



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

## The Maine Voter

Volume 26, Number 2

April 2009

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### LWVME Officers

#### Co-Presidents:

**Ann Luther** Trenton  
**Barbara McDade** Bangor

#### Vice President:

**Sarah Walton** Augusta

#### Secretary:

**Colleen Tucker** Portland

#### Treasurer:

**Michelle Small** Brunswick

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**Martha Dickinson** Ellsworth  
**Betty J. Willhoite** Falmouth



Editor: Martha Dickinson

Contributors: Barbara McDade, Ann Luther, Michelle Small, Cathie Whittenburg, Martha Dickinson.



The League of Women Voters of Maine, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major political policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



## LWVME • Convention • 2009

May 1 -2

Lancaster Lounge, Moulton Union  
Bowdoin College  
Brunswick, ME 04011

Dear Members of the League of Women Voters of Maine ~

Welcome to this special Convention edition of the LWVME *Maine Voter*. On behalf of the State Board of Directors, we would like to extend a warm invitation to all Maine League members to attend Convention 2009 in Brunswick, Maine.

We have a great agenda for Convention at a wonderful venue! Featured speakers include Rep. Diane Russell; Deputy Secretary of State Julie Flynn; and author and activist Theresa Amato.

Inside this issue, you will find an introduction to the nominated slate of League officers and directors. We are very excited about the talented and qualified candidates that our Nominating Committee is presenting for election at Convention.

In this issue of the *Maine Voter*, you will also find the proposed program and budget for 2009-2011. The Recommended Program for the coming biennium includes some very exciting and important projects. If you would like Convention to consider any of the non-recommended Program items for 2009-2011, please let the Board know by April 20th.

The League of Women Voters celebrated its 89th anniversary this year. We are holding our Convention in Brunswick, full of energy and enthusiasm for the possibilities that lie ahead.

We have been honored to serve as Co-presidents these last two years, and we look forward to seeing you at Convention in May.

Warmest regards-

Ann Luther & Barbara McDade, Co-Presidents

**League of Women Voters of Maine**  
**AGENDA FOR CONVENTION 2009**  
Brunswick, Maine

**Friday • May 1**

3:30 - 5:00 pm	<b>Old Board Meeting</b> The retiring Board meets for the last time. All members welcome.	<i>Curtis Memorial Library 23 Pleasant Street</i>
3:00 - 6:00	<b>Hotel Registration</b> See next page for how to register for a hotel room.	<i>Comfort Inn</i>
5:00 - 5:30	<b>Informal Gathering</b> Meet old friends and greet new ones before dinner. Cash bar. For more information see: <a href="http://www.henryandmarty.com">www.henryandmarty.com</a>	<i>Henry and Marty 61 Maine Street</i>
5:30 - 7:00	<b>Dinner</b> Dinner on your own. We have reserved a table for 12 at Henry and Marty. Order off the menu, separate checks. Join us there – first come, first served – or make your own arrangements.	<i>Henry and Marty</i>
7:00 - 9:00	<b>Dessert and Coffee Reception</b> <i>Speaker: Rep. Diane Russell</i>	<i>Lancaster Lounge Moulton Union Bowdoin College</i>

**Saturday • May 2**

9:00 - 9:30 am	<b>Convention Registration</b>	<i>Lancaster Lounge</i>
9:30 - 10:30	<b>Plenary Session I</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Presentation of Nominating Committee</b></li><li>• <b>Presentation of Proposed Program 2009-2011</b></li><li>• <b>Presentation of Proposed Budget 2009-2011</b></li><li>• <b>Presentation of Proposed Bylaw Changes</b></li></ul>	<i>Lancaster Lounge</i>
10:30 - 10:45	<b>Break</b>	
10:45 – 12:00	<i>Speaker: Julie Flynn</i>	<i>Lancaster Lounge</i>
12:00 - 1:00	<b>LUNCH</b>	<i>Lancaster Lounge</i>
1:00 - 2:30	<i>Speaker: Theresa Amato</i>	<i>Lancaster Lounge</i>
2:30-2:45	<b>Break</b>	
2:45 – 3:30	<b>Plenary Session II</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Bylaws</b></li><li>• <b>Programs for 2009-2011</b></li><li>• <b>Budget</b></li><li>• <b>Election of Officers and Directors</b></li></ul>	<i>Lancaster Lounge</i>
	<b>ADJOURN</b>	
4:00 – 5:00	<b>Meeting of the New Board</b>	<i>Lancaster Lounge</i>

