



Bulletin

" . . . we are going to be a semi-political body. In that body we have got to be non-partisan and all-partisan."
~Carrie Chapman Catt, 1920

League of Women Voters of Indianapolis
August 2009
Volume 91, Number 1

Notes from LWV-US:

Health Care Action Alert

Health care reform legislation has been moving quickly this summer, and your Senators and Representatives need to hear from you during the August recess. Urge your members of Congress to support strong health care reform legislation that includes a quality, affordable public insurance plan. The www.LWV.org has more information.

League Urges Allocation of Funds for International Adaptation and Clean Energy Technology

The National League and coalition partners sent a letter to Senators John Kerry (D MA) and Richard Lugar (R IN), leaders of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, urging that climate change legislation include funds for international adaptation and international clean energy technology.

LWV-Indianapolis:
Voicemail: 317-767-4187
Email: LWVIndy@sbcglobal.net
www.indygov.org/lwv

Meeting and Event Information

Lunch with LWV

Friday 21 Aug Guest: Joanne Sanders, City-County Councillor
Noon, Double Eagle Cafeteria,
Scottish Rite Cathedral, 650 N. Meridian

Membership Event

Saturday 22 Aug President Benjamin Harrison House Tour, 11 a.m.
RSVP by **August 19th**
(See page 3 for information)

LWV-Indiana Regional Workshops

Saturday 29 Aug Vincennes, IN
Saturday 12 Sep South Bend, IN
(See page 4 for information.)

Lunch with LWV

Friday 18 Sep Guest: Matthew Tully, Indianapolis Star
Noon, Double Eagle Cafeteria,
Scottish Rite Cathedral, 650 N. Meridian

General Meeting – Health Care

Wed. 30 Sep North UMC, 3808 N. Meridian St.
7:00 p.m. Update on Health Care Reform Legislation
(See page 2 for information.)

Lunch with LWV

Friday 16 Oct Guests: Matthew Gutwein, Health & Hospital Corp.
and Lisa Harris, MD, Wishard Health Services
Noon, Double Eagle Cafeteria,
Scottish Rite Cathedral, 650 N. Meridian

The League of Women Voters is a time-tested nonpartisan, nonprofit, volunteer political organization, dedicated to promoting active and informed participation in government - from the school district to the nation, and from voter registration to public service. Although LWV sometimes advocates for or against issues, it never supports or opposes particular candidates.

Health Care

September 30 General Meeting

At the 2008 LWVUS National Convention, delegates chose Health Care Reform as a priority issue for the national League. (Good timing, huh?) The League believes that quality, affordable health care should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. Furthermore, the League believes that all Americans should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care and mental health care.

All Leaguers are encouraged to participate in the health care debate. By going to the LWVUS Web site at www.lwv.org and looking under the "Take Action" button, you can find Action Alerts, sample letters to your member of congress, and study papers on health care.

The Indy League will do its best to help you understand these issues with a program that is in the works for Wednesday, September 30 at 7p.m. at North United Methodist Church (38th & Meridian). Planning is still in the preliminary stages, and therefore subject to change, but we are inviting representatives from Senator Lugar and Bayh's offices as well as from Representative Carson and Burton's offices. So read those League papers and mark your calendars!

Board Meetings

The LWV-Indianapolis Board of Directors continues to meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Our meeting location is the NUMC downstairs in case you should want or need to visit.

Lunch With LWV

Purpose:

to inform us as citizens and voters

Place:

Double Eagle Café
inside Scottish Rite Cathedral
650 N Meridian St, Indianapolis

Date:

3rd Fridays

Time:

12 NOON – 1 P.M.

Parking:

Free in the lot west of the building, accessed from North Street

Plan:

Come through the cafeteria line any time after 11:30, buy your meal, and join us in the Truman Room to eat, listen, and discuss.

Invite a friend, and join us.

Friday, 21 August

Our speaker for the August Lunch with League is Joanne Sanders, City-County Councillor, Minority Leader. Councillor Sanders has been a member of the council for 9 years and is a League member. She will update us on the current council agenda.

Friday, 18 September

Our speaker for the September Lunch with League is Matthew Tully, political feature writer for The Indianapolis Star. We will be interested to hear about his take of the political situation in Indy. Mr. Tully has been awarded several journalism awards for his creative articles.

