



League of Women Voters of Utah

The Utah Voter

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Important Dates

- ◆ Legislative session starts January 17, 2005 and ends March 2.
- ◆ Saturday Caucuses every Saturday, January 22 to Feb 26, 9 AM League office
- ◆ State Board meeting 11 March 9 AM
- ◆ Convention April 29-30 in Ogden

President's Letter

Winter 2005

Thanks to modern technology, the world has become one complicated and diverse community. Information is only seconds away. If you were searching for voter information in this election year in addition to the normal media sources (newspaper, radio and television), the World Wide Web (internet) has put a new dimension on disseminating information. You could find web pages written by the candidates themselves, web pages written by political parties and you could also find interest groups who had much to say about *their* view of the candidates' views. Many would say we had more information than we need. It definitely was a challenge for the average voter to decipher, interpret and understand the information available in order to be an informed voter this year.



It was exciting for those of us on the LWVU Board to be a part of this internet information process. We were able to present a great deal of information, to a far larger audience, using less manpower and having a far greater impact than ever before. And we are still in the infancy of possibilities. The state league would like to take this opportunity to thank:

- ◆ Our Voter Service Director, Nancy Vingelaar, and her committee members Sharon Walkington and Joyce Barnes;
- ◆ Our Web Team Director, Pat Comarell and her committee members Marie Irvine, Dolores Hansen, Sandy Peck and Gigi Brandt. (I know that many of you wish the information had arrived earlier and we apologize. We will get better.)
- ◆ The league is also grateful to **The Salt Lake Tribune** for giving us space to provide voter information to the community and to advertise our web-site.

As we begin 2005, our league priorities will naturally shift from the elections to the Legislature. We plan to expand our web-site to provide an ever expanding source of information on what the Utah Legislature is doing and how their actions relate to our priorities. Using our web site, league members will be able to know where legislation we care about stands and who has the ability to impact or pass it. We intend to provide training on how to use this source of information efficiently and effectively.

Two background studies are now available on www.lwvutah.org for League education:

- ◆ **Political Decisions and Nuclear Waste Storage in Utah** This is basically background information on the state of hazardous waste in Utah, how we got where we are and what if anything we can do about it. The committee has prepared some discussion questions for local unit time and also some consensus questions. We are hoping to have a statewide position ready by convention. Local members will have the option of planning unit time, or having their board answer the consensus questions, or have their individual members respond directly to state.
- ◆ **Systems of Choosing Elected Officials**. This background study was prepared by Ann O'Connell. It is a collection of two studies written by California Leagues that inform and/or

clarify the many systems or types of elections available and used by different local and state governments.

I know that many League members still like to receive League information in 'hardcopy' (printed material) and we will try to continue to make this happen. However, the reality is that today's League board member is limited in the amount of time they have to commit to the League and this has forced the League leadership to look toward new ways of providing and disseminating information if the League wants to continue to be a strong and viable organization in Utah.

Have a wonderful New Year! As your New Year's Resolution, consider whether there is anything you could do for the League, any committee you would be willing to serve on, any issue about which you could write, and/or any board position you would be willing to fill. The League needs an active membership in order to be vibrant, healthy and ultimately effective.

Nanette Benowitz

LWWUT 2005 Legislative Priorities - Following the Money

On January 17, the 2005 Legislative session will begin. Each year dedicated League members participate in the process by being League observers. Based on the League's positions on major issues we have studied, leaguers observe the progress of bills that we believe will have an important effect on voters. This year we have been to many committee meetings and are approaching this legislative session with some new ideas. We will be especially watchful of the Executive Appropriations Committee and the appropriations subcommittees on budgets submitted by state government departments. New bills in our priority areas will have a financial impact on services and taxes as well. We feel that by watching where the money is spent, we will have a clearer picture of the priorities of this session.

As we watch the funding of the state budget, we will focus especially on how five League priority interests are affected by budget and tax policy. They are education, transportation, drug and sex offender rehabilitation, state tax structure changes, nuclear and hazardous waste management, and child welfare. And, as always, the League will be concerned with money in politics and other good government and election issues.

Education

There are several items of interest under this category, including No Child Left Behind (NCLB), charter schools, tuition tax credits, and school funding.

Since its inception, the state has had difficulty with all the mandates of NCLB, especially trying to meet the needs of our diverse population. Both charter school legislation and a tuition tax credit proposal are making another appearance. We will be watching for any changes from last year and how legislators are making these proposals more acceptable. Of continuing interest is the question of school funding and how the school system will accommodate the additional students that are anticipated over the next several years.