## Our Convention Speakers

Our Friday night speaker **Rep. Diane Russell** is serving her first term in the Legislature and sits on the Legal and Veteran's Affairs Committee. She was born and raised in western Maine and graduated from Leavitt Area High School. She has a bachelor's degree in media studies from the University of Southern Maine. A public relations consultant, she also has done citizen lobbying, community organizing and public policy work. She is a founding board member of the Opportunity Maine Campaign, a nonprofit organization that used the citizen's initiative process to get legislation passed to make college more affordable for all Mainers. Rep. Russell is a former member of Common Cause Maine. See [www.maine.gov/legis/housedems/drussell](http://www.maine.gov/legis/housedems/drussell).

**Julie Flynn** will speak to the Convention on Saturday morning. Since 1995, Julie has led the Secretary of State's Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions; first, as the Director of the Division of Corporations and Elections; and since 1999, as the Deputy Secretary of State for the Bureau. Through her leadership, the Division of Elections strives to make continuous improvements in election processes and technology and to create an environment of inclusiveness for all voters. Julie Flynn began her service as a Maine election official in 1988; serving as an Assistant City Clerk for the City of Portland, Maine's largest jurisdiction, where she was responsible for administering the voter registration and election programs. Julie holds a BA in Psychology and a Master of Business Administration, both from the University of Maine at Orono. Julie is a Maine native who lives in Richmond with her husband Bob. They have three grown children and four grandchildren.

Saturday afternoon, **Theresa Amato** will address the Convention. She is the author of the soon-to-be published book *Grand Illusion: The Myth of Voter Choice in a Two-Party Tyranny*. She founded the Citizen Advocacy Center in Elmhurst, Illinois in 1993. (See [www.citizenadvocacycenter.org](http://www.citizenadvocacycenter.org).) Ms. Amato, a native of Itasca, Illinois, was graduated with honors from Harvard/Radcliffe Colleges in 1986 with a degree in Government and Economics, and from the New York University School of Law in 1989. Ms. Amato was a litigator at Public Citizen in Washington, DC, and the Director of the Freedom of Information Clearinghouse where she was a frequent lecturer on U.S. information policies and open government laws. The American Lawyer recognized Ms. Amato as one of the future leaders of the legal profession by naming her among the country's 45 young lawyers (under 45) outside the private sector whose vision and commitment are changing lives. She has also been recognized as a Wasserstein Public Interest Law Fellow, and has won the NYU School of Law Public Service Award. Ms. Amato is licensed to practice law in New York, Washington, DC, and Illinois.

## Convention Hotel Reservations

Make reservations on your own. We have reserved a bloc of 10 non-smoking rooms with two double beds each at the Comfort Inn in Brunswick for the night of Friday, May 1. The rate is \$79.76 per room and includes a continental breakfast. The Comfort Inn is just off Exit 28 on I-295. The off-ramp becomes Pleasant Street, and the Inn is on the right side. The Comfort Inn's telephone number is 729-1129. For more information, please see <http://www.comfortinn.com/hotel-brunswick-maine-ME025?promo=gglocal>. To assure our rate, make your hotel reservation by April 17.

## LWVME Proposed Program 2009-2011

### PAC Study

In 2007, the League of Women Voters of Maine launched a study of "Money in Politics: PACs in Maine" to help the people of our State understand the role of political action committees in financing candidate elections. As part of this project, League members are exploring the underlying principles of campaign finance regulation and reform and the workings of candidate PACs.

This LWVME study focuses on Political Action Committees to understand how they are funded, how they influence candidate elections, and what changes, if any, should be made to limit the influence of private money on elected officials. PACs involved in ballot initiatives are not included as they present very different issues and deserve their own study.

League members are reviewing PACs in existence during the 2006 election to examine such questions as who gives to whom -- corporate contributors, out of state contributors, grassroots organizations, individual donors; who are the principal officers, decision makers and fundraisers for PACs; how the money is spent -- candidate campaigns, independent expenditures, other spending; what factors influence an elected official's decision whether to form or join a PAC; is there an appearance of corruption when candidates or elected officials raise are involved in PACs.

The Study Committee is issuing a series of briefing papers aimed at helping League members and others gain a better understanding of this complex issue. The first three of six briefing papers have been published online at [www.lwvme.org](http://www.lwvme.org). They are: (1) PAC Basics, (2) Maine State Law and Enforcement, and (3) Brief History of Campaign Finance Reform. The last three papers will be on (4) Campaign Year 2006 -- Contributions and

Expenditures, (5) Experience of Candidates and Caucuses, and (6) The Future of Reform.