Friday, 16 October

Our speakers for the October Lunch with League are Matthew Gutwein, President and CEO of Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County and Lisa Harris, M.D., CEO and Medical Director of Wishard Health Services. The topic for October's lunch will be the Health and Hospital Referendum Question on the November Ballot.

Membership Events – New, Prospective and Veteran Members

On August 22nd League of Women Voters of Indianapolis will be having an outing for new members, veteran members and prospective members. Please join us for a special tour of the President Benjamin Harrison House. The tour includes the Carriage House exhibit on women's suffrage, *Bustles to Ballots*, as we celebrate Women's Equality Day. The 89th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment is August 26th. To mark the anniversary LWV-Indianapolis will be sponsoring a special tour for members and guests on Saturday, August 22nd at 11:00 a.m. The approximately 45 minute tour will concentrate on the legislative career of our twenty-third president. After the tour we will have the opportunity to discuss upcoming events and answer questions about the League of Women Voters. Current members are asked to make a \$3 donation towards the cost of the tour. New members (those who have joined since March 2009) and prospective members will be our guests for the tour. Lunch will be at the Villa and cost will be on your own. Space is limited so please RSVP for the tour and/or lunch at 317-767-4187 or lwvindy@sbcglobal.net by August 19th. Total time for the tour and lunch will be approximately 2 hours. For more information on the Harrison House visit www.presidentbenjaminharrison.org. For information on the Villa visit www.thevillainn.com.

On Wednesday, November 4th at 11:30 a.m., League of Women Voters of Indianapolis hosts an outing for new members, veteran members and prospective members. Please join us for a special tour of the Indiana Statehouse and lunch at the Indiana Government Center South cafeteria. The tour will touch on the architecture and history of the seat of Indiana's government since 1887 with an emphasis on the current legislative process.

We'll discuss how to stay informed and connected to what will be happening in the statehouse come the next legislative session in January 2010. After the tour we will have the opportunity to discuss upcoming events and answer general questions about the League of Women Voters. The tour is free and lunch will be on your own. Total time for the tour and lunch will be approximately 2 hours. Space is limited so please RSVP for the tour and/or lunch at 317-767-4187 or lwvindy@sbcglobal.net by November 2nd.

Stay tuned for final dates for two more outings in 2010. In February we will host a special tour of the City-County building and in late March/early April we will be hosting a tour of the Federal Courthouse and a meeting with a representative of the US Attorney's office.

LWV-Indiana Workshops

“Take the Challenge!”

2009 LWV Regional Workshops

Every year the LWVIN (i.e., State League) offers regional workshops that focus on issues such as membership, advocacy, voter education, and policy positions. These workshops are a fantastic way to connect with Leaguers across the state and get a renewed sense of purpose. Any Leaguer can register (required) for a workshop and pay the \$25 fee at the door. However, the Indy board is happy to offer a limited number of “scholarships” to interested Leaguers who wish to attend.

Basic details for the regional workshops are as follows, but greater detail can be found at www.lwvin.org.

- Southern Indiana Workshop: August 29, Vincennes (RSVP by Aug. 21)
- Northern Indiana Workshop: September 12, South Bend (RSVP by Sept. 4)

You can register directly on-line, but if you would like scholarship information, please contact Erin Kelley at 317-767-4187 or lwvindy@sbcglobal.net.

LWV-Indiana State Study Local Government Reform

Leaguers who attend the regional workshops will learn about the goals of a state study on local government reform. The Indy League is planning its first pre-study meeting for **October 15 at 7p.m. at NUMC**. All Leaguers are encouraged to attend (especially those who attend the regional workshop).

More details will be forthcoming, but the State League has specifically asked local Leagues to study three components of the *Streamlining Local Government* report (i.e., Kernan-Shepard Report):

- Countywide body to oversee provision of all public safety services
- Transfer of township responsibilities to a county executive
- Reorganize library system by county; including a countywide levy for library services

Drawing upon our recent township and downtown studies, this should be an informative process. If you’ve never participated in a study before, it is probably the single best way to learn about how the League operates ... not to mention the fact you’ll get smart. Really smart.

Upcoming & Potential Volunteer Opportunities

Naturalization Ceremonies – Should the League get Involved?

Approximately thirty naturalization ceremonies take place in Indianapolis a year at rate of 2 to 3 per month. Most ceremonies occur at the Federal Courthouse downtown with a few exceptions throughout the year. Based on the 2009 schedule, ceremonies typically take place on Thursdays at 10a.m. and would require about two hours of volunteer time. Other groups are already registering voters, but there is opportunity for the League to distribute voter education materials such as our *Voting in Marion County* guide and *Directory of Government Officials*. For the League to be involved, however, we need to commit to being at most of these ceremonies.

