

September 2011

PO Box 142
Brunswick, ME 04011

The Brunswick Voter



Items of Interest

- What's Happening at Home?
- Requirements for Women's Health Coverage
- Four Questions on November Ballot
- Matching Funds Ruled Unconstitutional

Calendar

~Brunswick Candidate Forum, Thursday, September 29, 7:00 p.m., Municipal Meeting Facility, 16 Station Avenue. Broadcast on Local Cable Access Channel 3.

~Topsham Candidate Forum, Wednesday, October 19, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall, 100 Maine Street. Broadcast on Local Cable Access Channel 3.

~Election Day, Tuesday, November 8. Polls close at 8:00 p.m. Check with your municipal clerk about opening time and location.



Election Day Registration on November Ballot

Augusta, ME - On September 8, Secretary of State Charlie Summers validated 70,308 petition signatures to put a people's veto on the November 8 ballot as Question 1. A coalition of 18 groups, including the League of Women Voters of Maine, submitted the petition to restore same-day voter registration, which has been a feature of Maine politics for the last 38 years.

League President Barbara McDade was the lead applicant for that petition. At the time the application was filed, McDade said, "We should not make things harder for people to vote, we need to make it so

everyone can vote."

The people's veto question as written is flawed. The question reads, "Do you want to reject the section of Chapter 399 of the Public Law of 2011 that requires new voters to register to vote at least two business days prior to an election?" Under the law, voters are actually required to register on the Thursday before Election Day - three business days in advance.

While the coalition's success in gathering more than 70,000 petition signatures in one month is impressive, the war is not yet won. The Maine Heritage Policy Center has

already issued a poll conducted by Pulse Opinion Research, LLC that found the public rejects same-day registration by 57 to 43 percent.

However, political scientists are already questioning the poll's methodology. Plus, there are eight weeks until Election Day.

The coalition is currently raising funds to put on an effective campaign in favor of the people's veto. Contributions may be made at

<http://www.protectmainevotes.com/contribute> or mailed to Protect Maine Votes, PO Box 18161, Portland, ME 04112.

Parties Deadlocked on Congressional Districts

Augusta ME - On August 30, Maine Reapportionment Commission Chair Michael Friedman, an Independent, cast the tie-breaking vote in favor of the Democratic congressional redistricting plan.

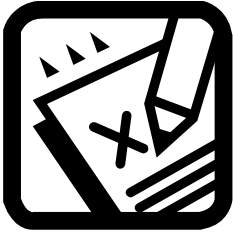
The Democratic plan would move Gardiner, Rome, Unity Township, Vassalboro and Vienna from the 1st to the 2nd District, and it would move Oakland and Wayne from the 2nd to the 1st. It would result

in a population differential of one while affecting more than 19,000 residents in Kennebec County.

The Republican plan would move Lincoln, Oxford and Sagadahoc Counties and the rest of Kennebec County into the 2nd District while moving Androscoggin and Oxford Counties and part of Franklin County into the 1st District. It would result in a population differential of one, and it would

affect more than 360,000 residents in seven counties.

Governor Paul LePage has called a Special Session of the Legislature to consider the plans on September 27. Maine statute requires that a redistricting plan be enacted by a two-thirds vote. However, Republicans have discussed changing the statute to require only a simple majority. Democrats have vowed legal action in response to such a change.



What's Happening at Home?

Bath, ME - On September 7, the **Bath** City Council voted unanimously to demolish the former YMCA. The Council also agreed to appropriate \$5,000 to study the cost of renovating the former Armory for use as a youth center and skate park.

On August 22, the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority voted unanimously to construct a 60,000-square-foot train layover facility along the railroad tracks parallel to Bouchard Drive in **Brunswick**.

NNEPRA also agreed to form an advisory group consisting of the town planner, a Town Council member, two members of the public and representatives of the Maine Department of Transportation and Amtrak.

Some members of the Town Council cried foul when a majority of the Council agreed via telephone to submit a letter to NNEPRA in support of the site of the facility. Any Town Council action that is not taken at a public meeting is a violation of the Freedom of Access Act.

There will be two contested races for public office in Brunswick in November.

Incumbent Gerry Favreau and newcomer Sarah Brayman are running unopposed for Town Council in Districts 5 and 7. Former School Board member Bill Dana, Benet Pols, who is completing his term as Town Councilor in District 7, and

former School Board member Byron Watson are competing for an At Large seat on the Council.

Incumbents Jim Grant and Michele Joyce are running unopposed for School Board in Districts 5 and 7. Incumbent Jack Jones and newcomer William Thompson are vying for an At Large seat on the Board.

The League of Women Voters is holding a Brunswick Candidate Forum on Thursday, September 29, at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Meeting Facility at 16 Station Avenue. All candidates for Town Council and School Board have been invited.

In **Freeport**, there will be a number of contested races this November. Newcomer Katherine Arno is in contention against incumbent Eric Pandora in Town Council District 2.

Newcomer Kristina Egan is in a race against incumbent Joe Migliaccio in Town Council District 3. Incumbent Rich DeGrandpre is facing a challenge from newcomer Marie Gunning for the At Large seat.