### **Program Choices for the Coming Year**

Because the PAC Study continues to be a very time-consuming endeavor, the Board of Directors asks the Convention to reflect carefully upon the human resources available to the League before it authorizes another study to begin during the next two years. If there are a sufficient number of members with the time and the enthusiasm to devote to a second study, the Board recommends that the Convention choose one of the following topics. If you would like Convention to consider any of the non-recommended Program items for 2009-2011, please let the Board know by April 20.

#### Ballot Initiatives

It seems as though the number of citizen initiative petitions in circulation in Maine has grown over the past decade. Is that true? If so, is that good or bad for democracy? Under the Maine Constitution, proponents of an initiative must gather signatures equal to 10 percent of the voter turnout in the most recent gubernatorial election and submit them to the Secretary of State for certification within a period of 18 months. If the Secretary of State certifies that the proponents have gathered the requisite number of signatures, then the Legislature must pass the initiative as worded, which is rare, or send it to the voters as a referendum with or without a competing measure.

A study of ballot initiatives would examine their numbers over the years, their proponents and opponents, the percentage that were certified by the Secretary of State, the source of their funding, and the percentage that were ultimately passed by the voters. However, the study would involve looking at more than numbers. It might also involve a qualitative assessment of whether ballot initiatives pass good laws. It would require interviewing key players in the initiative process, such as the Secretary of State, legislative leaders, initiative proponents and opponents, citizen groups, media experts, campaign contributors and others. The purpose of the study would be to describe the current initiative process in Maine and to recommend changes to the process, if warranted.

#### Early Voting

Maine currently has a “no-fault” absentee voting statute, which means that a registered voter may cast an absentee ballot either by mail or in person at the municipal clerk’s office without providing a reason. However, the Maine Constitution does not permit early voting, which is a time period prior to an election during which voters may cast their ballots at a designated polling place within their municipality in the same manner as on Election Day.

Under the absentee voting system, ballots are sealed in signed envelopes until Election Day, then opened and counted either by hand or optical scanner. With early voting, ballots are placed in a ballot box or optical scanner on the day they are cast. Voters often prefer early voting to absentee voting because they have the sense that it guarantees greater confidentiality.

At the request of the Legislature, the Secretary of State has already studied early voting. A pilot program was implemented in Bangor, Portland and Readfield during the November 2007 referendum, and preliminary and final reports were issued in April 2007 and February 2008. Secretary Dunlap concluded that the pilot program had been a success and recommended that Maine adopt the early voting method. A bill is currently pending before the 124<sup>th</sup> Legislature.

A study would involve a careful examination of the pilot program and the Secretary of State’s reports, especially any information concerning methods used to ensure the security of the ballots during the early voting period, and any additional costs incurred by the municipalities as a result of increased staffing requirements. It would also require a survey of the successes and failures of early voting in other states. Finally, a study would include interviews of the Secretary of State, municipal clerks from both urban and rural areas, representatives of political parties and voter organizations.

*- Michelle Small, Brunswick*

### **“Virtual” Council Meeting of LWVUS**

This year, the LWVUS Board voted to hold its Council meeting “virtually” rather than “in-person”. Everyone is invited to participate on Saturday, June 13, from 1 pm to 5 pm. You may either join other members of the League at the Bangor Public Library, or you may participate over any computer with high speed internet access. Check the “for members” pages at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) for more information.

The LWVUS Board recognizes the drawbacks to this type of meeting, but sees the exciting possibilities for the LWVUS and all Leagues around the country. It is a terrific chance to explore and experience new communications technologies that we can use in future projects as a way to expand our ability to reach out to each other and to the public. This is a wonderful opportunity for all our members to participate in a Council meeting that once was available to only 100 or so members. Please join us, in Bangor if you can.

*- Barbara McDade, Bangor*

# League of Women Voters of Maine

## Nominated Slate for 2009-2011

### Board of Directors

#### President

**Barbara McDade**

[bmcdade@bpl.lib.me.us](mailto:bmcdade@bpl.lib.me.us)

**Bangor**

947-8336 (w)

Barbara McDade has served as the Co-President of the Maine League for the past two years. She joined the Maine League in 2006 while working on the Open Government Sunshine Week activities. Ms McDade has been director of the Bangor Public Library since 1991 and was a library director in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New Jersey before moving to Maine. She oversaw the renovation of the Bangor Public Library, served as president and legislative chair of the Maine Library Association and serves on the Maine Library Commission and the Board of Maine InfoNet. While in Virginia, where she started public library service in Augusta County, she served as president of the Waynesboro League. She lives in Bangor with her husband, Michael. She is Vice President of the Rotary Club of Bangor and is organist of the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Bangor.