If you are interested in learning more and/or think you might be able to work 1 to 4 ceremonies over the course of 2010, please contact the voter service chair at 317-767-4187 or lwvindy@sbcglobal.net. We are taking a straw poll to determine if this is something we should pursue. You won't be committed to anything, but we really need feedback to decide how to proceed.

2010 Census – Liaison Needed

The Census is a right fit for the League: *it is a local civic event, it is inclusive, it is consequential, it is non partisan*. Among other things, census data is used to define legislative districts, school district assignment areas and other important functional areas of government.

Leagues across the country have already begun establishing partnerships with their local census offices in efforts to ensure every resident is counted. The Indy League would like to contact our regional census office to find out how we can support census education efforts.

We are in need of a Leaguer willing to communicate with the census office on what can be done and then advise the board on opportunities that exist. Please contact Erin Kelley at 317-767-4187 or lwvindy@sbcglobal.net if you are interested.

Step Up for Kids!

Voter Registration Volunteers Needed

Step Up for Kids Week is an annual, non-partisan, nationwide event, sponsored by the Every Child Matters Education Fund (ECMEF) and co-sponsored by many other national, state, and local organizations. The Indianapolis League is a co-sponsor at the local level. Step Up for Kids Week brings people together during the week of October 5-9 to show widespread public support for a shift in spending priorities towards children and families. It will call upon all levels of government to make our nation's children a top priority. Events will take place on the steps of the state capitols and other appropriate venues across the country.

On Monday, October 5 (around 11a.m., exact time TBA) there will be a press conference and rally at the Statehouse followed by a march to the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. We are in need of 4 – 6 Leaguers who would be willing to join the crowd and register voters. We likely will not have a table, but will be registering voters with clipboards and passing out voter education materials on foot.

On Saturday, October 10 Step Up for Kids is sponsoring an event for families to cap off the week. The details for this event are still very preliminary, but we will likely need 2 – 4 volunteers to staff a voter registration and information table at a local park for a few hours.

Interested Leaguers should contact us at 317-767-4187 or lwvindy@sbcglobal.net.

The Indiana Open Door Law

At the LWV Indianapolis annual meeting last April, members discussed the Observer Corps' need for information on what, exactly, observers should look for regarding the "openness" of public meetings. The following overview was compiled from the Office of the Public Access Counselor's *Handbook on Indiana's Public Access Laws* (April 2008) and is referred to as "Handbook."

Meeting notice

The Open Door Law (ODL) requires public notice of date, time, and place of any meetings, executive sessions, or of any rescheduled or reconvened meeting **at least 48 hours prior to the meeting**, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. A public agency must post a notice of meetings at the principal office of the agency, and if no such office exists, at the place where the meeting is to be held. (See Section 2 of the "Handbook," regarding I.C. § 5-14-1.5-5.) State agencies are also required to provide electronic access to meeting notices on the Internet. There may also be other statutes governing notices of particular meetings. (See Appendices D and E in the "Handbook" for sample meeting notices.)

Advance copy of meeting agenda

A governing body of a public agency is not required to use an agenda, but if it chooses to utilize one, the agency must post a copy of the agenda at the entrance to the location of the meeting prior to the meeting. The public agency must also describe each agenda item specifically during a meeting and may not refer solely to an agenda item by number. The ODL does not prohibit a public agency from changing or adding to its agenda during the meeting.

Example: The clerk posts the agenda outside the meeting room one hour prior to the meeting. This is not a violation of the ODL because the agenda was posted prior to the meeting. Unlike the meeting notice, the agenda is not required to be posted 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Meeting memorandum

The ODL requires the following memoranda to be kept:

- date, time, and place of the meeting;
- the members of the governing body recorded as either present or absent;
- and the general substance of all matters proposed, discussed, or decided;
- a record of all votes taken, by individual members, if there is a roll call.

The memoranda are to be **available within a reasonable period** of time after the meeting for the purpose of informing the public of the governing body's proceedings.

Meeting minutes

The ODL does not require a public agency to keep minutes of its meeting. Minutes of a meeting, if any, are to be open for public inspection and copying. A public agency may not deny access to minutes of a meeting simply because they are still in "draft" form or have not yet been approved.

