

The VOTER

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The Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Kent

September 2006

League-Sponsored Town Hall Meeting to Focus on Issues of Government Accountability, Election Law Reform

Citizen participation is what it takes to make Ohio government responsive, fair and honest. Area residents will have a chance to do just that at a town hall meeting on November 14, at 7 p.m. at the United Methodist Church, 1435 E. Main Street, Kent.

The meeting begins with the presentation of an award to four local citizens for their contributions to the community. The honorees are Lois Enlow, director, Portage County Board of Elections; Glenda Enders, deputy director, Portage County Board of Elections; Helen Dix, a longtime supporter of the Voters Guide; and Bill Schultz, Kent City Council at-large representative. Each is being recognized for exemplary civic engagement.

Next is a discussion about accountability and election law reform under the direction of skilled facilitators. Audience members will learn about these issues and share their ideas. They also will have time to talk politics with one another.

The local town hall meeting is part of the the Kent League's participation in a project called imPACT (Political Accountability for Citizens Today), a com-

prehensive two-year program that aims to encourage citizens to get involved in democracy.

The imPACT project provides local town hall meeting organizers "toolbox kits" that con-

Local citizens Enlow, Enders, Dix and Schultz have been chosen as honorees to be recognized for their exemplary civic engagement.

tain a professional introduction to political reform. So far, the kits have information on five topic areas: election administration, judicial independence, redistricting, campaign finance and accountability. They also contain templates for news releases, invitations for other organizations to participate, an event poster and ways to involve the community.

The project is sponsored in part by the Joyce Foundation along with many cosponsoring area organizations.

A League committee is seeking cosponsors for its town hall meeting. No monetary commitment is required of cosponsors;

however, the League does ask that cosponsoring organizations provide volunteers to cover tasks such as providing refreshments, greeting attendees as they arrive, facilitating small-group discussions, distributing flyers and copying resource materials to be distributed at the meeting. To suggest a group for cosponsorship, call Kathy Hardy at 330/673-1672. Please consider volunteering to help on the meeting night, and most of all, plan on attending. For more information about imPACT, see the August issue *The VOTER*.



LWVK Events Alert . . .

Tuesday, October 19, 6:30 p.m.

Noncommissioner Candidates, Levies & Issues Night; Stanton Middle School, 1175 Hudson Road, Kent

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From the President's Desk:

Election Fever... Candidates Forums... Town Hall Meeting

Can you smell election fever right around the corner? Good. Because we'll need your help and good will during the next month or so as we gear up for statewide and county elections as well as a town hall meeting on political accountability and election reform.

Much has been said over the decades about how the League is always the best place to go for good material about elections, and we strive to present balanced candidates forums.

Those meet-and-greets are the "signature" events of the League in Kent. But we can't do it without your help.

Terrie Tarchinski-Nielsen has been "in training" as forum host for a few rounds now and could use some help filling out the rest of the duties at the forums slated for October 19 and 28. What can you do to help? Show up, first off. It was hard last spring to host

a candidates forum at the Kentway apartments where the candidates outnumbered the audience. We have had good snacks donated, and that would add to the event again this time. You could run the stopwatch or welcome people at the door. And, we could use some cosponsors, so spread the word. It's never too late for a group to sign on as a cosponsor!

The town hall meeting in November will give voters a chance to talk about accountability and election law reform—just a week after the November election. We are hoping that no irregularities are reported in November but, if they are, it should add to the interest and liveliness of the discussion that evening. Mark November 14 on your calendar, and plan to join us!

- Barb

Kent League of Women Voters Income Statement for Fiscal Year End June 30, 2006

Income	Actual	Budget	Variance
Contributions	\$1,942	\$2,660	\$(718)
Dues	3,070	3,600	(530)
Northfield Park Fund-Raiser	388	300	88
Other	498	150	348
Total Income	\$5,898	\$6,710	\$(812)
Expenditures			
Board & Administration	\$ 760	\$725	\$35
Finance Drive	367	400	(33)
Education	665	1,150	(485)
VOTER	215	710	(495)
League Support			
National Dues	1,680	1,714	(34)
State Dues	1,113	1,188	(75)
Public Support	345	320	25
Events	552	350	202
Travel & Meetings	754	800	(46)
Total Expenditures	\$6,451	\$7,357	\$(906)
Excess	\$(553)	\$(647)	\$94
Beginning Balance	\$10,519	—	—
Balance 6/30/06	\$9,966	—	—
Education Fund			
Receipts			
Phonathon	\$163	\$75	\$88
Contributions	660	321	339
Total Receipts	\$823	\$396	\$427
Expenses			
Dues - LWVO	371	396	(25)
Net Change	452	—	\$452
Balance - Beginning	\$397	—	—
Balance 6/30/06	\$849	—	—

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/>.