#### Vice President

**Sarah Walton**

[sarah.walton@maine.edu](mailto:sarah.walton@maine.edu)

**Augusta**

622-1993

Sarah currently serves as Vice President of LWVME as well as Director of the Brunswick Area League. She is the former president of LWVME and has represented the League in several coalitions. After many years as an attorney in Maine state government, she is now Assistant Professor of Justice Studies at the University of Maine at Augusta. Sarah is co-author of the Maine Law Enforcement Officer's Manual.

#### Secretary

**Colleen Tucker**

[ctucker@maine.rr.com](mailto:ctucker@maine.rr.com)

**Portland**

775-3709

Colleen is the current Secretary of the League of Women Voters of Maine. Born and educated in Maine, she graduated from the University of Maine School of Law in 1984 and has practiced law since then, concentrating on real estate acquisitions and conservation easements held by land trusts or the State of Maine. Colleen has represented the League at press conferences, before the Maine legislature and in various public and member-only programs held in the Portland area.

#### Treasurer

**Ann M. Luther**

[ann.m.luther@gmail.com](mailto:ann.m.luther@gmail.com)

**Trenton**

664-0696

Ann has served as president of the League of Women Voters of Maine from 2003 to 2007 and as co-president from 2007-2009. Representing LWVME at Maine Citizens for Clean Elections, she serves that coalition as co-chair. Until 2006, she was also chair of the LWV-Down East MAL unit. She joined the League in 1998 upon retirement from her career as product manager at SEI Investments. She and her husband ran a seasonal business, the Sea Breeze Motel, in Bar Harbor until spring 2002. Ann was a founder of the MDI Restorative Justice Program and served on its Executive Board, and was involved in youth issues with MDI Tomorrow.

#### Director

**Michelle Small**

[msmall@gwi.net](mailto:msmall@gwi.net)

**Brunswick**

729-1856

Michelle is a graduate of Bowdoin College, New York University School of Law and the Muskie School of Public Service, and she is a "recovering" lawyer and a full-time mother to two sons, ages 15 and 9. She is married to a history teacher and fellow "recovering" lawyer, who belongs to a different political party. They enjoy arguing about politics and doing *The New York Times* crossword puzzle together. A member of the League of Women Voters since 1995, Michelle currently serves as Treasurer of the League of Women Voters of Maine, its Education Fund and the Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. She has also served as the Secretary and Treasurer of the League of Women Voters of the Brunswick Area. Michelle is working with the League Lobby Corps this Session and is monitoring bills related to term limits.

#### Director

**Polly Ferguson**

[mferguson1@maine.rr.com](mailto:mferguson1@maine.rr.com)

**South Portland**

799 4214

About a year before she retired from her position as a social worker in a residential treatment center for children and families, Polly joined the Buffalo/Niagara League and was on the board there for several years. She worked on many issues including alternatives to incarceration, land use planning, sprawl, local government and waterfront development. When she moved to Maine in 2007, she transferred to this League and joined the state study on Political Action Committees. Aside from the League, she is involved in teaching ESL classes at a community center and is a mentor with My Sister's Keeper to women coming out of prison.

**Director****Jill Ward**[jmward@maine.rr.com](mailto:jmward@maine.rr.com)**South Portland**

799-1596

Jill joined the League last year and is happy to be a part-time non-profit consultant and full-time mom of 2½ year-old Michael. She is working on projects with organizations in Washington, DC and Maine, including Maine Citizens for Clean Elections. Educated at the University of Pennsylvania and Georgetown University Law Center, Jill has always had a strong interest in civic life and public service. She returned to her home state of Maine with her family in 2007 after more than 15 years experience in the public sector, including senior policy positions with Girl Scouts of the USA, the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence and the Children’s Defense Fund in Washington, DC. Jill also worked in the U.S. Senate for Senators Paul S. Sarbanes (D-MD) and George J. Mitchell (D-ME).