League Positions: The League supports adequate financing of the public schools to ensure quality education. We support increasing the corporate franchise tax and severance taxes and consolidating state school lands. We also support action to promote economic development through quality public and higher education.

We have opposed tuition tax credits. We do not believe taxpayer money dedicated to education should be spent to benefit private schools, because they lack fiscal accountability to elected school boards, can discriminate rather than accept all students, and encourage the flight of good students from the public schools.

Transportation

Continuing and worsening bottlenecks along I-15 for commuters, especially in Davis, Salt Lake and Utah counties have increased the focus on transportation, highways, commuter rail and transit. The ongoing discussion of attracting business and growing the economy means even more cars, more trucks and more people needing transportation, but transportation's large scale infrastructure is very costly. The source of the money and how much can actually be done without shortchanging other needs will be high on everyone's agenda. The two year Transportation Planning Task Force report has suggested several bills for funding and managing transportation.

League Positions: The League supports the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest, including protection of air quality, energy conservation and minimizing consumption of nonrenewable resources.

DORA, the Drug Offenders Rehabilitation Act, SB 22, will be presented to the legislature again this year. This program, proven highly successful in other states, offers drug offenders an opportunity to go into treatment. Rather than just putting them in jail, it provides a chance for them to improve their lives. One proposal will fund a Drug Court as a pilot project. The annual cost of DORA is estimated at \$6 million, and three years of operation is needed for cost savings to begin to be generated. But recovering lives, reducing crime, and creating fewer repeat offenders makes this an extremely worthwhile program worth funding. Governor Olene Walker has included the \$6 million in her budget.

Sex offender treatment also needs increased funding based on interim committee study. That request will go to the Executive Offices and Criminal Justice appropriations subcommittee.

League Position: We believe that effective reintegration into society should be the primary focus of prison programs.

Tax Reform

Many of you are aware of Governor Walker's comprehensive tax reform proposal. While this is spurring discussion, there seems to be limited support for it as a package. At least we can hope that there will be meaningful discussion and proposals to increase revenue, since the system is not expected to keep up with growing needs and definitely does need overhaul. New Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. will no doubt have his own ideas, and it will be interesting to watch where he puts his emphasis. The Jones - Mascaro bill will be back, proposing income tax changes in personal exemptions, federal deductibility, and indexing for inflation. If passed this could add around \$80 million a year to the Uniform School Fund.

League Position: The League has many tax positions based on past study. It supports a state tax system that is fair and equitable; that provides adequate resources for government; is understandable to the taxpayer and encourages compliance; and accomplishes its objectives without creating undue administrative problems. The sales tax on food should be either eliminated or reduced gradually. Replacement for the loss of revenue could come from increasing individual and corporate income taxes, an increase in the cigarette tax or a tax on luxury items. We believe the income tax should be more progressive. Sales tax exemptions should be reviewed periodically for their effect on well-paying jobs, fairness and environmental quality.

Nuclear Waste

The Hazardous Waste Regulation and Tax Policy Task Force has invested long hours on this issue. We will watch for some new plans for dealing with nuclear waste. A bill prohibiting Utah acceptance of B and C waste (which is more radioactive than the Class A waste now stored) was not recommended by the Task Force but has been requested by Senator Arent.

League Positions: Since League has many positions on clean air, water, and land use, as well as the health issues associated with nuclear waste, we will want to carefully examine any new bills in this sensitive area. We favor allowing citizens to hold their elected officials accountable

for decisions that will affect their health and safety, the environment and the economy, not just today but into the future.

Child Welfare

The 2004 legislative debate is continuing over how well children are protected from neglect and abuse and how best to balance their welfare with parental rights. Of special concern are state and federal health and human services budget cuts that impact children. We will also follow a bill that addresses emancipation of minor teenage children to allow them to manage their financial needs.

League Position: The national League position supports early intervention for children at risk to help children reach their full potential. We support abuse and neglect prevention, quality health care, early childhood education, developmental services, family support services, and violence prevention.

Good Government

Two money and politics bills supported by the League in the past will be back: limits on the personal use of campaign funds and a ban on gifts to elected officials. A constitutional amendment establishing a redistricting commission is being drafted.

League Positions: Methods of financing political campaigns should ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and allow maximum citizen participation in the political process. The state League favors establishment of a bipartisan redistricting commission to advise the Legislature.

