

July 2010

PO Box 142  
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# The Brunswick Voter



## Items of Interest

- What's Happening at Home?
- DISCLOSE Act Passes House
- Hearings on New START Treaty

## HealthCare.gov

The federal government has launched a new Web site called HealthCare.gov to inform the public about the Affordable Care Act. There are sections for families with children, individuals, people with disabilities, seniors, young adults and employers.

The site highlights the five questions that follow:

~What are health insurance exchanges and when will they be launched?

~What is the Patient Bill of Rights and how does it affect me?

~How is coverage for young adults expanding?

~Which businesses qualify for health insurance tax credits?

~What actions are being taken to strengthen Medicare?

## June 8 Primary Results

Augusta, ME - On June 8, the parties selected their candidates for the General Election. Approximately 20 percent of registered voters went to the polls.

For Governor, the Democrats nominated Senate President Elizabeth "Libby" Mitchell. The Republicans nominated Waterville Mayor Paul LePage.

There are also three unenrolled candidates in the gubernatorial race: Eliot Cutler of Cape Elizabeth, Shawn Moody of Gorham, and Kevin Scott of Andover.

In the 1st District, Representative Chellie Pingree was unopposed in the Democratic Primary, and Dean Scontras was also unopposed in the Republican Primary.

In the 2nd District, Representative Michael Michaud was unopposed in the Democratic Primary, and Jason Levesque was also unopposed in the Republican Primary.

Question 1 about tax reform was defeated by a margin of 61 to 39 percent. All four of the bond issues were approved by varying margins.

## Report from 2010 LWVUS Convention - Ann Luther & Barbara McDade

Atlanta, GA - This year Ann Luther, Barbara McDade and Colleen Tucker represented Maine at the LWVUS Convention.

On the first evening, they met with delegates from Maryland and Saratoga Springs, New York to discuss Maine and Maryland's positions on marriage equality. Then, by an overwhelming majority, the Convention concurred with the two state positions, adding to the Equality of Opportunity position the following: "LWVUS supports legislation to equalize the legal rights,

obligations, and benefits available to same-gender couples with those available to heterosexual couples. LWVUS supports legislation to permit same-gender couples to marry under civil law. The League believes that the civil status of marriage is already clearly distinguished from the religious institution of marriage and that religious rights will be preserved."

Through the use of concurrence, the Convention also added to the third sentence of the LWVUS position on the selection of the president the

following: "We support the use of the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal of the direct popular vote for election of the president until the abolition of the Electoral College is accomplished."

The Convention also used the concurrence process to amend and update the LWVUS Arms Control position. Among other things, the updated position encourages the United States to assume

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## What's Happening at Home?

Arrowsic, ME - On June 16, voters at the **Arrowsic** Town Meeting approved a \$198,423 municipal budget. They also re-elected Selectman Larry Wilson, who ran unopposed.

During the June 8 Primary, the voters of **Bath** rejected a \$300,000 bond ordinance to construct an artificial turf field at McMann Field by a margin of 1,522 to 861. Following the election, the City Council launched an investigation into whether municipal resources had been used to influence the outcome of the vote.

**Brunswick** voters approved a \$32.3 million school budget by a margin of 3,691 to 1,179.

The Brunswick Town Council may reduce the number of polling places for the November 2 election from six to one. On July 12, the Council will hold a public hearing about its proposal to have a single polling place at the Brunswick Junior High School.

On June 29, **Freeport** and Brunswick signed a six-year contract in which Brunswick assumed responsibility for all Freeport emergency dispatch services.

Although opponents of dispatch consolidation filed a petition to overturn the approval of the contract by the Town Council, they failed to gather the 626 signatures from registered voters necessary to put the issue on the ballot. The petition drive gen-

erated a complaint to the Maine Human Rights Commission when a disabled voter found it difficult to appear before the town clerk to sign the document.

All five **RSU 1** towns - Arrowsic, Bath, Phippsburg, West Bath and Woolwich - approved a \$25 million school budget by a total margin of 3,343 to 1,131.

The **RSU 5** towns of Durham, Freeport and Pownal approved a \$23.6 million school budget by a total margin of 2,345 to 1,607. However, the budget passed due only to the large number of votes it received in the Town of Freeport. Durham and Pownal voters defeated the budget by a total of 949 votes.

On April 28, the RSU 5 Board of Directors voted 7 to 4 to eliminate the 7th and 8th grades at Pownal Elementary School for the 2010-11 year. It also voted to eliminate the 6th grade for the 2011-12 year. Parents may choose to send their children to either Durham Elementary School or Freeport Middle School.

On the fifth attempt, voters in the **RSU 12** towns of Alna, Chelsea, Palermo, Somerville, Westport, Whitefield, Windsor and Wiscasset approved a 2009-10 school budget in the amount of \$26.1 million by a margin of 62 to 38 percent. They also approved a 2010-11 school budget in the amount of \$24.9 million by a margin of

66 to 34 percent.