**Director****Cathie Whittenburg**[cathiewhit@gmail.com](mailto:cathiewhit@gmail.com)**Portland**

318-0771 (c)

Cathie is currently the Director of New England Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence and is a past Vice President of States United to Prevent Gun Violence. She also serves on the City of Portland Land Bank Commission. She has been involved in grassroots politics since high school (which was a long, long time ago).

**Director****Catherine Erdman**[cce13@gwi.net](mailto:cce13@gwi.net)**Augusta**

622-4819

Catherine first joined LWV in Maryland; she was active there and in Beaumont, TX in the 70’s. She lived for 16 years in Wilmington DE and moved to Maine in 1992. Catherine has lived in Orono, Peaks Island, Otis, Temple and Augusta. She “Marched on Washington” 3 times. She has been an at-large member of LWVME for several years and misses the camaraderie of a chapter meeting. She started teaching computers in 1967 and now finds herself out of date. Some special interests are children’s issues, Maine tax reform, and LWV Lobby Corps.

**Director****Martha Dickinson**[marthad@gwi.net](mailto:marthad@gwi.net)**Ellsworth**

667-5863

Martha joined the League three years ago. Before retirement, she taught physics at Maine Maritime Academy, College of the Atlantic, and various colleges on the west coast. She has participated in several LWV-Downeast projects including organizing election forums and election observing. She attended the national LWV convention in Portland, Oregon last June and participated in the lively debate on voting technology. She is active in several political and social change organizations as well as her church. Martha sings with Voices for Peace and Women With Wings. She reviews books on astronomy, cosmology, and climate change for a library journal.

**Director****Christine Savage**[csavage@midcoast.com](mailto:csavage@midcoast.com)**Union**

785-4632

Christine has always lived in Maine. She has been involved in government for many years, serving in Municipal Government as Manager for 21 years, followed by 14 years as a Legislator. Because of term limits, she now has time for other activities. She is a Board member of Spectrum Generations and of the Knox County Housing Coalition as well as being active in her church.

**Nominating Committee****Jon Bartholomew**[jbartholomew@commoncause.org](mailto:jbartholomew@commoncause.org)**Portland**

878-4126

Jon is the Executive Director of Common Cause Maine and Associate Director of Media Reform for Common Cause. He is on the boards of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections and the Maine Freedom of Information Coalition and serves as a citizen member on the Government Relations Committee of the Maine Chapter of the National MS Society. Prior to this, he was most recently the Communications Director for the Maine Citizen Leadership Fund and the Dirigo Alliance in Maine. He also worked for three years for Citizen Action of New York leading their Clean Money/Clean Elections campaign and staffing the Coalition for After-School Funding. Before he moved to the east coast, he was a field organizer for Planned Parenthood of Western Washington for three years, and earned his Masters of Public Administration from the University of Washington. He has been involved in many political campaigns, both for candidates and on ballot measures.

**Nominating Committee****Betty Willhoite**[BJGJMR@aol.com](mailto:BJGJMR@aol.com)**Falmouth**

781-9893

Betty joined the League in Stamford, Connecticut. Following a family transfer to the Chicago area, she served on the Cook County League Board. With a move to the city, Betty was a member of the Chicago Board, then President. Her item assignments were Economic Development and Social Policy. Betty also worked with Citizens Information Service, education arm of the League. On moving to Maine, she joined the Maine League and is now retiring from the Maine State Board.

