



League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area

March 2012

www.lwvka.org

Co-Presidents: Connie Ferguson and Paula Manley

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League Phone: 269-544-0303

LWVMI Redistricting Study

By Paula Manley

The Michigan redistricting lines have been drawn. Since they are set until 2021 why should we be concerned? The Michigan Redistricting Collaborative, of which the LWVMI is a member, educated the public about the system in 2011 and pointed out the problems with the current system. LWVMI decided that we could not wait until 2021 to address any potential reforms. Thus, we have the State Study on Redistricting which will conclude by June 1.

The current redistricting system is governed by MI Public Act 221 of 1999, Congressional Redistricting Act and P.A 463 of 1996. The Congressional Redistricting Act established guidelines for drawing Michigan congressional districts. The guidelines comprise provisions for strict population equity, upholding the Voting Rights Act, preserving political boundaries, contiguity, compactness, single member districts and numbering districts. P. A. 463 established guidelines for drawing Michigan's legislative districts and gave jurisdiction to the Michigan Supreme Court to review redistricting plans. The maps drawn in 2011 are available on the [Secretary of State's site](#).

Each state has its own procedure for drawing the lines. In 28 states the state legislature is responsible. The remainder of the states have commissions. The Michigan Redistricting Collaborative believes it is important that Michigan reform its system to allow for transparency and public participation.

The LWVMI Redistricting Study committee has provided six pages of background material for members to review. You may look at the information on the LWVMI website. If you have an interest in exploring this issue with local League members, please contact **Paula Manley** at 345-7623 or pjmanley@hotmail.com. The time commitment involves reading and one or two meetings prior to May. This is an opportunity to participate in shaping a position which could be used to advocate for reform. Please join us!

Calendar

Mar. 20 Board Meeting

Tues. The Park Club
5:30 pm 219 W. South St, Kalamazoo
Food available for purchase
6 pm Meeting
Questions? Call 269-544-0303
or email president@lwvka.org
for more information.

Apr. 17 Annual Meeting

Tues. Park Club
5:30 pm 219 W. South St, Kalamazoo
Watch for your invitation!

Note: Board meets on 3rd Tuesdays. Members are welcome to attend all Board Meetings.

**A race to the bottom
is very destructive.
Investing in government
is more constructive.**

Congratulations Connie!

By Paula Manley

Connie Ferguson has been selected by the LWVUS Selection Committee to join the Ruth S. Shur Fellow National Coaching Team. Connie is one of 15 individuals from around the country to join the 2012-14 class. She will partner with coaching teams nationwide to work to strengthen the League. Connie has had experience in various capacities on the local, state, and national League levels. We congratulate her and wish her well in her new volunteer role for the LWVUS.

News From National and State

Lobby Corps Action—In January, the LWVUS Lobby Corps urged Senators to oppose efforts in the Senate to overturn Administration initiatives that protect public health and the environment. These initiatives include the new mercury and air toxics rule and the recent decision to block the Keystone XL pipeline.

Elections: Voting Rights Act under Attack—A challenge to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act has been on the radar of voting rights groups across the country as numerous new voter suppression laws are being implemented. Section 5 requires all or parts of 16 states (called "covered jurisdictions") to "pre-clear" proposed changes in voting or election procedures with either the U.S. Department of Justice or the U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia. The U.S. District Court in DC heard arguments to overturn Section 5. We anticipate that this argument could be heard by the US Supreme Court before the November elections and could jeopardize a key provision that has been used to protect millions of voters.

EPA Must Act without Delay to Limit GHG Emissions from Power Plants, Refineries—

Power plants and refineries account for nearly 40 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. EPA regulation of these two key sources of global warming pollution is long overdue. A [two-page fact sheet](#) reviews the status of the EPA's development of performance standards for power plants and refineries and provides talking points you can use to advocate for EPA regulations with your Member of Congress or in an op-ed piece for your local newspaper. Find more information about the EPA's efforts to regulate GHG emissions and toxic air pollutants in the Clean Air Defense section of the Toolkit for Climate Action on lww.org.

League Supports DISCLOSE 2012 in Congress—The [LWVUS Lobby Corps is carrying a message](#) to

House offices, asking Representatives to cosponsor H.R. 4010, DISCLOSE 2012, introduced by Rep. Chris Van Hollen. The legislation provides essential new disclosure requirements to cover the hundreds of millions of dollars in secret contributions being injected into federal elections by non-profit groups and other entities. The legislation also ensures that there will be timely disclosure by Super PACs. The League and coalition partners also sent a letter to the House in support of H.R. 4010.

