



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

## The Maine Voter

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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.

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

Dear League Members,

The League of Women Voters is celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2010. Not coincidentally, the 19th amendment to the United States Constitution that gave women the right to vote celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2010, as well.

"The women who started the movement to give women the right to vote really didn't know where it would end, how it would end, or when it would end," said League of Women Voters president, Mary G. Wilson. "And yet they persevered. They persevered in a time when it wasn't fashionable for women to speak out on any issue – let alone try to get some rights for themselves. They worked against all odds – and succeeded."

In 1920, after a 72-year struggle, passage of the 19th amendment appeared to be imminent, and members of the National American Woman Suffrage Association met to form the League of Women Voters, the organization to educate the newly franchised women to effectively use the vote.

In 1920, LWV founder Carrie Chapman Catt urged the new organization to "finish the fight" and to work to end all discrimination against women. Initially, the LWV was primarily concerned with the status and rights of women and women's issues, but interests were gradually expanded to include issues affecting men as well as women. Today, the LWV works to effect change on a wide variety of issues in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy.

Our League, the League of Women Voters of Maine, follows in the footsteps of our foremothers. Our group of dedicated members works to ensure everyone's right to vote. This year we are exploring how PACs work in Maine to see if there is a better way to run campaigns in the state. We are exploring alternatives in close elections—is there a better way to hold runoff elections, so peoples' voices can be heard more clearly. We continue to work to help voters get the information needed to make informed decisions and to help all those eligible to vote. We hope you will join us at the Keys to the Capitol in March, at our Annual Meeting in May and at our Forums throughout the state.

We have seen that women can make a difference—in fact any committed individual can make a difference in how our government works. I hope you will join with us to make our state one that works for all its citizens.

*- Barbara McDade, President  
 Bangor, Maine*

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

For the past several years members from the Leagues in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire and Rhode Island have met for workshops, to share ideas and to meet fellow League members. This year's **Quad States Leadership Development Program** will be held in Wells, Maine on May 22 and 23. The theme will be "The League in a Changing World."

The committee is still working on workshops, speakers and programs, but we know that discussions will focus on state studies, membership issues, the League process and voter service/voting procedure issues. It is hoped that there will be more time for individual members to share experiences and concerns with colleagues from the other states. While the boards and officers of state and local Leagues and MAL units are encouraged to attend, all members who are interested in learning more about how the League works are cordially invited.

During or after the Quad States meeting, our League will hold the LWVME State Council. Save the dates on your calendar now. Quad States is always a rewarding experience.

*- Barbara McDade, Bangor*

## LWVUS NATIONAL CONVENTION JUNE 11-15, 2010 Making Democracy Work: A History Of Change. A Future Of Hope.

The LWVUS invites all members to join fellow Leaguers from 50 states, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Hong Kong to celebrate 90 remarkable years of League achievements and chart the course for the next biennium of League programs.

All League members are invited to attend Convention, but Presidents of local, state and ILO Leagues appoint their allotted delegates. Non-voting members can be part of the excitement as the Convention delegate body debates and adopts the 2010-2012 National Program, the LWVUS Budget for the next fiscal year, and amendments to the LWVUS Bylaws. Delegates will also be choosing the LWVUS Board officers,

directors and nominating committee for the next biennium. For more information, see the Members Only page of [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).

The Convention 2010 site, the Marriott Atlanta Marquis, is located in the downtown area known as Atlanta's heartbeat. It's where you can experience the world's largest aquarium, relax in Centennial Olympic Park, tour CNN Worldwide, and enjoy myriad dining, cultural and shopping experiences. Nearby are the President Jimmy Carter Library and Museum and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site and Visitors Center. For detailed information on this fabulous metropolis, visit the website [www.Atlanta.net](http://www.Atlanta.net) and click on 50 Things to do in Atlanta. Do plan to arrive early or stay a few extra days to explore the many attractions the Atlanta area has to offer.

The Marriott Atlanta Marquis recently completed a \$120 million renovation including a new Ballroom and meeting rooms on the Atrium level which will accommodate all of the LWVUS Convention events. Guests enter the hotel and a soaring 50-story atrium, and can check-in at the front desk or at a self-serve interactive kiosk, which produces your room key with a swipe of a credit card. Hotel restaurants include a Starbucks Café, SEAR for breakfast, lunch and dinner and the M-Shop Deli. The hotel has an indoor/outdoor pool and a Health Club and Spa. A 2-minute walk on an indoor covered pathway leads to Peachtree Center, with over 60 restaurants and shops. For more information please call 404-521-0000 or visit [www.Atlantamarquis.com](http://www.Atlantamarquis.com).