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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-Ross
Membership

Jackie Waltz
Finance

Kathy Hardy
Programs

Gail Pytel
Programs

Stacy Yaniglos
Programs

Terrie Tarchinski Nielsen
Voter Service

Amie Cajka
Immediate Past President

Jan Rusnack
Past President/Adviser

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

Vicki Kline
Voter's Guide

Audrey Cielinski Kessler
Voter & Web Site

Jan Rusnack
Voter Registration

Federal Court Says Three Provisions of a State Law Violate the NVRA

Judge Kathleen O'Malley of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio granted a preliminary injunction September 1 in the matter of *Project Vote, et al. v. J. Kenneth Blackwell, et al.*, which enjoined the state of Ohio from enforcing three provisions of H.B. 3. The federal court ruled that the preregistration, training and affirmation requirements set forth in section 3505.29 of the Ohio Revised Code were not uniform and in violation of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA).

Section 3505.29 provided that all "compensated" voter registration workers be trained, register with the secretary of state and complete an affirmation every time they submit voter registration forms that they had completed the training and have complied with the statute. The federal court ruled that the statute erected barriers, which are contrary to the NVRA, and that these barriers placed undue hardship on poor and elderly voter registration workers. Although the issue was not before O'Malley, she stated in a footnote that she did not believe that applying the preregistration, training and affirmation requirements on "compensated" and noncompensated voter registration workers would be justified.

The second provision of H.B. 3 that was enjoined, in part, by O'Malley deals with the direct-return requirement. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit did not object to the 10-day requirement, so that is still in effect for the upcoming election. The 10-day requirement mandates that all voter registration cards be mailed and/or taken to the local board of elections office or to the secretary of state's office in Columbus within 10 days of the registration being completed. The federal court did rule, however, that there would be no criminal penalties upon anyone for failure to return the voter registration cards because of the requirement's "chilling effect on volunteer participation in voter registration . . . and "imposes an extreme burden on First Amendment rights. . . ."

The third provision of H.B. 3 that was enjoined by O'Malley regards the disclosure requirement. Section 3503.14 required that voter registration workers disclose their name, address and name of employer. The statute itself does not differentiate between a "compensated" and uncompensated worker. That "compensated" distinction was placed on the voter registration cards by the secretary of state. The statute requires a signature from the person who provided the form, aided in filling out the form and who received the form. This could be three different people. The court found that such a requirement was in violation of the NVRA and was preempted and that the statute failed to serve the state's legitimate interests of preventing voter fraud.

The court's ruling is provisional but will apply to the general election this November. The hearing for a permanent injunction is set for after the election. Additionally, this ruling has no effect on the new identification requirements that are in effect now.

League Supports Renewal of MHRB Issue 22

The Mental Health and Recovery Board of Portage County is seeking the renewal of its 0.3 mill levy on November 7. Passage of the renewal levy is not a tax increase and will generate \$300,000 as it has in past years.

The board helps fund services for children, adults and families who are affected by mental health issues and/or addictions. It funds services at Coleman Professional Services, Townhall II, Children's Advantage, Family & Community Services, and for its Safer Futures program, the Bair Foundation and Compass Recovery.

Funding for social services in general is being cut. By voting for this renewal, you will help to ensure that the funding is not cut even more. The board of the Kent League voted to support the Mental Health and Recovery Board renewal at its September 13 meeting.

LWVUS Launches 2 New Election-Related Web Sites

The League of Women Voters of the United States plans to launch a national election Web site in early October. The address is www.VOTE411.org.