<b>LWVME Proposed Budget for 2009 - 2011</b>				
	<b>FY 2010</b>	<b>FY 2010</b>	<b>FY 2111</b>	<b>FY 2111</b>
<b>INCOME</b>				
<b>MEMBERS</b>				
Local League PMP	900		900	
MAL Dues	700		800	
Pass-through MAL	1,285		1,422	
Local League Dues				
Other member pay				
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS</b>		<b>\$2,885</b>		<b>\$3,122</b>
<b>DONATIONS</b>				
Fundraising	4,000		4,400	
Grants, gifts, etc				
In-Kind	3,500		3,500	
<b>TOTAL DONATIONS</b>		<b>\$7,500</b>		<b>\$7,900</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>				
Interest				
Keys to Cap	500		500	
Retreat				
Convention Council	500		500	
Quad States	500		500	
Misc				
Ed Fund Admin	325		325	
Fund Program				
Misc				
<b>TOTAL OTHER INCOME</b>		<b>\$1,825</b>		<b>\$1,825</b>
<b>RESERVES</b>				
Bal Forward				
Transfer				
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>				
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>\$12,210</b>		<b>\$12,847</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
<b>OFFICE EXPENSES</b>				
Supplies	825		825	
Rent				
Telephone	600		600	
Filing fees	60		60	
<b>TOTAL OFFICE EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$1,485</b>		<b>\$1,485</b>
<b>BOARD EXPENSES</b>				
Board Expenses	500		500	
Salaries				
Quad States Pres	150		150	
Fundraising	419		500	
Membership	250		1,140	
Pub Relations	450		450	
Nominating Com				
Budget Com				
<b>TOTAL BOARD EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$1,769</b>		<b>\$2,740</b>
<b>CONVENTIONS</b>				
State Convention	400		400	
Quad States Con	400		400	
National Convention/Cou	1,500		1,000	
Workshops				
Retreat				
<b>TOTAL CONVENTIONS</b>		<b>\$2,300</b>		<b>\$1,800</b>
<b>ASSESSMENTS</b>				
LWVUS MAL PMP	1,256		1,422	
Coalition Dues	200		200	
Assessments				
<b>TOTAL ASSESSMENTS</b>		<b>\$1,456</b>		<b>\$1,622</b>
<b>PUBLICATIONS</b>				
State Voter	2,250		2,250	
Web Site	200		200	
Membership Directory				
Publications				
<b>TOTAL PUBLICATIONS</b>		<b>\$2,450</b>		<b>\$2,450</b>
<b>PROGRAM</b>				
Program Issues	1,500		1,500	
Keys to the Capitol	400		400	
Naitional Program				
Voter Service	600		600	
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM</b>		<b>\$2,500</b>		<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>OTHER EXPENSES</b>				
Local League Developme	250		250	
Local League Dues				
Other				
<b>TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$250</b>		<b>\$250</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$12,210</b>		<b>\$12,847</b>

## D. C. Voting Rights Waylaid in Congress

American citizens living in our nation's capital live a life of taxation without representation. They pay federal taxes, serve in the military, yet lack full voting representation in Congress. Although residents of the District of Columbia elect a mayor and a city council and may vote in Presidential elections, they have no representation in the U.S. Senate and only a nonvoting delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The League of Women Voters has been working for years to help right this wrong. U.S. citizens living in our nation's capital deserve full voting representation in the bodies that make their laws. The U.S. is the only democratic nation in the world to deny citizens living in the nation's capital representation in the national legislature.

In February, a bill came before the U. S. Senate that would grant D.C. voting rights. At the last minute, an amendment, drafted by the National Rifle Association, was attached to the bill. The amendment, sponsored by Senator John Ensign (R-NV), would repeal the District of Columbia's new gun laws entirely and prohibit the D.C. Council from enacting strong gun laws in the future.

The D.C. Council was forced to rewrite the District's gun laws after the ruling last year by the Supreme Court in *District of Columbia v. Heller*. The Court found D.C.'s almost total ban on handguns unconstitutional. While the Court affirmed the right of an individual to own a gun, it also ruled, "like most rights, the Second Amendment right is not unlimited. It is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose." The decision went on to give examples of constitutional gun regulations, such as "prohibitions on carrying concealed weapons," "prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill," "laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms" and laws "prohibiting the carrying of dangerous and unusual weapons."

After the *Heller* ruling, the D.C. Council enacted new gun laws that included the District's gun registration requirements and a ban on certain types of semiautomatic guns. Since then, the NRA has been trying to use Congress to overturn these local laws, laws that have the overwhelming support of the residents of the District of Columbia.

The D.C. Voting Rights bill, complete with the NRA amendment gutting D.C. gun laws, passed

the Senate by a vote of 61 to 37. Maine Senators Collins and Snowe voted in favor of the NRA amendment and in favor of the D.C. Voting Rights bill.

The bill then moved to the House, accompanied by outrage from the D.C. Council and residents and national gun violence prevention groups. D.C. residents should not be forced to give up their protections in return for representation in Congress. Council Chairman Vincent Gray noted, "Obviously, we're deeply concerned about this. This is a very steep price to pay for a right that should have no price."

The League strongly supports the D.C. Voting Rights bill and opposes all amendments. In a letter to House members, League President Mary Wilson writes, "The League of Women Voters believes that voting rights legislation is not the appropriate vehicle for broad ranging debates on unrelated issues, especially when other avenues are available for consideration of those issues. We are deeply concerned that opponents may be using other issues as a subterfuge to try to sidetrack this civil rights bill instead of opposing it outright. The League of Women Voters asks you not to join in any such effort."