Kathy Dorn, Legislative Action Director

Legislative Action

Kathy Dorn, our Legislative Director, is in charge of our lobby corps. She is recruiting leaguers to monitor and to attend committee meetings, to follow specific legislation and to attend our Saturday morning caucuses. Each Saturday, starting on January 22 you are invited to attend the Legislative Caucus at the League office, 3804 Highland Drive, at 9AM. Our legislative observers, Board members and Sandy do a quick review of the week on the Hill, set priorities and determine if we need to take action on any proposed legislation. It is a great way to get a sense of what was done in the committees and what bills we will watch. It helps us focus on priorities and plan for the next week of observing. Please join us when you can, every Saturday till the end of the session, March 2nd.

We will be following a broad range of issues, but we will be giving priority to the budget process. We are especially concerned about

- ◆ Funding for education
- ◆ Funding for transportation
- ◆ Funding for corrections
- ◆ Child welfare reform
- ◆ State tax policy
- ◆ Storage and taxation of hazardous and nuclear waste
- ◆ Good government and election issues

If you have strong feelings about any of these subjects, or there are other areas you would like to watch contact Kathy Dorn @ (801)277-0897 kmd1965@msn.com

Calling All Curious Members

Need to know how to use the League website at www.lwvutah.org? Or the State of Utah Legislative site at <http://le.utah.gov>? Want to know how to find a bill on line so you can read or print it? Or find out how your legislator voted on your top issue. This year Gigi Brandt will teach a class for LWV members who want to get some hands-on experience in this area. The class will be in the Main Library Downtown on January 25th from 6PM to 7:30 PM. This is a great opportunity to polish or learn skills that will get used during the session. This is an excellent aid for any new Leaguers who may be interested in observing. Finding the information easily and on line saves time and frustration when you go to the Capitol to

observe. All league members interested in participating will need to RSVP with the library's Technology Center @ (801)524-8290. Registration is open to the public, is free, and begins two weeks prior to the first class.

Kathy Dorn, Legislative Action Director

Position Statement on Water Taxation approved by LWV Utah

On December 3, 2004 the LWV Utah Board approved the following position statement.

WATER TAXATION

*LWVU Position based on the 2003 study "Taxation for Utah Water Delivery and Development " (2004)

The LWV of Utah has positions on water conservation and planning strategies which should enable future generations to live on a limited water budget without threatening the health of the natural environment. We favor policies that support a safe and reliable water supply for our citizens. A stable revenue flow to pay for water delivery infrastructure must be in place. Since user fees may be unstable or burdensome, especially in times of drought and under regimens of strict conservation measures, additional revenue sources that are not tied to rates of consumption may be necessary. Although state sales tax and local property taxes have been a traditional support for water districts in Utah, other sources might be more equitable, for example assessments on each water account or hook-up.

Any water policy or fee should meet the following standards:

- 1. Transparency - easily identified and understood*
- 2. Voter approval - approved by direct vote of the citizenry or elected representatives*
- 3. Time limitation - subject to time limits or scheduled sunset review*

Furthermore, a robust public discussion on water policy is critical in a state where water is limited, rapid growth is predicted, and competing environmental and lifestyle choices must be considered.

In 2004 you told us you did not want a technical study
on nuclear waste storage in Utah.
Read our provocative background information in plain English
Read all 11 pages on the Web @ www.lwvutah.org under publications hard copy
Urge your League to discuss this "hot" topic

(Discussion questions sent on request)

Can we reach consensus
ON
POLITICAL DECISIONS AND NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE IN UTAH

Consensus questions available for individual and unit responses

Elections Systems Study - the first step

(taken by the Salt Lake League)

The LWVUT has now officially embarked on part one of an election systems study. The Salt Lake League held lively discussions in November. We used the material that will soon be posted on the LWVUT web site. Or if that procedure is not to your liking, I would be happy to mail hard copies to each League (only one each, however).

You have some reading to do. First we have borrowed an article from the Sacramento Voter which gives a short (relatively speaking) description of plurality, instant run-off, and proportional voting. You may bog down in the proportional voting section but do not be concerned. Part of the purpose of this first discussion is to discover what is difficult and where we all need more information. Leagues in other states have had a tough time with their election systems studies. The lesson I get from them is to be in no hurry. Furthermore, keep in mind that if we decide we want to develop a position, it is best to stick to general principles and goals, not to tie our League to a specific system which may not stand the test of time.

What we did in Salt Lake was to brainstorm and create a list of criteria or goals for an improved election system. *Chapter Two: Criteria for Evaluating Election systems* from the **California Election Systems Study Kit** will give you some background although I imagine many of you already have formed your own ideas. I strongly suspect that many Salt Lake Leaguers had not read the material but they had lots to say about elections anyway - what was wrong with them and what might make them better. And even so we did throw around terms like instant run-off, proportional representation, and sincere and wasted votes.

