including innovations, charters and privatization

_____ Workshop B: Public education funding and equalization issues

_____ Workshop C: Accountability and transparency at school, district and state levels

NAME (S) _____ \$25.00 EACH _____

_____ TOTAL \$ _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE _____ EMAIL _____

RECEIPT REQUESTED _____ LWVDE Fed tax ID 516021961 [501(c) 4]

CREDIT CARDS ARE ACCEPTED—Please complete the following:

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CREDIT CARD NUMBER: _____

CREDIT CARD EXPIRATION DATE: _____

Send your check to LWVDE, 2400 W. 17TH Street, Clash Wing, Room 1, Lower Level, Wilmington, DE 19806-1311. Please call the League office at 302-571-8948 or e-mail lwvde@voicenet.com if you have any questions. Directions at: www.theduncancercenter.com www.lwvdelaware.org

ACTION! Your support is needed to pass Senate Bill 19. Here is what you can do now:

2. Join us for the Senate Committee Hearing

Next Wednesday, March 20th, the Senate Committee will hold a hearing on the death penalty. Many death penalty repeal supporters will testify in front of the Senate Committee, urging them to vote yes on Senate Bill 19. It is important that we fill the Balcony of the Senate Chambers with supporters!



3. Event: Kirk Bloodsworth

Tuesday, March 19th, 7:00, Jewish Community Center (101 Garden of Eden Rd. Wilmington, DE 19810)

Kirk Bloodsworth was convicted of murdered and sentence to death for a crime that he did not commit. He spent 10 years in prison before he was proven innocent and entirely exonerated. He now is a leader in the abolition movement.

Pictured above waiting to testify at the Rally to repeal the death penalty March 12, 2013 in Legislative Hall are: L – R: Janet Kramer, LWV Justice chair, and standing in front Senator Karen Peterson, lead sponsor of the legislation.

CALENDAR

Tuesday, March 19, 2013	6-8:30 pm	Roma Restaurant 3 President's Drive Dover, DE 19901	LWVDE Board Meeting. RSVP to the League office if attending. Letty will give you information and directions.
Wednesday, March 27, 2013	8:30am-4pm	The Outlook at the Duncan Center 500 West Loockerman St. Dover, DE 19904	League Day in Dover - Our Annual Legislative Day. The theme of this year's League Day is Public Education: Trends and Issues. Morning Program: The morning session will feature a Keynote Address by Senator David Sokola followed by three workshops. 1. Delaware education trends 2. Public education funding & equalization issues 3. Accountability & transparency at school, district & state levels Buffet luncheon with all legislators are invited to attend. From 1:30 to 4:00 pm, there will be opportunities to attend committee meetings and visit with your legislators regarding important issues at Legislative Hall.
Thursday, April 18, 2013	6-8:30 pm	Roma Restaurant 3 President's Drive Dover, DE 19901	LWVDE Board Meeting. RSVP to the League office if attending. Letty will give you information and directions.
Saturday, May18	9:30 am 3 pm	Planning stage	LWV of Delaware CONVENTION
Friday, June 14- Sunday 16		Washington DC area	LWVUS COUNCIL

The Advocacy Corps meets the 1st Wednesday of the month in Dover. Call 302-571-8948 or send an email lwvde@voicenet.com for locations. Generally it is in one of the new Dover Public Library meeting rooms.

League of Women Voters of Delaware
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