## A CALL FOR FAIR ELECTIONS NOW

The Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* was issued on January 21. Mary G. Wilson, national president of the League of Women Voters wrote in response that: "The Supreme Court has made a tragic mistake. Their decision ... is constitutionally irresponsible and will surely bring about an anti-democratic revolution in how we finance elections in this country. Today, basic pillars of American democracy have been undermined – that elections should not be corrupted by vast corporate wealth and that the voters

should be at the center of our democratic system.”

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE), our coalition partner, has responded with a renewed effort to gain support for the **Fair Elections Now Act (FENA)** that would provide public funding to congressional candidates who accept only small private contributions. MCCE is asking Senator Olympia Snowe to cosponsor **FENA** in a **Send Some Soap** campaign. Supporters are asked to go online to [www.sendsomesoap.com](http://www.sendsomesoap.com) and send a brief personalized message on a bar of soap to Senator Snowe. Representatives Chellie Pingree and Mike Michaud are already cosponsors of FENA in the House of Representatives, while Senator Susan Collins has expressed opposition.

MCCE believes that Congress must act to elevate the role of regular citizens in congressional campaigns so that their voices will be heard above the increased roar of corporate speech. “Maine’s approach is the right approach,” said Ann Luther, Co-chair of MCCE. “We have a voluntary system that frees candidates from the money chase and keeps them on a level playing field even when independent expenditures are made.”

The Supreme Court decision does not have a direct effect on Maine. Maine’s law does not bar corporations from engaging in independent spending in campaigns, but it does require disclosure of independent expenditures. The *Citizens United* decision specifically upheld disclosure requirements similar to those in Maine law. For more information, see [www.maineclipselections.org](http://www.maineclipselections.org)

- Martha Dickinson, Ellsworth

## KEYS TO THE CAPITOL

The LWVME will host an on-site introduction to the Maine legislature, called “Keys to the Capitol,” in Augusta on Thursday, March 25. Bring your friends and plan to join us. The day will begin at the Welcome Center in the Capitol Building at 9 am and will end with tea at the Governor’s mansion, the Blaine House, from 2 to 3:30 pm. The day also includes:

- A guided tour of the State House
- An up-to-the minute briefing about legislative action
- An update on the LWVME PAC study
- Observation of a committee meeting or legislative session
- A tour of the Blaine House

You are encouraged to arrange a meeting with your legislator and invite her or him to join you for a snack or lunch in the Cross Café (in the Capitol Building).

A \$5 registration fee covers expenses, including the tea but not lunch. RSVP for the tea at [lvvme@gwi.net](mailto:lvvme@gwi.net) or 799-3112 before Friday, March 19. Additional details will be available online at [www.lvvme.org](http://www.lvvme.org) or by request. Mark your calendar now for Thursday, March 25. We hope to see you there.

- Anne Schink, South Portland

## NEW TAX LAW CHALLENGED BY PEOPLE’S VETO

On June 12, Governor John E. Baldacci signed a tax-restructuring bill into law. The bill lowered the top income tax rate from 8.5% to 6.5% on incomes lower than \$250,000, while extending the sales tax to cover more goods and services and increasing the meals and lodging tax from 7% to 8.5%. Proponents of the bill predicted that 90% of Maine people would pay lower taxes.

After the bill was signed, its opponents, who feared its impact on the business climate, swung into action and initiated a people’s veto petition, collecting and submitting 71,035 signatures to Maine’s Secretary of State by September 11. On

November 9, Matthew Dunlap determined that 56,107 of those signatures were valid and certified the question for the June 2010 ballot. The question will read:

*“Do you want to reject the new law that lowers Maine’s income tax and replaces that revenue by making changes to the sales tax?”*

Certification of the question was not without controversy. On November 2, Charles Webster, chair of Maine’s Republican Party, sought a declaratory judgment against the Secretary of State from the Kennebec County Superior Court after Dunlap’s office missed the October 13 deadline to issue a decision about the validity of the signatures submitted. Following a hearing, Superior Court Justice Donald H. Marden ordered the Secretary of State to place the people’s veto question on the ballot, finding that Dunlap had lost his authority to determine the validity of the petitions when he exceeded the 30-day statutory time limit.

*- Michelle Small, Brunswick*

## FORUMS IN A BOX

Would your local League, library, service organization, senior college or other group like to sponsor an opportunity for voters to learn about the **tax referendum** and other initiatives that may be on the ballot June 8? If so, try LWVME’s new Forums in a Box.

We think LWVME’s Forums in a Box is something that can work for you. The idea is that the League will provide a moderator, the speakers and the format for the discussion. The local League or other organization would provide the local public relations, venue, timekeeper and someone to collect questions from the audience—perhaps, even a few light refreshments.

