

# *The* VOTER

Vol. 55, No. 1

The Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Kent

January 2008

## LWVK Completes Consensus Process on Immigration

After two years of inquiry and review for the National Immigration Study, Kent League of Women Voters members tackled the most challenging set of consensus questions to come along in several decades. The process occurred during two lengthy meetings in December and January.

The results of local consensus efforts were approved by the

---

*The consensus process for the immigration issue posed an enormous challenge not seen in several decades.*

---

Kent League's board at its January meeting and then submitted to the national committee. That committee next will consider responses from thousands of Leagues to frame a national position on immigration. According to the League of Women Voters of the United States' Web site, the national board anticipates adopting a position in early April 2008.

The Kent study committee was comprised of Jane Preston Rose, Cathy Mansor, Roberta O'Keefe, Debby Newberry and Amie Cajka (chair).

The results of the local consensus will not be published in *The VOTER* because the final national position may or may not resemble the local response. Traditionally, Leagues refrain from publicizing local results and instead wait for the final position to be announced by the national organization. Members are welcome to call Cajka at 330/688-9545 for a copy of the answers that Kent League members submitted to the LWVUS.

Here is how the LWVUS describes the consensus process:

*It is easier to say what consensus is not, than what it is. Consensus is not a vote—rather, consensus is mutual agreement of League members arrived at through discussion. During discussion, everyone has the opportunity to express their viewpoints, and the issue is examined from all sides. Discussion follows a lengthy study process where League members look at the history and pros and cons of an issue.*

*Consensus questions, created by the appropriate study committee and approved by the Board, provide structure for the meeting, as members discuss the pros and cons until it becomes apparent whether or not consensus has been reached on each question. The questions for the Immigration consensus were created by a national committee.*

*The local study committee analyzes the consensus responses and using this information, creates a statement that will be considered along with responses from other Leagues. Once approved by the national Board, the statement immediately becomes the League's position and is the basis for action on the issue.*

*This type of member involvement in the organization and its consensus process tends to ensure member commitment to the resulting positions. In addition, members have the opportunity at each Annual Meeting or Convention to decide whether or not to re-adopt these positions.*

See CONSENSUS, p. 5.



### LWVK Events Alert . . .

**Saturday, February 23, 9:15 a.m. breakfast, 9:45 a.m. meeting**

Program planning meeting; Mental Health & Recovery Board, 155 E. Main Street, Kent.

---

#### Inside . . .

|  |   |
|--|---|
| From the President's Desk . . . . .    | 2 |
| Election-Related Dates . . . . .       | 2 |
| National Study-Topics Sought . . . . . | 3 |
| LEADER Institute to Dissolve . . . . . | 4 |
| Recruitment Brunch . . . . .           | 4 |
| County Health Clinic Closer . . . . .  | 5 |
| LWVO Launches 'Power Pledge' . . . . . | 5 |
| Coming Attractions . . . . .           | 6 |



## From the Co-Presidents' Desk:

### *Primary Election Day... Candidate Forum ... Membership Meeting*

Well, the snow is upon us, and it's quieter after the holidays—or is it? The primary election is right around the corner in the first week of March, but am I the only person who feels like it all will be decided by then?

Okay, that's not the position we'll take—we want an engaged citizenry in Ohio and in Portage County. We **do count**, and we'll count even more in the general election when, just like in 2004, we saw candidates crisscrossing the state, hoping we'd like them.

We have a voter forum set for February 21 at 7 p.m., and we'll need some League goodies to go along with that. We're still setting the place, but there are only two contested offices, it appears—the sheriff and one county commissioner seat. Commissioner Chris Smeiles is opposed by Brett McClafferty. There's still time, of course, for independents to file before November.

How about getting out to visit on March 8 and bringing along a few

potential members to the League's membership meeting? We find that if you **bring them**, they will come. And many will join. And bring some goodies with you. Diets don't count at League events. Featured will be former Kent State University President Carol Cartwright and League member and state Rep. Kathleen Chandler. Carol said if you aren't in the mood to talk higher education, she'll wow us with hydrangea pictures from the gardens where her daughter works! Yea!

New members, new voters, new year's wishes to you and yours. Thanks for everything you do for the League! A big thanks this month to the really hard-working team of Amie Cajka, Roberta O'Keefe, Cathy Mansor, Jane Rose and Debby Newberry who walked members through two or three rounds of consensus-building to reach our answers to the national survey on immigration. With League members like this, who isn't inspired to recruit more?

- *BARB & VICKI*

The **VOTER** is published eight to 10 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Kent. The newsletter is available both in print and online at the League's Web site: <http://www.kent.oh.lwvnet.org/>.

