



REPORT FROM LWVUS CONVENTION 2010

Those of you who have never attended a League national convention may not know that it is set up similarly to a political convention. The reason to be there is to decide what national studies will be done and what issues can be added to the national League's positions; to pass resolutions calling attention to pressing national and international issues; and to address organizational issues such as electing officers and changing bylaws. Parliamentary rules are strictly adhered to. To carry the vote, advocacy groups need both delegate support and careful procedural maneuvering. Groups are encouraged to hold caucuses on issues, to build winning strategies, and to lobby delegates for their support. It's a fun way to learn some practical politics while meeting passionate and informed people from across the country. This year Ann Luther, Colleen Tucker and I represented Maine at the LWVUS Convention in Atlanta, GA.

Equality in Marriage. On our first evening, we joined with delegates from Maryland and Saratoga County, NY to advocate for concurrence at the Convention with Maryland and Maine's position on Marriage Equality. Colleen was our point person on this issue and explained our position to the assembled delegates. I'm happy to report that, by an overwhelming majority, the Convention concurred with the LWVMD & LWVME position on Marriage Equality, and it is added to the Equality of Opportunity position. The concurrence reads: The League of Women Voters of the United States supports equal rights for all under state and federal law. 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.

National Popular Vote. Another important concurrence was adopted that added the following words to the third sentence to the LWVUS position on selection of the president: "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".

Arms Control. The convention also passed a Board Recommended concurrence to amend and update the Arms Control position. You can read more about the new Arms Control position at the [LWVUS web site](#).

New National Studies. The Convention voted two new studies for this biennium. One had been recommended by the National Board, the **Federal Role in Public Education**. The study would focus on the role of the federal government in education policymaking, with possible consideration of funding, common standards and/or governance relationships among all levels of the government. The second was from the floor of the convention to study **Privatization**: the policy agenda to transfer government functions, services, and assets to the private sector.

Resolutions. The Convention delegates passed six resolutions:

- Supporting safe drilling and mining for energy resources. The resolution reads, "Be it therefore resolved that we, representatives at the 2010 National Convention of the League of Women Voters, call upon the Board to use the resources of the League to support and lobby for significant strengthening of appropriate regulation, oversight, inspection, and penalties associated with the development of fossil fuel resources. This strengthening should include elimination from national legislation of the exemptions for drilling and mining, as well as additional legislation requiring the federal agencies to regulate drilling and mining in a manner consistent with the preservation of a healthy environment. We also call on the Board to communicate with the President and the Congress putting them on notice that Leagues across the country are deeply concerned about this issue."
- Lifting the travel ban to Cuba
- Limit use of the filibuster
- Adding the principle of Transparency to the SARA resolution passed in 2009
- Advocating improved Medicare for all
- Promoting 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.

There is so much more to tell. Representative John Lewis addressed the Convention, as did HHS Secretary Kathleen Sibelius. There is a new **Climate Change Toolkit**. Check it out on the [LWVUS web site](#). I hope Ann and Colleen will add to this report -- perhaps talking about workshops, speakers, the panel of past LWVUS presidents, and the birthday cakes at the banquet.

Barbara McDade, President, LWVME