Unfortunately, the NRA has continued efforts to amend the House D.C. Voting Rights bill and join it with a repeal of D.C. gun laws. As a result, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) has put the bill on hold.

In addition to the League of Women Voters, a number of other organizations are working to bring a clean, non-amended bill before the House.

- Cathie Whittenburg, Portland



### Check "YES" for Clean Elections!

Check out Line 1 of Maine's Income tax form. It's a \$3 check-off that funds the Maine Clean Election system that allows qualified candidates who agree to limit their spending to run for state office without raising private money.

Checking "Yes" won't raise your tax bill or reduce your refund, but it will help keep big money out of Maine politics.



## Campaign Finance is Topic for Leadership Conference

For the last two years, the state Leagues of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island have banded together to hold a Leadership Conference. The Quad States Presidents and LWVUS Liaison Judy Davis are planning this year's conference to be held on May 30 and 31 in Wells, Maine.

The 2009 Quad States Leadership Conference will focus on public financing of election campaigns. In addition to three workshops, we will have a keynote speaker on campaign finance law on Saturday morning. We are pleased that Laura MacLeery, Democracy Deputy Director at the Brennan Center for Justice, has tentatively agreed to present our keynote address.

Workshops will be built around the issue of campaign finance, but the skills we learn will be transferable to other issues. The workshop topics include one on **Organizing** - conducting a public campaign for an issue with Cathy Silber, New Hampshire Coalition for Public Funding of Election. A workshop on **Fundraising** will cover using an issue as a fundraising device. Judy Davis, LWVUS Board, will lead a workshop on **LWVUS Advocacy Priorities** - how the state Leagues can work with LWVUS on federal issues, including campaign finance, while prioritizing in lean times.

Maine was the first state to pass a full public funding system, and the League of Women Voters was instrumental in that victory. Our position as leaders in the national movement for reform cannot be overstated. Maine is a beacon of hope for the nation. As other states pass and implement similar programs and the United States Congress considers Maine-style reform, we must do what it takes to ensure the continued success of our system. Despite the success of Maine's Clean Election system, talk persists in the State House to eliminate public funding for the governor's race in 2010. LWVME is working in coalition with Maine Citizens for Clean Elections to preserve our current good law.



**REGISTRATION for Quad States Leadership Conference is \$20, payable to the LWV of NH-Quad States.**

**Mail your name, address, phone number, and email address with your \$20 check to: Jane Armstrong, LWVNH, 4 Park St, Suite 200, Concord, NH 03301-5344.**

**Saturday lunch and Sunday breakfast are included.**

**Make your own hotel reservation at Hampton Inn & Suites, 900 Post Road, Wells, Maine 04090 (1-207-646-0555).**

**20 rooms have been set aside for us at a rate of \$89 for a room with two queen beds, microwave, and more.**



## Ballot Issues on the Horizon

Although 2009 will be an "off-year" election, there will be no shortage of questions on the November 3 ballot. On February 23, Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap announced that four of five citizen initiatives submitted by the January 22 deadline had received enough petition signatures to undergo review by the Legislature. Under the Maine Constitution, proponents of an initiative must gather signatures equal to 10% of the voter turnout in the most recent gubernatorial election or, in this case, 55,087 signatures.

The four initiatives now under review by the Legislature are: An Act to Decrease the Automobile Excise Tax and Promote Energy Efficiency, An Act to Establish the Maine Medical Marijuana Act, An Act to Provide Tax Relief and an Act to Repeal the School Consolidation Laws. By law, the Legislature must either pass the initiatives as written or send them to the voters as referenda. If the Legislature chooses, it may also send competing measures to the voters.

The initiative that was not certified by Secretary Dunlap was **An Act to Expand Affordable Health Insurance Choices in Maine**. Secretary Dunlap found all 63,690 petition signatures invalid because they did not appear on a petition that “was furnished or approved by the Secretary of State.” In addition, he found 9,509 of those signatures invalid for other reasons. Written by the Maine Heritage Policy Center, the failed initiative sought to make insurance products from other New England states available to consumers. It was also designed to eliminate guaranteed issue of insurance coverage and to create a “high risk pool” for consumers otherwise unable to find coverage. The initiative was promoted by industry and was not favored by consumer groups.

The **excise tax** initiative would cut municipal taxes on new automobiles in half. Strongly opposed by the Maine Municipal Association, it would shave off \$70 million per year in excise taxes, according to proponent group Maine Leads.

