



THE VOTER

NOVEMBER 2011 Vol 38, No 11

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

President's Message



What an active fall for the League! In addition to our regular meetings—with legislators in September, well-being of children in October, and an education consensus coming up in November—we also have two municipal candidate forums in Six Mile and Central and a weekly Action Friday to talk about League issues and seek out opportunities for action. We are enjoying our new meeting room at the library, but do take careful note that our November meeting is scheduled for a different week and a different place, the Clemson City Hall Community Room (lower level) on the 3rd Tuesday, November 15th. It's always a great experience when we gather to reflect on our position on an issue, and this program's consensus meeting on the federal role in education should produce a lively discussion. And if you have not yet paid your dues, bring a check!

I appreciate everyone who works hard for the League, but I want to single out a few particular folks this month. Linda Gahan has done a great job of reformatting the VOTER. Paula Appling is working hard on the two candidate forums and preparing to update the DPOs on the web to reflect municipal and special elections. Sandra Gray did a great job testifying on Oconee on redistricting. Thanks to them and to all of you who make this League a force for good in our corner of the world.

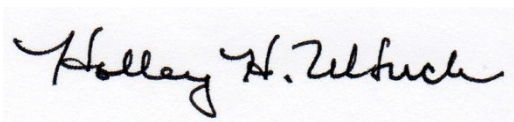


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THE VOTER

League of Women Voter Clemson Area
P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633
www.lwvclemsonarea.org

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Arlene Stewart, Nominating Committee

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Tuesday, NOV 1 **LWVCA BOARD MEETING**, Clemson City Community Meeting Room, 5:00 – 6:00 pm.
- Friday, NOV 4 **ACTION FRIDAY LUNCHEON**, Western Sizzlin, Clemson, noon
- Fri, NOV 11 **ACTION FRIDAY LUNCHEON**, Western Sizzlin, Clemson, noon
- Tuesday, **NOV 15** ***“ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION with Consensus Questions”***, Presented by LWVCA Education Committee, **CLEMSON CITY COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM**, 7:00 – 9:00 pm.
- Fri, NOV 18 **ACTION FRIDAY LUNCHEON**, Western Sizzlin, Clemson, noon

NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

“ROLE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION”

On November 15 LWVCA’S Education Committee consisting of Paula Appling, Reggie Turetzky, Cheryl Lee, Claudette Bennett, Carol Kozma, and Linda Gahan will present background information on the federal government’s involvement in public education. This will allow LWVCA members to address the consensus questions of this study. This is a national study adopted by delegates attending the 2010 National Convention. We will discuss 15 consensus questions developed by the national education committee (also found in this issue) covering funding and equity, common core standards and assessment, and a few general questions. The LWVUS website can get you started: www.lwv.org, ->For Members, ->Projects & Programs, ->Public Education link. Also consult your October VOTER for more information. LWVCA’s November General Meeting will be held on **November 15 at the Clemson City Community Meeting Room (NEW PLACE, NEW DATE)**. Social hour begins at 7:00 pm with the program commencing at 7:30 pm.

~Submitted by Paula Appling

ACTION FRIDAYS

Action Fridays continue to hold the attention of leaguers who come to Western Sizzlin each Friday at noon. Most recently the topics have been:

1. Funding for mental illness
2. End of story on Oconee redistricting
3. SC Action priorities in environmental policy
4. Editorial on comprehensive tax reform

Come and share an item of concern or to learn about issues and opportunities for action. Other topics which have come up include redistricting, helping Eleanor Hare write an op-ed, finalizing questions for our September meeting with our legislators, taking action on comprehensive sex education, lobbying our Department of Transportation Commissioner on I-73, writing letters to the editor on drug testing for the unemployed and I-73 and the gas tax, and discussing the protection of funding for the mentally ill in Congress. After each Action Friday you may get an email from me with the details on action we are taking that you can be a part of, but it’s better to be there where you can ask questions or offer advice and information. Western Sizzlin, Fridays at noon until Thanksgiving. ~Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

Glancing To January: Privatization of Government Services

Get Ready: Consensus Meeting in January!!!!

Holley Ulbrich, Mary Ann McKenzie and Paula Appling are making plans for the January 10th meeting when we will address consensus questions about privatization of government services. Many programs and services paid for by governments are actually run by private business firms under contract, ranging from prisons and mental health services to animal control, transportation and education. How is this working out? What kinds of things should government produce, and what lends itself to private management with taxpayer financing?

The official description of the project is as follows:

“The purpose of this study is to identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector. It will review the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers, and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good.”

Consensus questions and background materials will be in the VOTER that comes out at the beginning of January.

~Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

Consensus Questions: Role of Federal Government in Public Education

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. The current role of the federal government in public education is
Much too small too small about right too large much too large
2. What should be the role of the federal government in public education? (Rank)
 - a. To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.
 - b. To ensure that all students preK-12 receive a quality education.
 - c. To measure teacher effectiveness through test data.
 - d. To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.
 - e. To monitor state efforts for funding
3. A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.
Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

COMMON CORE STANDARDS:

4. Currently the governors and state education officers have developed Common Core Standards that are national but not federal. Should the standards be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal funding? (Choose one)
 - a. Special grant programs such as Race to the Top
 - b. All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act where the needs qualify for funding.
 - c. All programs receiving federal funding from any source
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
5. Should there be a **national assessment aligned** with the common cores standards? Yes No
If Yes, Should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated? (choose one)
 - a. Voluntary
 - b. Mandated
 - c. Mandated, if fully funded
 If No, what other accountability measures might you suggest? (choose one)
 - a. Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments.
 - b. Suggest that the local education districts use their own assessments or adopt one that is a nationally norm-referenced assessment such as the *Stanford Achievement Test* or *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*.
 - c. Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically
6. National standards should lead to: (choose one)
 - a. A nationally mandated curriculum to be aligned to the national standards and assessments.
 - b. A national curriculum that is only suggested but not mandated.
 - c. A suggested structure for states and local education agencies to develop their own curriculum.
 - d. No national curriculum.