#### **Board Members**

Barb Hipsman-Springer  
Co-President

330/678-0681  
bhipsman@kent.edu

Vicki Kline  
Co-President

330/842-2782  
vicki.kline@pl.com

Hillary Lovell  
Secretary

330/715-3542  
hlovell@kent.edu

Nena Hankins  
Treasurer

330/673-0128  
nhankins@att.net

Call the co-presidents to volunteer to help with program meetings or committees or to get information about the League's activities and policies.

#### **Directors**

Tracy Deep, Membership

Deb Newberry, Finance  
330/678-1816

Gail Pytel, Programs  
330/673-3282

Stacy Yaniglos, Programs  
330/678-5664

Terrie Tarchinski Nielsen, Election Service  
330/274-0864

Leona Brown, Nonofficer Board Member  
330/673-8030

Amie Cajka, Immediate Past President  
330/688-9545

Jan Rusnack, Past President/Adviser  
330/678-1261

Directors set policy and make financial decisions and are involved in programs, voter service and organizational activities of the League.

#### **Off-Board Leaders**

Nancy Adams, Land-Use Programs  
330/673-6548

Nena Hankins, Voter's Guide  
330/673-0128

Jackie Waltz, Finance Drive  
330/325-2207

Audrey Cielinski Kessler, Voter & Web Site  
330/677-8598

Jan Rusnack, Voter Registration  
330/678-1261

## LWVO Announces Four Important Election-Related Dates to Remember

The League of Women Voters of Ohio reminds Leagues across the state that the March primary election is just around the corner. Below are some critical deadlines that should be noted:

- **February 4** - Deadline to register to vote in the March primary
- **February 8** - Absentee voting for the March primary begins; absentee voting may be done by mail or in person at the local board of elections office
- **March 1** - Deadline of noon for requesting that an absentee ballot be sent to the voter by mail from the county in which the voter is registered
- **March 4** - Primary election day, with polls closing at 7:30 p.m., including walk-in absentee voting; mailed absentee ballots must be postmarked **before** 7:30 p.m.; voted absentee ballots may not be dropped off at a polling location

## LWVUS Seeks Local Input on Recommendations for National Study

It's time for the Kent League of Women Voter's annual program planning meeting. Mark your calendar for February 23 at the Mental Health & Recovery Board, 155 E. Main Street in Kent. Breakfast begins at 9:15 a.m. followed by the planning meeting at 9:45 a.m.

Program planning is the time for local Leagues to let the national League know what direction they want the League to follow. This year, local Leagues have been asked to select **one** area to recommend for a national study, similar to the recent immigration study.

At the local meeting in February, focus groups will discuss the plausibility and potential success of a study in the following areas: apportionment, gun control, health care, citizens' right to vote, campaign finance, and military policy and defense spending. The League's state lobbyists will read the local Leagues' current positions and recommended five of those issues for updating. The Kent League's Program Planning Committee believed it necessary to include at least one international position in the discussion. Military policy and defense spending was selected.

Below are summaries of the national League's current position statements. Complete position statements will be provided at the meeting in February. Come for a delicious breakfast and great discussion.

### Apportionment

Announced by the national board in January 1966 and revised in March 1982: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be apportioned substantially on population. The League is convinced that this standard, established by the Supreme Court, should be maintained and that the U.S. Constitution should not be amended to allow for consideration of factors other than population in apportionment. See also the League's Voting Rights position, which recognizes that both the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act require that reapportionment not dilute the effective representation of minority citizens.

Supreme Court Rulings of 1962 and 1964 required that both houses of state legislatures must be proportioned substantially on population transformed this issue from a state to a national issue. Thirty-three states had positions on this issue when the national position was adopted. Both state and local positions were used during the '60s to resist efforts to reverse the Supreme Court rulings.

This position has been the basis for League action to encourage participation in censuses and equitable apportionment and redistricting of all elected government bodies.

While the position has been used in conjunction with the Voting Rights position to support remedying racial gerrymandering, it does not address and thus does not allow us to take action on such innovative remedies as majority-minority districts or multiple-member districts.

### Gun Control

The gun control position was adopted in 1990 from a statement proposed by the LWV Illinois and later amended in 1994 and 1998. It urges the passage of federal legislation to control proliferation of handguns and semiautomatic assault weapons in the U.S. The League supported the Brady bill, requiring a waiting period and background check to buy a handgun. Identification verification, gun safety education, and annual license renewal were also advocated. LWVUS found that the Second Amendment was a right only in connection with service in a regulated militia, which is known today as the National Guard. This narrows the definition of "right to keep and bear arms" from an individual right to a collective right. However, it does not prohibit gun ownership on behalf of an individual; it only confers the right to the National Guard. Lastly, this position supports regulation of firearms for consumer safety, as hand gun and assault weapons are cited as a major health and safety threat to citizens.