The California League has been most generous with their study material and with advice. I am consulting with Paula Lee of the LWV of California and Californians for Election Reform, Dr. Barbara Klein of the Phoenix Metropolitan League, and Janet Anderson of the LWV of Seattle. It is inspiring to learn what other League members are doing. If you want to be more involved please call or email. For example, I feel all the League studies have failed to give a robust defense of the two party system. There are political scientists who feel it has real merit in supporting political stability, preventing radical swings to the right and left, but also allowing the victorious party to turn in a new direction. I think League members tend to be reformers but we need to be careful to understand all sides of this issue.

There will be more study material in February. Please feel free to design your own process. If one meeting is all your League can spare wait until you have all the material and the discussion and consensus questions. Just make sure your members are confident that they can make well-informed decisions.

Ann O'Connell connell@xmission.com 801.277.9046

Voter Service

For having to "invent the wheel" this year in an election cycle that was hectic and important to say the least, I think the Voter Service Committee and Web Team did an exceptional job. Hopefully you all have had a chance to peruse the Voter Guide on the www.lwvutah.org website.

The Voter Service Committee worked hard to get as many responses from candidates on the website as possible, then promote the website widely. We have had many kudos for our successes and suggestions for improvements for next year.

The committee is going to send thank you notes to all candidates who submitted answers. We will be leaving the answers of candidates who won on the website so that we can refer to them during the Legislative Session and during the candidates' terms. We will invite them to clarify, refine, or change their current answers if they choose to do so. The legislative

lobbying corps will be able to refer to their responses during the session. Keep checking the website for updates.

We appreciate the efforts of the local league members and apologize that it took the state team too long to get the site redesigned and the candidates uploaded. We have made major progress and think that next time will go much better. If you have any suggestions on how you feel that we can get the candidates to respond in a timelier manner or even to respond at all in some cases, we would appreciate your suggestions. - Nancy Wingelaar (801)942-4030 jnwingelaar@aol.com

Local League Updates

The Weber League has decided to take advantage of the work we did on our Voter Guide and give voters a chance to hold legislators accountable for their pre-election promises. We are keeping the winning candidates' answers to the Voters Guide questions on our website.

We will identify bills related to our concerns as they are proposed at the legislature. The titles and numbers of these bills will be posted on our website along with instructions on how to follow a bill and how to find out how any legislator voted on a particular bill.

Since we know that legislators, like all of us, have a right to change their minds we will send a letter to each one giving them an opportunity to add information to the answers they gave to the Voters Guide questions. We have also informed them that we may print alternative views on our website.

We had good visibility in the community before the election: we distributed 10,000 hard copies of the Voters Guide (which covered county commission and school board candidates as well as state legislators); we registered voters; we held a joint candidate forum for school board candidates with the Women's Legislative Council; and we publicized our website. However, we don't want our members' efforts to fade away now that the election is over! Marilyn Odell

National Update

Position on Selection of the President (Electoral College)

In light of the recent presidential election, the ongoing discussion surrounding the Electoral College, and the fact that the League updated its position this biennium; it is timely to remind you of LWVUS position on the Selection of the President. The League's updated position, which was officially adopted in June 2004, reaffirms our steadfast commitment to abolishing the Electoral College. The League strongly supports uniform voting procedures nationwide and promotes the principle of "one person, one vote."

The official position, overwhelmingly supported by members through the consensus process, is as follows:

The League of Women Voters believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the presidential election system—from the candidate selection process to the general election. We support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions,

public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information.

The League's commitment to uniform voting procedures and to other principles in the new position means that action to "reform" the Electoral College on a state-by-state basis would not be supported by the League position.



Civil Liberties Protection to Honor Bill of Rights Day

Bill of Rights Day was December 15, 2004. "The League of Women Voters believes the best way to celebrate and honor this historic document is to protect the liberties it guarantees," said Kay J. Maxwell, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS). "The Bill of Rights includes some of our nation's most fundamental rights, and we must be vigilant to protect those rights. The League has been a historic defender of civil liberties, and continues this emphasis today."

Since the League's inception, the protection of the individual liberties laid out in the Bill of Rights has been one of the organization's top priorities. During World War II, the League worked to balance the preservation of civil liberties with the importance of national security. During the "witch hunt" period of the early 1950s, the League conducted a community education program known as the Freedom Agenda, providing Americans with the opportunity to discuss and learn about the Bill of Rights.