Global Democracy: People-to-People Travel to Cuba—

The League of Women Voters Education Fund, in close partnership with the Education Fund of the Florida League, is offering several opportunities for League members to travel to Cuba in 2012. [Find more information.](#)

Registration for Rio+20 Conference Now Open—

The Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, "Rio+20," will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 20-22, 2012. The conference will be preceded by the third Preparatory Committee meeting of the Conference from June 13-15. Registration is now open and will close on May 20. All attendees must be registered by our UN Observer, Rosalee Keech (unobserver@lww.org). [Find information on the conference](#) and follow news on lww.org.

LWVUS/EF Boards Announce "Power the Vote" Initiative—

The LWVUS and LWVEF Boards adopted a comprehensive "Power the Vote" initiative designed to maximize voter protection advocacy, registration, education and mobilization priorities in 2012. The campaign will set goals and leverage resources at all levels of the League in order to serve as many voters as possible this year. Keep an eye out for more information in the coming weeks and at the National Convention in June!

News From National and State

LWVUS Legislative Priorities for 2012

—The LWVUS Board established the following as Legislative Priorities for 2012: Voter Protection, Campaign Finance Reform, Environmental Defense, and Health Care Defense. In addition, these items were included on the LWVUS Watch List for 2012: Fair Taxation, CEDAW (Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), UN Support, and Immigration. Items on the Watch List will be acted upon if the opportunity arises for League action, it does not interfere with action on an LWVUS Priority and it appears the LWVUS can make an impact. The decisions were based on what issues are likely to come before the 112th Congress, the opportunities to make an impact, program decisions made by members at the last Convention, member interest, and resources available to manage these priorities effectively. The Board reviews these priorities

throughout the year, making changes if necessary.

LWVMI Redistricting Study

—At the 2011 LWVMI convention, members voted to conduct a study of the redistricting process. The Redistricting State Study Committee, chaired by Program VP **Fran Hamburg**, has developed consensus questions and background information for the study. These materials were sent to local League presidents and also are available on the LWVMI web site. Deadline for completion of the study is June 1. The Michigan Redistricting Collaborative, of which LWVMI is a member, is looking forward to the completion of this study and anticipates that the LWVMI position will be a significant help as they draft a reform proposal and that LWVMI will be active in the fall campaign to draw attention to concerns.

Nominating Committee Slate for 2012-2013

By Yolanda Mitts

The Nominating Committee met in January to identify potential nominees for Board positions. We continue to meet via email. Our most difficult positions to fill are the VP for Program and Treasurer. As of this date, those positions are still open.

The following slate of Board members to be voted on at the 2012 Annual Meeting is as follows:

Co-Presidents

Paula Manley & Michele McGowen

Vice President for Program:

(Open)

Treasurer:

(Open)

Membership:

Frances Eckenrode

Board Members:

Sabrina Pritchett-Evans

Denise Hartsough

Georgiann McWilliams

Carol Urban

Nominating Committee:

Yolanda Mitts, Chair

Rebekah Fennell

Kay Anderson

The Nominating Committee also extends our appreciation to Board Members, **Sabrina Pritchett-Evans** and **Ruth Caputo** for their invaluable assistance. If you are willing to help us fill the above open positions, please contact **Yolanda Mitts** at ymitts@yahoo.com.

LWVKA Program Planning 2012

LWVKA supports concurrence on sentencing reform.

By Michele McGowen

On Saturday, January 28, 2012, local League members **Connie Ferguson, Paula Manley, Ken Manley, Terry Hluchyj, Ruth Caputo, & Michele McGowen** braved the blustery morning to meet at Disability Network for the 2012 Program Planning meeting.

The program planning process is a tool for identifying issues for League study. LWVUS policy positions are reviewed every two years. LWVMI policy positions are also reviewed every two years, alternating years with LWVUS. LWVKA (local) policy positions are reviewed each year.

This year, LWVKA had the option to recommend one *new* study OR recommend *one review and update* of a current policy OR recommend one *concurrence* OR to make *no recommendation* to LWVUS regarding national policy positions.

With additional input from **KC Miller** and **Kay Perry**, the group reviewed and discussed current LWVUS and LWVKA policy positions and concluded that at this time there was no need for substantive changes to any of these policies. No ideas for new national or local studies were brought forward.

Three other League's from around the country submitted requests for Program Planning meeting. Two were requesting Concurrence recommendations, the other was a suggestion for a policy review and update. The topics were Sentencing Reform, Creating a Department of Peace, and Nuclear Energy Policy.

After discussing the merits of each request, members decided to support the LWV-Washington DC area's request for Concurrence regarding Sentencing Reform.

Below is the language that will be brought forward at National Convention. More details can be found at www.lwvdc.org.

National Program Planning Concurrence recommendation regarding Sentencing Reform

Sentencing Policy:

- (1) The LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime.
- (2) The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

Voter Registration

More voter registration volunteers needed.

By Karen Eddy

Voter Registration Volunteers for 2011—thank you, thank you, thank you!!