### Health Care

The health care position was last updated in 1993 after a two-year study. LWVUS supports a basic level of health care at an affordable cost with equitable distribution of services. The League supports a national "single-payer" health insurance plan financed through increased taxes, so long as cost control strategies are employed. Managed care, regional planning, malpractice reform and other methods of cost controls could enhance efficiency and economical delivery of services. Administration of the system could either be a combination of private and public sectors or a combination of federal, state, and/or regional government agencies. LWVUS opposes a solely private model of financing the health care system. However, a patient's ability to pay should not be a consideration for allocation of resources.

### Citizens' Right to Vote

Adopted in 1982, the League position simply states, "The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed." While the position statement does not affirm much, the League continued to remain active in the area of election law reform by discouraging conduct in campaigns that frustrates voter participation, sponsoring the "Take a Friend to Vote" campaign, publishing numerous materials on how to improve the voting system, etc. However, all of the efforts for reform have not transferred to the position statement.

### Campaign Finance

The League's position on campaign finance was updated in 1982. It states that "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." LWV has sought to reduce the influence of big money in elections and has supported public funding for presidential elections.

### Military Policy and Defense Spending

Announced by the national board in April 1984 and revised in April 1986: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the U.S. Government should seek to protect its interests at home and abroad through the use of nonmilitary measures, including diplomacy, mediation and multilateral cooperation. These measures reflect the importance that the League attaches to U.S. efforts to strengthen international organizations, reduce tensions among nations, and minimize the risk of conflict worldwide.

See *AGENDA*, p. 4.

## LEADER Institute Plans to Dissolve

The LEADER Institute, a leadership training program for young women from across the area that the Kent League has supported for a number of years, has decided to dissolve after this fall's class.

The League has participated in the Institute by contributing between \$350 and \$450 a year in cash and an additional \$200 a year in refreshments for the program luncheons.

Anne Andrews and Kady Pownall, the main "leaders" from the Kent League should be congratulated for their dedicated efforts. Andrews can be reached at 330/678-0858; Pownall can be reached at 330/923-2037. From there, the list includes most of the League's members. It has been a popular volunteer post for cookie bakers and sub-sandwich deliverers as well as table facilitators.

In addition, dozens upon dozens of young women have learned organizational and leadership skills through the participation of the Kent, Akron, Tallmadge and Hudson Leagues of Women Voters.

Some Institute officials concluded that the organization was duplicating leadership training efforts at some of the nearly two dozen high schools who sent representatives. Others said training at the hands of older women set a different tone about leadership in a democratic society.

Either way, the Kent League is certain that it has contributed to a wonderful program. Each individual who helped mentor these young women over many classes is to be thanked for their interactions, for getting the "subs" on their way and for countless other jobs that were done with no complaints.

The Kent League's last contribution to the Institute will be provision of food for the luncheon break on February 10. If you would like to help supply food for the program one last time, contact either Andrews or Pownall.

## Recruitment Brunch Slated for March 8

Round 'em up, and bring 'em over—prospective new Kent League members, that is. It's all happening on March 8 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the home of Karen and Doug Fuller, 1431 River Edge Blvd. in Kent.

The "Wither Higher Education" event is being held to recruit new members and reinvigorate current members. Featured guests are former Kent State University President Carol Cartwright and State Rep. Kathleen Chandler.

The Fullers volunteered their home for this casual afternoon of socializing and updates on how higher education is weathering the storm from the statehouse. Be sure to join in the fun, conversation and education. Men are welcome, too!

So mark your calendar and bring yourself, lots of prospective League members and some goodies to share.

### AGENDA

*Continued from p. 3*

The League believes that military force should be viewed as a tool of last resort . . .

The League believes that nuclear weapons should serve only a limited and specific function—that of deterring nuclear attack on the United States—until such time as these weapons are eliminated through arms-control and disarmament agreements . . .

Nuclear Deterrence: The League believes that the United States should vigorously pursue arms-control negotiations in order to ensure that all nations reduce and eventually eliminate their stockpiles of strategic nuclear weapons . . .

North Atlantic Treaty Organization: The League believes that the defense of NATO allies should continue to be a shared responsibility . . .

The League believes there is no appropriate role for U.S. nuclear weapons in the defense of NATO allies . . .

Other Commitments: The League supports the U.S. commitment to defend Japan with conventional forces . . .

Defense Spending: The League believes that defense spending should be examined in the same way as spending for other national needs . . .

In summary, the League believes that national security has many dimensions and cannot be limited to military policy alone. It can be defined as ensuring domestic tranquility, providing for the common defense and promoting the general welfare. Key elements include the country's ability to implement social and environmental programs and to maintain cooperative relationships with other nations. Other important components are effective political leadership and a strong economy. Therefore, in decisions about the federal budget, political leaders should assess the impact of U.S. military spending on the nation's economy and on the government's ability to meet social and environmental needs.