The League continues to actively engage on this issue in a number of ways. Leagues around the country work to raise awareness about threats to the Bill of Rights through community forums and discussions. LWVUS advocated on Capitol Hill against troubling provisions in the USA PATRIOT Act, and supported the bipartisan Security and Freedom Ensured (SAFE) Act, which addresses some of the PATRIOT Act's problems. LWVUS believes that basic civil liberties must be preserved and protected as the nation seeks to guard against terrorism and other threats to national security.

"As we advocated during World War II, members of the League today are steadfast in their conviction that the need to protect against security threats to America must be balanced with the need to preserve the very liberties that are this country's foundation," Maxwell said. "The Bill of Rights is not only an important part of our nation's history, but also a living document that will guide us into the future, and we must protect it."

The New Utah League website is up and running!

Thanks to the Web Team!

This site (www.lvvutah.org) has progressed from "under construction" to "finish the punch list". The team is planning on spending the first of the year completing the remodeling of the site. The legislative page will undergo a major overhaul to incorporate the Legislative Updates, important links to follow legislation, and LWVU Legislative Priorities.

The "Who We Are" tab contains information on how our organization runs, e.g., mission statements, our principles, bylaws, policies, officers, how the League works, how to join, donations, etc.

The rest of the site is helpful to our members, but also contains information that non-members will find useful: Voter's Guide, Legislative News, background and our positions on issues, publications, and more.

Our thanks to the Web Committee for doing such an excellent job and spending endless hours getting the voting information for the last election on the web site: Nanette Benowitz, Gigi Brandt, Pat Comarell, Delores Hansen, Marie Irvine, and Sandy Peck.

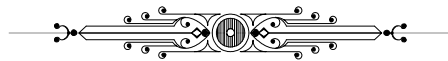
Also, we owe the look and structure of the site to **Tony Williams of 444 Design**. He did an enormous amount of work (most of which was donated time). As we got down to the wire on election information, Tony was very responsive and timely in implementing the numerous additions and changes we needed.

We hope you will spend a little time getting acquainted with all the information available on the web site. Try the Legislative News section so you see how we update it often during the session.

Our hope is that this will be a marvelous tool to keep members and the general public informed. We know there are still some glitches, but we are smoothing them out day by day. Your ideas for how it can be improved would be appreciated (email pcomarell@comcast.net).

We will be using our web site to give background information on our priorities, to provide direct links to the legislative web-site so you can find bills, meeting agendas, voting records, our KCPW radio legislative updates, and of course all of our legislative action alerts. We urge all of you to take some time in January, after the web team has had the chance to update the site, to become familiar with what is available to you on line at www.lwvutah.org

Tune In to KCPW Radio. It's still at 88.3 and 105.3 FM for Salt Lake and Davis listeners. And now those of you in Cache, Weber and Utah Counties can hear it at 1010 on AM. Not only League daily legislative updates during the session, but hours of NPR public affairs information—local, state and national—are available every day. Be sure to try it!



Convention

Will be held in Ogden on April 29th and 30th. Friday evening we will have a dinner and guest speaker. Business meeting will be Saturday morning. Sherilyn Bennion (801)274-9215 is the state liaison, Weber's liaison is Shelleice Stokes (801) 393-4852.

We will be sending out program suggestions in March following the summary of the legislative session.

Give the Gift of Democracy A Gift Membership In the League!

As the elections of 2004 showed us there is still more to be done to make sure that all votes count and that all votes are counted. Our democracy is one of our most precious gifts and the League stands as an ever vigilant and active source of strengthening this precious system. What a great opportunity we all have now to reach out and invite others into our essential organization.

Many thanks to our generous contributors of time, talent & treasure!

George S and Dolores Dore Eccles Foundation
United Way

Tony Williams 444 Design for Website assistance
New Horizons

The Salt Lake Tribune for full and quarter page voter service ads
XMission.com

Bandwidth Incorporated

Marelynn Zipser
Corinne Wunderli
Sara Rule Salzberg
Alice Steiner
Georgene Bond
Cathy Crawford
Irene Fryer
Reggie Benowitz

Pat Zielgler
Alma Anderson
Mary Schultz
Barbara Kitchens
Kathryn Fitzgerald
Pat Eager
Tom Proffitt
Sharon Walkington

Irene Fryer
Mary House
Dawne Gruher
Joyce and Donald Davis
Peggy Christensen
Dot Bolieau
Pat Comarell
Lula Devalve



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF UTAH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Left to right CW, starting at the top:
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