Each Tuesday morning from 9-11 a.m., **Sara Wick, Fran Eckenrode, Margaret McAllister, Diane Worden, Karen Eddy, or Carol Urban** registered voters at the Department of Human Services (DHS) on Stockbridge Avenue in Kalamazoo. It is a pleasure to be a partner in this commitment.

Also throughout 2011 each of these League members volunteered at various voter registration sites: **Paula Aldridge, Suzanne Cook,**

Stuart Eddy, Connie Ferguson, Denise Hartsough, Terry Hluchyj, Barbara Huber, Janet Jones, Cheryl Lyon-Jenness, Margaret McAllister, Sue Nelmes, Janet Nykaza, Sabrina Pritchett-Evans, Charlotte Russell, Janet Scarrow, Carol Urban, Sara Wick, Beverly Byle, Martha Cohen, Yolanda Mitts, Carol Payne-Smith, Mary Gustas, Louise Robeck, and Fran Eckenrode.

We need at least 15 more volunteers in addition to those listed above for continuing this service in 2012. Please call or email **Karen Eddy** at kseddy2@yahoo.com or 269-599-6399.

League of Women Voters General Fund Statement of Revenues and Expenditures Budget Year July 2012—June 2013

REVENUES	2011-12	Year to Date 1/31/12	2012-13 Proposed
Membership Dues	\$8,500	\$4,855.00	\$8,010
Members Contributions	3,500	1,415.00	2,000
Non-Member Contributions	500	460.00	500
<i>Bulletin</i> Sponsors	150	100.00	100
Fund Raising Sales	200	108.00	140
Annual Meeting Income	1,000	—	1,000
Women's Equality Day	250	—	100
Transfer from Education Fund	1,000	583.33	2,000
Interest Income	<u>250</u>	<u>150.74</u>	<u>250</u>
Total Revenues	\$15,350	\$7,672.07	\$14,100
EXPENDITURES			
Office Expense	\$100	187.42	200
Postage, Bulk Mail, PO Box	885	476.40	800
Telephone	525	331.46	525
Website	145	22.95	145
<i>Bulletin</i> Expense	2,100	973.18	1,200
Finance Drive Expense	10	283.64	200
External Organizational Dues	275	25.00	275
National PMP	4,410	3,071.25	4,005
State PMP	3,000	2,252.78	2,904
Sponsorship	500	100.00	500
Meeting Costs	50	—	46
Annual Meeting Expense	1,000	—	1,000
TAG Project—Advocacy	1,050	1,302.00	1,000
National/State Convention	1,000	—	1,000
Membership Recruitment	<u>300</u>	<u>313.69</u>	<u>300</u>
Total Expenditures	\$15,350	\$9,339.77	\$14,100
Total Revenues & Expenditures	\$—	(\$1,667.70)	\$—

“The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Join us in making democracy work!”

A League Study on Privatization of Government Services, Assets, and Functions

Help shape policy on privatization issues.

By Michele McGowen

Participating in a League study is an opportunity to shape public policy advocacy at the national, state, and local levels. It is a way to become deeply informed about urgent or complex issues. It is also a way to meet and connect with others who share your interests and passion. In fact, those reasons sound like the reasons many of us joined the League in the first place! Today, I am inviting you to join our study on the Privatization of Government Services, Assets, and Function.

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

The [LWVUS website](#) has links to background material that will help us as we prepare for the Privatization Consensus meeting. League members without internet access may contact **Michele McGowen**, VP Program, at 553-9699 to obtain printed copies of study material.

Study background documents from the LWVUS include:

- The Legal Framework of Transparency and Accountability within the Context of Privatization
- Subcontracting Public Education
- Privatization of Prisons
- Privatization of a Publicly Owned Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Public Library Privatization - A Case Study
- Deregulation of Railroads

A consensus meeting will occur in mid April 2012 - watch for the April *Bulletin* for more details. In order to prepare for our discussion in April, please review the consensus questions on page 7.

If you cannot attend the Privatization consensus meeting, you may submit your responses to these questions to **Michele McGowen**, 1312 Manor Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49006 before April 5, 2012.

See Consensus Questions on next page.

Needed

10'x10' canopy to keep papers and volunteers dry while registering voters. If you have one or see one for sale, please contact Karen Eddy at kseddy2@yahoo.com or 269-599-6399.