Example: Public meeting will be held "after the executive session." This is not proper notice because it does not provide the time the meeting is scheduled to begin.

Voting

The ODL does not require votes to be taken in any particular manner, so long as a secret ballot is not utilized.

Video and recording devices

A person has the right under the ODL to be present at a public meeting, other than an executive session, and to record the meeting by videotape, shorthand, or any other method of recording, subject to reasonable restrictions as to equipment and use that may be imposed by the governing body. Rules and regulations prohibiting the use of cameras, tape recorders or other recognized means of recording a meeting are void.

(Open Door Law, Cont.)***Speaking at a public meeting***

The ODL does not guarantee the right to speak at public meetings. Although an individual has the right to attend and observe all public proceedings, no specific statutory authority allows an individual to appear before and address a governing body. A governing body may choose to provide an opportunity for comments or discussion at any time or may allow a limited number of comments or limited amount of time for comments on matters under consideration. During certain meetings, a provision for public comment may be required by statute.

Reporting violations of the Open Door Law

Any person may contact the Public Access Counselor to file a formal complaint or request an informal opinion. See Sections 5 and 6 of this handbook for more details. In addition, an action may be filed by any person in a court of competent jurisdiction against the governing body which allegedly violated the ODL. The plaintiff need not allege or prove special damage different from that suffered by the public at large.

NOTE: More information on Indiana's Open Door Law can be found at <http://www.in.gov/pac/>

The form to use to file a complaint with the Office of the Public Access Counselor can be found at <http://www.in.gov/icpr/webfile/formsdiv/49407.pdf>

Submitted by Jean Preer, 6/29/09

2009-2010 Dues

At Annual Meeting in late April 2009, LWV-Indianapolis members voted to change to a single-date membership renewal. That date is Women's Equality Day, 26 August!

There is an insert in this newsletter to help you renew and better understand this transition to a single renewal date.

The dues amounts have not changed. Please send \$50 for individual membership; \$75 for household membership (more than one member at the same address); \$25 for student membership.

As you may know, after state and national PMP (per-member payments), LWV-Indianapolis will keep only about \$8 of each person's \$50.00 dues – not enough to print and mail newsletters, much less to rent meeting rooms and send delegates to Council or Convention. Please consider including an additional donation with your dues to help cover our activities. We appreciate this support and thank each of the donors.

Help America Vote Act - Public Input Requested

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) mandated a number of the electoral reforms now in force. Further changes have been recommended for Indiana by the Secretary of State's "Vote Indiana Team."

You can view the full list of recommendations by going to:

<http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/2009vit/index.html>

The deadline for public comment is 5:00 p.m., Friday, August 28, 2009. Any comments you have regarding the proposed changes must be received no later than that date and time.

Submit any comments to the following address: Todd Rokita, Indiana Secretary State, 200 West Washington Street, Room 201, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204, or by email to

havaadministrator@sos.in.gov. Public comment on the proposed changes may also be left by phone at 317-234-VOTE or at the Indiana Election Division toll free in Indiana at 800-622-4941(TDD).

Comments may be faxed to the Vote Indiana Team at 317-233-3283.

Joining the League of Women Voters

Yes, I would like to become a member of the League of Women Voters for an annual fee of \$50.00.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

My annual dues of \$50.00 are enclosed.

I am a new member. Yes _____ No _____

I am a renewing member. Yes _____ No _____

(All members receive the *Bulletin* several times a year as well as other League literature and information.)

Scholarships/reduced dues are available for student memberships please contact the League.

Enclosed is an additional contribution of \$ _____ to help the League of Women Voters make a positive impact on voting, citizenship and democracy.

Enclosed is an additional contribution of \$ _____ to help provide student member scholarships.

Below is the name and address/phone number of a prospective League member.

I expect to be an active member _____, an occasional participant _____ or a supporter _____.

Date: _____

I would like to be contacted to assist with (*circle all preferences*):

National Issues	State Issues	Regional/Local Issues	Lobbying
Health Issues	Letter Writing	Membership	International Issues
Research	Education Issues	Welfare Issues	Environmental Issues
Election Issues	Fundraising	Observer Corps	Ridesharing

For more information about the League of Women Voters, please call (317) 767-4187.

From:

League of Women Voters of Indianapolis

c/o North United Methodist Church

3808 N. Meridian St.

Indianapolis, IN 46208-4019

Forwarding and Address Correction Requested