All four **SAD 75** towns - Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Harpswell and Topsham - approved a \$34.8 million school budget by a total margin of 4,311 to 1,525.

On June 10, the SAD 75 Board of Directors voted for the second time to close the West Harpswell School and send its 61 students to Harpswell Islands School. The margin was 12 to 2. Next March, Harpswell voters must decide whether or not to keep the school open. If they decide to retain it, the Town of Harpswell must pay the additional operating costs to SAD 75.

Last March, Harpswell voters decided by a margin of 906 to 827 to keep the West Harpswell School open for the 2010-11 year. The additional operating costs are \$219,000.

On May 19, **Topsham** voters cut \$150,500 from the Town's proposed capital budget. As a result of those cuts, the property tax increase was lowered from 7.5 to 6.45 percent. Only 246 voters - or 3.6 percent of those registered - attended Town Meeting.

Topsham voters overwhelmingly passed a 180-day moratorium on medical marijuana dispensaries. However, they rejected an ordinance that would have allowed residents to keep six chickens in urban or rural areas.

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a leadership role in the international arms control movement.

Both the Board-recommended study on the federal role in public education and a study of privatization proposed from the floor were approved by the Convention. The education study will most likely focus on funding, common standards and the relationship between different levels of government. The privatization study will most likely focus on the transfer of government functions, services and assets to the private sector.

Delegates to the Convention also passed six Resolutions as follows:

- 1) To support safe drilling and mining for energy resources.
- 2) To lift the travel ban to Cuba.
- 3) To limit the use of the filibuster.
- 4) To add the principle of transparency to the SARA [Secure, Accurate, Re-countable and Accessible] Resolution passed in 2009.
- 5) To advocate for improved Medicare for all.
- 6) To promote federal efforts to take action and to work with the U.S. coastal states and communities most directly affected, to respond creatively, efficiently and effectively to the environmental, health and economic crisis created by the oil flowing from the out of control BP oil well in the Gulf of Mexico.

A LWVUS Convention is similar to political conventions. Delegates are required to adhere strictly to parliamentary rules. To carry the vote, sponsors must lobby other delegates for their support.



## DISCLOSE Act Passes House - LWVUS

Washington, DC - The League of Women Voters hailed the passage of campaign finance legislation by the U.S. House of Representatives as the first step in achieving greater transparency in U.S. elections.

"Secret spending in elections undermines our democracy -- that's why this bill is so important," said Elisabeth MacNamara, national president of the League of Women Voters.

"The League of Women Voters commends the House for taking strong action. We now call on the Senate to pass a similar bill, ideally a version free of amendments that dilute transparency or corrupt the spirit of the legislation," she

stated. "It is essential for Congress to enact this legislation now, so we can protect the 2010 elections," MacNamara said.

The DISCLOSE Act received support from a host of reform groups including the League, and Speaker Nancy Pelosi acknowledged the League and coalition groups for their efforts in helping to pass this legislation.

"This bill is a step in the right direction and achieves its fundamental purpose," MacNamara said. "The League will continue to fight for enhanced disclosure, and this bill is an important part of that fight. It's the best campaign finance

reform since McCain-Feingold," she concluded.

The Supreme Court in *Citizens United v. FEC* recently gave the green light to corporations to spend without limit to support or oppose candidates for office. However, the Court's decision made clear that disclosure of this spending could be required by Congress.

This bill requires interest groups to have officials appear in campaign advertisements, to reveal the identities of campaign contributors and to disclose expenditures on their Web sites. It contains controversial exemptions for large organizations like the NRA.





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*Please deliver to:*

*The League of Women Voters is where  
hands-on work to safeguard democracy  
leads to civic improvement.*

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LWVME and LWVUS are now on Facebook!

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## Hearings on New START Treaty

Washington, DC - On May 18, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee began hearings on the New START Treaty. In her opening remarks, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated as follows: "The choice before us is between this treaty and no treaty governing our nuclear security relationship with Russia, between this treaty and no agreed verification mechanisms on Russia's strategic nuclear forces, between this treaty and no legal obligation for Russia to maintain its strategic nuclear forces below an agreed level."

U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev signed the New

START Treaty in Prague on April 8. By the Treaty's terms, each nation must reduce its number of deployed strategic warheads from 2,200 to 1,550 on no more than 700 launchers (airplanes, missiles or submarines) by 2017. The Treaty has verification provisions that permit inspectors from each nation to count the number of warheads on each launcher.

Under the Constitution, the Treaty must now be ratified by two-thirds of the U.S. Senate. Experts predict that the Senate will ratify the Treaty by the end of the year but that no vote will be taken before the November election.

One concern of Republicans is modernization of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. Another is preservation of the option for a missile defense system. The Obama Administration is walking a tightrope between the Russians, who oppose a defense system that could intercept its missiles, and the Republicans, who want a defense system that could intercept the missiles of rogue nations such as Iran or North Korea.

Former Republican Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and James Baker have testified before the Committee in favor of the Treaty.