CONSENSUS QUESTIONS CONTINUED

7. What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation? (Rank order)
 - a. Provide an assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards.
 - b. Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching Common Core Standards.
 - c. Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers.
 - d. Provide information to students, parents, teachers and school districts about student achievement.
 - e. Provide diagnostic information on each child.
8. Data from the national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. If we have a national assessment, what information is most important to be reported to parents, teachers, students and the community? (choose one)
 - a. Data should be “norm referenced” (where students are ranked) for district comparison only.
 - b. Data should be “criterion referenced” and clearly informative so that teachers, parents, and students know how individual students have mastered criteria established at a national level.
 - c. Data should be used to determine “cut” scores knowing if students have mastered requirements for special grade levels.
9. Information from nationally required assessment data should be used to (Choose one):
 - a. Sanction schools not measuring up to the specific levels
 - b. Reward schools that achieve high scores
 - c. Rank teachers based on student test score data
 - d. Reward teachers who have exemplary scores
 - e. Inform districts how their population compares to others similar to theirs.

FUNDING AND EQUITY

10. In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds. However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as Race to the Top. Which would be appropriate: (choose one)
 - a. Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements
 - b. A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants
 - c. Competitive grants only
 - d. No federal funding
11. If the federal government’s role is the concern of the “common good” then: (choose one)
 - a. Mandates only should be sanctioned.
 - b. Mandates and funding should both be provided.
 - c. Funding should be provided through grants only.
 - d. A combination of funded mandates and grants should apply.
 - e. No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.
12. Equity in public education means equitable access to: (Rank order)
 - a. high quality teaching/learning
 - b. adequate and current learning materials
 - c. clean and well maintained physical facilities
 - d. food and health care
 - e. safe and secure neighborhoods
 - f. secure housing
13. Currently Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding is considered “categorical” rather than for general use. This means that it can only be used with special populations for special purposes. ESEA should remain targeted toward poverty and special needs.
 Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree
14. The federal government has a role in supporting early childhood education, birth to 5, for all children?
 Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree
15. Federal support for early childhood education programs (e.g., Head Start, Title I, Special Education, Early Start) should include funding for parent education and support regarding child development, child health and nutrition, and access to other supportive services, such as mental health as needed.
 - a. Strongly Agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly Disagree
 - b. This funding should be extended to:
 All children only those with special needs special needs first

The Well-Being of Children: What Advocates Need to Know

LWVCA Program on October 11, 2011, Central-Clemson Library

With 1 in every 2 children in South Carolina living in poverty, their status has worsened with the economic crisis according to Robin Kimbrough-Melton, research professor at the Institute on Family & Neighborhood Life at Clemson University and chair of the Criminal Justice Committee for the League of Women Voters of South Carolina. Speaking to Clemson Leaguers and guests at the Central-Clemson Library, Kimbrough-Melton noted that South Carolina's ranking on the annual Kids Count survey of child well-being was again 45th out of 50 states.

Although South Carolina saw moderate improvement in such indicators as fewer teen births and deaths and the percent of teens not in school and not working, the child poverty rate, the percent of children living in single-parent families, and the percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment actually worsened. According to Kimbrough-Melton, the high poverty rate in South Carolina, in particular, is a concern because of the detrimental effects of poverty on a range of child outcomes. For example, poverty has been linked to higher rates of school failure, greater risk for experiencing adverse behavior and emotional problems, and poor health and mental health outcomes.

Despite high rates of poverty in South Carolina, Kimbrough-Melton noted that steps could be taken to moderate the negative impact of poverty. Strengthening the social connectedness of families in neighborhoods and developing strategies for more actively engaging young people in community life are two of the strategies that she cited. These are no-cost to low-cost strategies that could yield high dividends for families in South Carolina. She described how volunteers working in the Building Dreams Mentoring Program, which she directs, are making a difference for youth who are living with parental incarceration and in neighborhoods with high crime and reentry rates.

In closing, Kimbrough-Melton expressed concern about the growing number of children in South Carolina of immigrants. Although many are U.S. citizens, they are more likely than other children to be living in poverty. She cautioned against the adoption of policies that have unintended negative consequences on these children.

Submitted by Carol Ward, Co-Chair Program and Action Team



CENTRAL FORUM on OCT 25: Candidates are, left to right, Lynne O'Dell Chapman, Tony H. Craig, H. R. Holladay, Jr., Blake Magnus, Joe N. Moss, Will Mullinax

OBSERVER CORPS

Clemson City Council	1 st and 3 rd Monday, 7:30 pm.	Anderson County Council	1 st and 3 rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm
Seneca City Council	2 nd Tuesday, 7:00 pm.	Pickens County School Board	4 th Monday, 7:30 pm.
Pickens County Council	1 st and 3 rd Monday, 7:00 pm.	Oconee County School Board	3 rd Monday, 6:00 pm.
Oconee County Council	1 st and 3 rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm.	Anderson Co. School Board	3 rd Monday, 6:00 pm

Contribution Form

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area LWVCA, P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Phone (opt) _____

____ I wish my contribution to remain anonymous.

____ I wish my contribution to be tax deductible where allowed by law. My check is made out to the "*League of Women Voters Ed Fund*" which is a 501(c)(3) organization.

____ I wish to support the League's action priorities. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters" and is not tax-deductible.

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

P. O. Box 802
Clemson, SC 29633

[Recipient]

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