*Note: The above text is excerpted from the full national position, which will be available at the program planning meeting on February 23.*

# County Health Clinic a Step Closer

Thanks to the partnership between Akron Community Health Resources (ACHR) and Robinson Memorial Hospital, Family and Community Services, the county commissioners and the Northeast Ohio Universities College of Medicine and Pharmacy, an estimate 30,000 to 45,000 underserved residents of Portage County will have greater access to health care. The partnership with ACHR brings a federally qualified health center to Portage County.



According to the project's steering committee, the goal is "to provide high-quality primary care and dental services to those residents of Portage County in need

regardless of their ability to pay for those services."

ACHR has operated a fully qualified health center on South Arlington Street in Akron since 1995. It accepts Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance and offers a sliding-scale payment arrangement for those patients with a limited ability to pay for health care.

The Portage County health clinic will be led by Executive Director John Sniezek, whose hiring was announced in November of last year.

Stephen Colecchi, president and CEO of Robinson Memorial Hospital, said that Sniezek also will serve as chief executive officer of ACHR, a position that has been open since the middle of last year. The location of the separate medical clinic in Portage County should be finalized by July.

## CONSENSUS

*Continued from p. 1*

The unique aspect of a national study is that consensus takes place at the grass-roots level of the organization. As the national study committee reviews the responses from across the country, it will have the Herculean task of determining whether consensus has been reached on each of the questions. The final product will go to the National Board of Directors for approval. Then a position will be in force and will be announced. That position then can be used to influence public policy under consideration by Congress and in every state capitol, county courthouse or city hall.

"We can honestly say it will be a miracle if a consensus emerges because of the diverse opinions among League members across the country," Cajka said. "For those Leagues like Kent that are in areas of the U.S. where immigration issues are emerging, this was an important learning process. Each committee member felt the experience was personally very valuable whatever the outcome.

"I would like to recognize the committee members for their dedication to the process over the past two years. They understood the importance of a thorough examination of the issues in order for our League to be able to participate," Cajka added.

The complete position will be printed in *The VOTER* after approval at the national level.

A total of 25 Kent League members participated in the two local consensus meetings. Thanks is extended to all of them.

---

## LWVO Launches 'Power Pledge'

The League of Women Voters of Ohio has announced the launch of Power Pledge in 2008 to nurture civic participation in government and to develop community leaders throughout the state.

Local Leagues in Ohio have been asked to work together as one to reform the system through civic engagement, safeguard and strengthen the country's democracy, and engage the public to actively effect change on the local, state and national levels.

All of these activities require a sustained financial commitment from League members. Along with the traditional one-time

donation, the Power Pledge system will allow donors to enroll in an automatic payment plan. This type of pledge system has been used successfully for years by many nonprofit organizations such as the Public Broadcasting Service and the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Rather than taking the time to write a check, contributors can sign up for Power Pledge with a monthly automatic-payment plan. Donors can budget their contribution over the course of a year by using the

*See PLEDGE, p. 6.*

## PLEDGE

*Continued from p. 5*

pledge system. Their donations will be transferred directly to the League from their checking or credit card account. It is all done automatically through the banks used by the LWVO and the LWVO Education Fund.

Contributors also will be able to split their monthly donation between the LWVO and its Education Fund. There are no additional fees for this service. One-time donations, however, still will be accepted by check or credit card.

In January, local Leagues are to establish a Power Pledge committee and name a chair. The LWVO and the LWVO Education Fund will supply each League with a solicitation packet, including a script explaining the new pledge system that can be used when local Leagues make member calls. The packet also will include the pledge form. That form can be used for one-time donations as well.

The Power Pledge campaign will begin in February and continue through April. In July and December, a rebate will be given to local Leagues. The more members who sign up for Power Pledge, the more the local Leagues will get back.



**LWVK**

## Coming Attractions . . .

### February

**21 Candidate Forum**

Candidates for sheriff and one county commissioner; 7 p.m.; location to be determined.

**23 Program Planning Meeting**

Come help set the national League's agenda for 2008; Mental Health & Recovery Board, 155 E. Main Street, Kent; 9:15 a.m. breakfast, 9:45 a.m. meeting.

### March

**8 Recruitment Brunch**

Social event to enroll new League members and reinvigorate current members; home of Karen and Doug Fuller, 1431 River Edge Blvd., Kent; 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

**26 League Meeting**

Details to come.

### May

- **Annual Meeting**

Week of May 12-18; exact date, time and location to be determined.

### June

**13 League National Convention Starts**

Convention ends June 17.

## The VOTER

Audrey Cielinski Kessler, Editor

1638 S. Lincoln Street

Kent, OH 44240-4449