The **tax relief** initiative, supported by both Maine Leads and TABOR NOW and opposed by Maine Can Do Better, would cap increases in state and municipal spending based on growth in population and inflation. A majority of the Legislature (or municipal governing body) and a majority of voters at referendum would need to approve any excess spending. The initiative is very similar to the TABOR referendum that was rejected by Maine voters by a margin of 54 to 46 in November 2006.

Governor Baldacci opposes both tax initiatives. He has met with leaders of both parties to urge them to reform the State’s tax structure before the end of this legislative session.

The governor also opposes the initiative to **repeal school consolidation**, which has been championed by proponent group Maine Coalition to Save Schools and is supported by the Maine School Boards Association. Although the State argues that 80% of students are now in consolidated

districts, 24 of 46 plans considered by voters have been rejected. School districts in more rural areas of Maine have been more reluctant to comply with the requirements of the school consolidation legislation enacted in June 2007.

The **medical marijuana initiative**, which is primarily supported by the Maine Medical Marijuana Initiative and Maine Commonsense, would bring Maine’s 1999 law enacted by referendum in line with those of Rhode Island, Vermont and some other states. It would create nonprofit dispensaries to ensure a safe supply of the drug and would establish a statewide identification card system to protect patients from arrest. The 1999 referendum passed by a margin of 61 to 39, and there is currently no organized opposition to this initiative.

*- Michelle Small, Brunswick*

## Naturalization Ceremonies

The League of Women Voters of the Portland Area has always been on hand at naturalization ceremonies in southern Maine to welcome new citizens and register them to vote. Colleen Sanders, of Freeport, coordinates this project, and would love to have additional volunteers.

Naturalization events are scheduled to take place on Friday, April 17, at the United States District Court at 156 Federal Street in Portland and on Friday, April 24, in the U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office in South Portland. The April 17 ceremony will take place at 10:00 a.m., and the April 24 ceremonies will take place at 8:45 and 10:00 a.m.

To volunteer to welcome new citizens, please contact Colleen Sanders at [colleensandeers@att.net](mailto:colleensandeers@att.net) or 838-1457.

*- Michelle Small, Brunswick*

## Join the League!

If you are not already a member, we need your help now in carrying out our mission of education and reform. You may become a member of the League of Women Voters of Maine and the United States, by mailing us your contact information with a check for \$45 for one membership, or \$67.50 for two members at the same household. Our Mailing Address is: **League of Women Voters of Maine, P. O. Box 863, Augusta, ME 04332-0863**. Please provide the following information.

### Membership Application Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of additional member(s) in household \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (work/day) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (\$45 one member. \$67.50 two members same household.)

Please make your check out to: League of Women Voters of Maine. *Dues are not tax deductible.*

Comments (e.g. interests, how you heard about the League) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
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## Calendar for Spring 2009

April 4	10 am - noon	Brunswick	Brunswick Same Sex Marriage Study Concurrence Meeting
April 17	10 am	Portland	Naturalization Ceremony
April 23	Noon - 2 pm	Ellsworth	LWV-Downeast Concurrence on Equality in Marriage
April 24	8:45 am and 10 am	S. Portland	Naturalization Ceremony
May 1	3 - 5 pm	Brunswick	State Board Meeting
May 1	5 - 7 pm	Brunswick	Pre-Convention Dinner
May 1	7 am- 9pm	Brunswick	Pre-Convention Dessert and Reception
May 2	9am - 3:30 pm	Brunswick	State Convention
May 30, 31		Wells	Quad States Leadership Conference
June 13	1pm - 5pm		LWVUS "Virtual" National Convention



League of Women Voters of Maine  
P.O. Box 863  
Augusta, ME 04332-0863

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

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## LWVME • Convention • 2009

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**Dates** May 1-2, 2009                      **Location** Moulton Union, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME  
**Lodging** Comfort Inn, Brunswick. Call 729-1129 for reservations. *Ask for League of Women Voters of Maine rate!*  
The rate is \$79.76 per room.

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### LWVME • Convention • 2009

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### Registration • Form

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Member or Guest Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I plan to attend (circle one):    Friday Night    Saturday    Both

\$50 Registration Fee                  Number Attending \_\_\_\_\_                  Total Enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_

Mail check and completed form to LWVME, Convention 2009, P.O. Box 863, Augusta, ME 04332-0863

Register now!                          Registration Deadline is April 20                          Contact: 207•622•0256    lwvme@gwi.net