For School Board, newcomer Gurdarshan Gill and incumbents Nelson Larkins and Beth Parker are squaring off for two, three-year terms.

Incumbents Mike Ashby and Timothy Whiteacre are running unopposed for two seats on the Water District Board of

Trustees. Incumbent Edmond Theriault is running unopposed for one seat on the Sewer District Board of Trustees.

On August 23, **Harpswell** residents voted 404 to 120 to acquire ownership of the West Harpswell School from **SAD 75**. They also appropriated \$25,000 to maintain the building until the annual Town Meeting next March.

On September 1, Harpswell's Board of Selectmen asked Town Administrator Kristi Eiane to obtain a legal opinion about the Board's public comment period. Since July 7, when the Board voted to ban comment about SAD 75, it has received criticism from residents and the Maine Civil Liberties Union. The MCLU takes the position that "content-based bans of free speech are inconsistent with the First Amendment."

Topsham has two openings on the Board of Selectmen. Nomination papers for those seats are due on September 23 at 4:30 p.m.. David Douglass, Ronald Riendeau and James Trusiani have already taken out nomination papers. The League of Women Voters is holding a Topsham Candidate Forum on Wednesday, October 19, at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall at 100 Main Street. All candidates for Board of Selectmen will be invited.

Requirements for Women's Health Coverage

Washington, DC - In August, the Obama Administration issued new requirements for women's private health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act. The requirements follow recommendations by the National Academy of Sciences.

The requirements take effect on August 1, 2012. For health insurance plans operating on a calendar year, they take effect on January 1, 2013.

One notable requirement is that health insurance plans must cover all FDA-approved contraceptives for women, including sterilization, without co-payments or other costs.

The National Academy's Institute of Medicine issued a report that found that nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended. Forty percent of those end in abortion. The Institute believes that the new coverage requirement will reduce both the number of unintended pregnancies and abortions.

Conservative groups are opposed to coverage for contraceptives. However, the requirements exempt certain religious employers.

Another requirement is that health insurance plans must cover preventive care visits, including preconception and

prenatal care, without co-payments. Preventive care will include screening for domestic violence, HIV and gestational diabetes, and DNA testing for the human papillomavirus (HPV) that causes cervical cancer.

For the first time, preventive care will include counseling and equipment, including breast pumps, to promote breastfeeding. According to womenshealth.gov, breast milk is easier for babies to digest and contains antibodies that protect them from illness. Breastfed babies have lower medical care costs than formula-fed babies.



Four Questions on November 8 Ballot

Augusta, ME - In addition to the people's veto, there will be three additional questions on the November 8 ballot. Questions 2 and 3 are citizen initiatives, and Question 4 is a constitutional amendment

Question 2 reads, "Do you want to allow a slot machine facility at a harness racing track in Biddeford or another community within 25 miles of Scarborough Downs, subject to local approval, and at a harness racing track in Washington County, with part of the profits from these facilities going to support specific state and local programs?"

If passed, Question 2 would permit the construction of one slot machine facility within 25 miles of Scarborough Downs

and the construction of another slot machine facility associated with an Indian-owned harness racing track in Washington County.

Proponents cite the economic development possibilities for the Biddeford and Washington County areas. Opponents point out that the slot machine facility is not actually required to be built in Biddeford.

Question 3 reads, "Do you want to allow a casino with table games and slot machines in Lewiston, with part of the profits going to support specific state and local programs?"

If Question 3 passes, developers in Lewiston intend to introduce slot machines and then

table games to that city. Proponents cite the economic development possibilities for the Lewiston area.

Opponents of both Questions 2 and 3 refer to the crime, domestic violence and gambling addiction associated with slot machines and table games.

Question 4 reads, "Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to change the years of redistricting the Maine Legislature, congressional districts and county commissioner districts after 2013 from 2023 and every 10th year thereafter to 2021 and every 10th year thereafter?" It moves redistricting two years closer to the release of Census data.





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Please deliver to:

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

Send your NEW email address to
lwvba@gwi.net.

Matching Funds Ruled Unconstitutional

Washington, DC - In a 5 to 4 opinion authored by Chief Justice John Roberts, the Supreme Court held that Arizona's matching funds scheme, which provided additional funds to a publicly funded candidate when expenditures by a privately financed candidate and independent groups exceeded the funding initially allotted to the publicly financed candidate, substantially burdened political speech and was not sufficiently justified by a compelling interest to survive First Amendment scrutiny.

Based on this Supreme Court

opinion, federal district court Judge George Singal ordered that Maine's matching funds statute was unconstitutional in *Cushing v. McKee*. Maine's Attorney General agreed to the order.

Anticipating this turn of affairs, the 125th Legislature passed LD 848, which gave the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices the authority to suggest any changes to the Clean Elections Act to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs by October 15, 2011. The Committee is expected to prepare a bill by December 1, 2011 for

consideration by the Legislature.

The Ethics Commission has outlined two possible solutions to the problem. One would involve publicly financed candidates collecting additional qualifying contributions in September to become eligible for a second distribution. A second would involve candidates collecting donations of up to \$100 that would be matched by the state at a 3 or 4 to 1 match. The Commission sought public comment on both of these proposals and is scheduled to meet on September 19 to consider them.