A related site evaluates the arguments on issues to be discussed during the town hall meetings later this year and can be viewed at www.ohioimpact.org. For more information about the Kent League's meeting, see page 1.

League Supports Additional Levy for Portage County Health Department

Voters in Portage County (except for the cities of Kent and Ravenna) are being asked to approve in November an additional levy of 0.4 mills for the Portage County Health Department. The levy will generate approximately \$1,040,900 annually. The Kent League supports passage of the levy, voting to do so at its board meeting on September 13.

The current tax rate of .4 mills was originally approved in 1955, has been renewed and now has an effective rate of .129174 mills, generating \$287,701. The levy will expire in 2007. If the additional levy is approved, Health Department officials said they will not ask for a renewal of the current levy.

The department plans to use the increased funds to improve disaster planning, obtain more accessible Health Department facilities for senior citizens and the disabled, increase the children's immunization program, and reduce some fees.

The Kent League's board based its decision on national

and state League positions in the area of meeting basic human needs. In order to prevent and reduce poverty, the national League supports policies and programs that provide access to health care, including preventive care, primary care, maternal and child health care, emergency care, catastrophic care, nursing home care, and mental health care as well as access to substance abuse programs, health and sex education programs, and nutrition programs.

The Portage County Health Department provides nursing services such as immunizations for children, flu shots, and health screenings (for cholesterol, blood, sugar and blood pressure). The department also investigates and responds to outbreaks of infectious diseases.

The Environmental Division inspects water wells and sewage systems, restaurants, and grocery stores and conducts health and safety inspections of schools, motels, swimming pools, mobile home parks and campgrounds.



News from LWVUS & LWVO

Password No Longer Needed for Member Section of Web Site

The Member section of the LWVUS Web site no longer requires a password to access. For information that still requires a password to access (such as subscribing to League listservs or viewing the database), members still need to log in using the same username and password. New members will need to register to access these resources.

If you haven't given Nena Hankins your e-mail, call her at 330/673-0128 or send an e-mail to nhankins@att.net. She will update your national membership, and you will be entered into the system. When you log in for the first time, you will be prompted to enter your first name, last name and e-mail address. If you have any questions, send an e-mail to membership@lwv.org.

Flyer Covers New Ohio Voter ID Laws and Rules

The League of Women Voters of Ohio offers a free flyer titled "Be Sure Your Vote Counts" to members and nonmembers. More than 100,000 copies of the flyer have been printed and can be downloaded by going to [http://www.lwvohio.org/VoterProtection/27560LWV vote counts two-sided final.pdf](http://www.lwvohio.org/VoterProtection/27560LWV%20vote%20counts%20two-sided%20final.pdf).

Economic Segregation Among Topics at Public Forum on Homelessness

Economic segregation, educational success and homelessness will be the focus of this year's Public Forum on Homelessness, a presentation of the Columbus Coalition for the Homeless set for Wednesday, October 18, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Huntington Hall at the YWCA, 65 S. Fourth Street, Columbus.

This is the sixth year for the coalition-sponsored forum and the second year that the League of Women Voters of Metro Columbus and the League of Women Voters of Ohio have been sponsors. As in the past, the goal of the forum is to ener-

See *HOMELESSNESS*, p. 5.

National Convention Wrap-Up

Delegates to the 47th National Convention of the League of Women Voters adopted all existing positions and added a position in support of abolishing the death penalty. The statement on the death penalty will become part of the national League's overall position on social policy. The national League and the Leagues of Ohio and several other states had already adopted this same position.

Convention delegates adopted a position that supports abolition of the death penalty.

More than 700 delegates representing 49 states attended the gathering June 10-13 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Gail Pytel represented the Kent League. Prior to the opening plenary session, the 25-member Ohio delegation met for lunch and used the time to get to know each other and to discuss their League's activities in support of the concurrence on abolition of the death penalty.

Delegates also approved an amendment that supports the concept of Internet neutrality. The amendment calls on Congress to protect access to the Internet. A three-year study of immigration was adopted as well. The scope of the study would encompass immigration in the United States—both legal and illegal—including laws, policy enforcement and the impact on the economy, jobs, education systems, health care, federal social programs, and state and local governments.