It’s a good way to partner with local organizations and helps educate those voting in the June election. The League has not taken a position on the tax referendum, so will provide a non-partisan discussion of the issues involved.

If you are interested in having a Forum on the 2010 Tax Referendum in your community, please

contact Barbara [McDade—  
bmcdade@bpl.lib.me.us](mailto:bmcdade@bpl.lib.me.us) or 947-8336 (w) or 941-8508 (h).

*- Barbara McDade, Bangor*

## Forum on Climate Change, Energy and Jobs in Ellsworth

On October 24, 2009, the LWVDE co-sponsored a **“Green Jobs, Energy Use and the Changing Climate”** forum in Ellsworth. Maine’s climatologist, George Jacobson, presented the current status of climate science. The Governor’s Director of Energy Security and Independence, John Kerry, spoke about the job and economic benefits of the clean energy economy. For example, clean energy jobs have grown 23% since 2001, while overall job growth has been only 3% in Maine. Kerry also said that Maine citizens and businesses sent \$5 billion out of state last year to buy fossil fuels. Other speakers included Steve Crawford, who spoke about the work of the Passamaquoddy Tribe on Pleasant Point; Brenda Cartwright of Hancock County Towns in Transition; Ben Hayman from RePower America; and Brook Welty, a College of the Atlantic student who planned to attend the Copenhagen Climate Change meeting. I gave a presentation on the LWVUS policies and actions on clean energy and climate change – we have a long proud history of support for clean energy and environment.

*-Pam Person, LWVDE  
and LWVUS Climate Change Task Force*

## Maine League Lobbies For Climate Change

In early October, the LWVME met with Senator Collins via videoconference at her Bangor office. The meeting was attended by LWVME President Barbara McDade, Treasurer Ann Luther, and LWVUS Climate Change Task Force member, Pam Person, with Senator Collins, Amy Carroll and Bangor office director Carol Woodcock. We asked the Senator to vote to bring the climate change legislation to the floor of the Senate. We brought research showing the economic benefits of investing in new energy sources

and energy efficiency. We also urged support for the United States to lead international action at the upcoming international summit of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties in Copenhagen. Senator Collins did not commit to either of our requests. She stated that she supported action on climate change, but did not like many of the provisions in the Kerry-Boxer bill and was concerned about China becoming number one in greenhouse gas emissions. We asked her to work to strengthen the bill once it was amendable.

Shortly after the Collins meeting, I was honored to represent the LWVME in Washington at a national lobbying day with key US Senators. Oxfam America's **Sisters on the Planet** project, which the LWVUS supports, sponsored this lobbying day on October 28. The Sisters on the Planet project aims to bring awareness to leaders about the effects of climate change -- "from Biloxi to Bangladesh, poor and vulnerable communities get hit first and worst by the effects of climate change. And within these communities women are disproportionately affected." Women are the caretakers of the children and elderly, as well as the ones who carry the water and till the soil and try to protect the elderly and children from harm during storms. During Hurricane Katrina, 83% of the displaced people were single mothers.

At a briefing from Oxfam, we heard moving talks by two women from the Sahel region in Africa who had led a project to reforest 130 million acres in Niger and Burkina Faso, where desertification is a problem. I became even more determined to help this effort.

I met with top aides to Senator Snowe and Collins concerning the Sisters on the Planet project and discussed the severe impacts of climate change, particularly on women. I asked them to support increased funding for international adaptation and clean energy investments in the pending national and international climate negotiations. We discussed the political, ethical, and national security aspects of environmental refugees, as sea levels rise and potable water and food supplies evaporate worldwide. Both Patrick Woodcock and Amy Carroll said their Senators support action on climate change. As of January 2010, the schedule had not been set for US Senate floor action on the Kerry-Boxer climate energy bill approved in committee. The US House passed climate/energy legislation in the summer of 2009.

Because of the lack of action on the part of the US Senate, President Obama could not take significant action to adopt a binding legal agreement at the Copenhagen summit. There was a political agreement to adopt the goal of a maximum 2° C (3.6° F) increase

in temperature and to support international aid for mitigation and adaptation by underdeveloped countries. League members attended the Copenhagen meetings, including two members of the LWVUS Climate Change Task Force.

*- Pam Person, LWVDE  
and LWVUS Climate Change Task Force*

## EARLY VOTING IN MAINE

In some states, the term "early voting" means absentee voting done in person in the office of an election official. However, the Maine Secretary of State uses the term "early voting" to describe a time period before an election during which voters have the opportunity to cast a ballot at a designated voting place within their municipality, in the same manner as on Election Day. This differs from in-person absentee voting that Maine currently allows. An amendment to the Maine Constitution would be necessary to implement early voting in Maine.