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PRIVATIZATION CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

1. As a general matter, the extent to which government functions, services and assets have been privatized in the past decade is:
 - Much too much Too much About right
 - Too little Much too little No consensus
2. Core government services and functions important to well-being of the people should remain with government and not be transferred to the private sector.
 - Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 - Strongly disagree No consensus
3. As a matter of good government policy, which of the following criteria should be applied when making decisions to transfer government services, assets and functions to the private sector?
 - a. **Transparency and Accountability:** All government contracts with private companies for services must ensure public access to relevant records and information regarding contracted services, functions and assets and provide for adequate government oversight and control.
 - High priority Lower priority
 - Not a priority No consensus
 - b. **Public Well-being:** Provisions are in place to assure that, in the event any public services are to be privatized, there will be no increased risks to public well-being, especially to vulnerable populations.
 - High priority Lower priority
 - Not a priority No consensus
 - c. **Cost and Quality:** Privatized services should not appreciably increase the costs or decrease the quality of services to the public.
 - High priority Lower priority
 - Not a priority No consensus
 - d. **Environmental and Natural Resources:** Defined parameters should be in place to assure that environmental and natural resources are not compromised.
 - High priority Lower priority
 - Not a priority No consensus
 - e. **Contracts and Sales of Public Assets:** All government contracts and privatized public assets should be subject to competitive bidding and comply with all laws regarding awarding contracts.
 - High priority Lower priority
 - Not a priority No consensus
 - f. **Economic Impact:** Privatization should not result in a negative economic impact on the communities in which the services are provided.
 - High priority Lower priority
 - Not a priority No consensus
 - g. **Government Recovery of Services and Assets:** Provisions should be in place to recover key services, assets and functions should the private sector fail to safeguard them.
 - High priority Lower priority
 - Not a priority No consensus
4. Privatization is not appropriate:
 - a. When the government lacks the will, ability or resources to adequately oversee contracts with the private entity and any successor thereto.
 - Agree Disagree No Consensus
 - b. When there is no private entity able or willing to provide the service for the short and long term.
 - Agree Disagree No Consensus
 - c. When it poses a potential threat to national security.
 - Agree Disagree No Consensus
 - d. When it poses a risk to personal or security data.
 - Agree Disagree No Consensus
 - e. When there has been evidence of potential corruption.
 - Agree Disagree No Consensus
 - f. When the private entity's goals and purposes are not compatible with public well-being.
 - Agree Disagree No Consensus
 - g. When the private entity has not complied with existing government requirements for public records, open meetings or publication of reports and audits.
 - Agree Disagree No Consensus
 - h. When a loss of revenue decreases government support for mandated or critical services.
 - Agree Disagree No Consensus
5. Some states have developed laws and regulations to control the process of privatization within their jurisdictions.

As a general matter, should privatization be regulated?

 - a. Yes, all privatization efforts should be regulated.
 - b. Yes, some types of privatization efforts should be regulated.
 - c. No, privatization efforts should never be regulated
 - d. No consensus
6. Which of the following should be included in the regulatory process when privatizing public assets, services and functions?
 - a. Timely public announcements regarding intentions to privatize and the clear and measurable expected benefits to the public.
 - Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 - Strongly disagree No consensus
 - b. Public and stakeholder (investors, shareholders, experts) input into the decision and terms of the contract.
 - Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 - Strongly disagree No consensus
 - c. Feasibility study regarding performance, costs and benefits.
 - Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 - Strongly disagree No consensus
 - d. Adherence to all laws regarding public contracts..
 - Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 - Strongly disagree No consensus
 - e. Transition plans for displaced employees.
 - Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 - Strongly disagree No consensus
 - f. Accountability and transparency provisions in all contracts.
 - Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 - Strongly disagree No consensus
 - g. Regular performance evaluations including meaningful opportunity for public comment.
 - Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 - Strongly disagree No consensus
 - h. Provisions for transferring services and assets back to the government or another contractor in the event of inadequate performance.
 - Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 - Strongly disagree No consensus
 - i. Adequate resources for enforcement.
 - Strongly agree Agree Disagree
 - Strongly disagree No consensus



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of the Kalamazoo Area
P.O. Box 2106
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2106

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
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Kalamazoo, Michigan
Permit No. 1107

Returned Service Requested

**REMEMBER—EVEN IF YOU HAVEN'T THE TIME FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION,
YOUR MEMBERSHIP ALONE WILL STRENGTHEN OUR VOICE.**

- Yes! I want to Take Back the System. Please sign me up!
- I'm enclosing a check for \$60 for individual membership.
- I'm enclosing a check for \$30 for student membership.
- I'm enclosing a check for \$90 for household membership.

NAME OF SECOND HOUSEHOLD MEMBER _____

- In addition to my membership, I'd like to make a contribution of \$_____
- Please send me more information on the League of Women Voters.
- I can't join right now, but I'm enclosing \$_____ to support League activities.

Because we lobby at the local, state and national levels, membership dues and other contributions to the League of Women Voters are not tax-deductible.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP CODE _____

PHONE HOME _____

PHONE OFFICE _____



Make check payable and mail to:
The League of Women Voters
Paula Aldridge, Treasurer
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