The PMP (per member payment) paid by local Leagues was increased to \$26.30 for 2006 to 2007 and to \$26.80 for 2007 to 2008. In real inflation-adjusted terms, the new rate is less than it was 15 years ago. Some of the increase will be used for the expenses related to the immigration study. Delegates also increased the annual dues for nationally recruited members from \$45 to \$55. Five dollars of the increase will be given to the home state of the nationally recruited member.

Mary G. Wilson of Albuquerque, New Mexico, is the new national League president. "This Convention proved that the League remains a vibrant, grassroots organization," said Wilson. "We debated many of the critical issues facing citizens across the nation, including immigration reform, the erosion of civil liberties, [and] the need for redistricting reform and voting systems in which voters have confidence," Wilson added. Although two members were nominated from the floor for national League office, the slate recommended by the nominating committee was elected and will serve for the next two years.

The keynote speaker was Thomas Mann of the Brookings Institute, whose topic was "American Democracy in a Partisan Era." Another highlight of the convention was a panel discussion titled "Merit Selection? Elections? Appointments? Understanding the System to Defend the Court." This discussion emphasized the importance of a strong third branch of government. The Monday night banquet featured Garrison Keillor.

HOMELESSNESS

Continued from p. 4

gize participants with information, strategies and skills to become better advocates for individuals and families who experience homelessness in their communities.

The forum will address the role that education plays in the lives of those who face homelessness and what can be done to expand educational opportunities for all students in Ohio.

For information about registration, continuing education units and scholarships, go to www.columbushomeless.org or call 614/252-3257. The deadline for registration is October 4.

Results of Joyce Foundation imPACT Study Available Online

Results of the Joyce Foundation's landmark survey of public attitudes toward political and governmental reform in five Midwestern states—Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota—are available at www.ohioimpact.org.

The Chicago organization surveyed 2,040 adults, about 400 per state, in June and July. One of the nation's foremost leaders in philanthropy, the the Joyce Foundation is the major funder of the Ohio League's ohioimPACT project and the Kent League's town hall meeting in November.

For more information on the poll, contact Jerolyn Barbee at jbarbee@lwvohio.org or Barb Hipsman at bhipsman@kent.edu.

HELP WANTED

Town Hall Meeting

Cosponsors are needed for the town hall meeting on November 14. If you have any suggestions, call Kathy Hardy at 330/673-1672.

Candidates Forum

Helpers are needed for the candidates forum on October 19. Here are some ways you can help: provide snacks, run the stopwatch, welcome people at the door. To volunteer or to find out other ways you can help, call Terrie Tarchinski-Nielsen at 330/274-0864.

Voters Guide

Helpers are needed for proofreading the November election Voters Guide. If you can help, call Vicki Kline at 330/842-2782.

SAVE THE DATE: DECEMBER 9

Mark your calendar for the League's brunch for newly elected public officials on December 9 at the Twin Lakes Country Club. The featured speaker is Kent State University photographer Gary Harwood. He will talk about the immigration book *Growing Season, the Life of a Migrant Community*. Harwood and Dave Hasler of the KSU English Department interviewed and photographed dozens of immigrants who work on a Hartville, Ohio, farm. Please be sure to join us.



LWVK Calendar . . .

October

11 **Kent League Board Meeting**

Pufferbelly restaurant, Franklin Avenue and West Main Street, Kent; 6:30 p.m.; members welcome.

19 **Noncommissioner Candidates, Levies & Issues Night**

Stanton Middle School auditoria; 1175 Hudson Road, Kent; candidates will be introduced and asked to give brief opening statements; question-and-answer period to follow; information on levies and issues will be available; 6:30 p.m.

28 **Commissioner Candidates Night**

Kent Free Library (if available); candidates will be introduced and asked to give brief opening statements; question-and-answer period to follow; information on levies and issues will be available; 10 a.m..

November

8 **Kent League Board Meeting**

Pufferbelly restaurant, Franklin Avenue and West Main Street, Kent; 6:30 p.m.; members welcome.

14 **Town Hall Meeting & Civic Engagement Awards**

Topic: Government accountability and election law reform; United Methodist Church, 1435 E. Main Street, Kent; 7 p.m.

The VOTER

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