The Maine Legislature, in 2005, directed the Secretary of State to design a pilot program for early voting. Since that time, the Secretary of State, with assistance from the Legislature, the Office of the Attorney General and municipal clerks, has studied early voting to determine the feasibility and appropriate procedure to adopt early voting for Maine's statewide elections.

Two reports on the early voting pilot programs are available from the Secretary of State. The 2007 report describes the results of a study of early voting and outlines the pilot program that was implemented in three municipalities for the November 2007 Referendum Election. The report issued in 2008 describes the success of the pilot program and the issues to be addressed to allow adoption of early voting as a statewide program. A third report is due in January 2010 but was not available at this writing. Legislation regarding implementation of early voting is pending before the Maine Legislature. See the Maine Secretary of State's website on [Early Voting in Maine](#) for the latest information.

*- Martha Dickinson, Ellsworth*



## PUBLIC INTEREST REPORTING

### Portland Area League Welcomes Judge John H. Rich III

On September 18, 2009, Magistrate Judge John H. Rich III presided over his first Citizenship Ceremony in the United States District Court in Portland, Maine. In his presentation to the new citizens he said he had spent his early years abroad and, like them, had gained his first impressions of the United States through a different lens.

Judge Rich was born in Bronxville, New York, but lived overseas for 18 years. He attended elementary school at lycées in Paris and high school in Tokyo. He was a summa cum laude graduate of Bowdoin College in 1978 and he received a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1982.

From 1983 through 2008 Judge Rich was employed by Perkins Thompson, P.A., in Portland Maine, serving as President of that firm from 2007-08. In 2008 he became a United States Magistrate Judge for the District of Maine.

Judge Rich is affiliated with The American Law Institute, Maine State Bar Association and the Cumberland Bar Association. His involvement in civic activities includes the World Affairs Council of Maine, Portland Museum of Art and the Committee on Foreign Relations, Portland. He wrote "Recent Federal Immigration Laws: Potential Traps for Unwary Employers," which was published in the Maine Chamber of Commerce and Industry RegWatch, premiere issue, summer, 1994.

For those interested in meeting or observing Judge Rich, he will preside at a judicial ceremony at 10 am on March 12 at the U.S. District Court in Portland.

- Polly Ferguson, South Portland

John Christie, a long-time journalist and publisher, recently founded the non-profit Maine Center for Public Interest Reporting (MCPIR). According to the MCPIR website, "In recent years, most newspaper and broadcast news outlets in Maine have reduced newsroom staffs through layoffs, early retirements and attrition. One of the first victims is in-depth journalism... In Maine, statehouse coverage has declined from about 20 year-round reporters in 1989 to 10 in 1999 to the current five."

In an email to the League, Christie wrote: "I formed the Maine Center for Public Interest Reporting (MCPIR) because I have first-hand knowledge of the widening gap between what citizens need to know about their government and what a beleaguered news media can deliver. The stories will be non-partisan, non-ideological and free from the influence of any interest groups." An apt quote from Thomas Jefferson heads the Center's home page: "*Wherever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.*"

Christie's first article, entitled "Well-connected lobbyists won special tax treatment from Gov. Baldacci," alleges that Baldacci gave some special exemptions from new taxes to two special interests – realtors and the ski industry. According to the article, "The governor's decision to go to bat for these special interests offers an example of the role money, influence and personal connections play in the creation of state policies that affect Maine citizens." In the case of the ski industry, Baldacci removed the new tax on lift tickets but left intact the new sales tax on meals and lodging. Baldacci has said that he opposed the increase in the real estate transfer tax on homes selling for more than \$500,000 because he didn't want to damage the real estate industry during this recession.

Look for this and future articles from MCPIR in the Bangor Daily News, Lewiston Sun Journal, Ellsworth American, Mt. Desert Islander, and on MCPIR's website at <http://pinetreewatchdog.org>.

- Martha Dickinson, Ellsworth

Stay in Touch with LWVME -- Make sure you receive our timely communications about important action alerts and current issues. If you are not receiving our e-mail messages, make sure we have your current email address. Send a message to us at [lwvme@gwi.net](mailto:lwvme@gwi.net).

## Join the League!

If you are not yet a member of the League, we need your help now in carrying out our mission of 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, PO Box 863, and Augusta, ME 04332-0863**. Please provide us with the following information. Thank you very much!

### 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 the 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 2010**

LWVME State Board, Augusta	Thursday, Feb 11, 10 am
LWV-DE Discussion Group, Blue Hill	Wednesday, Mar 3, 4:30 pm
Keys to the Capitol, Augusta	Thursday, Mar 25, 9 am
LWVME State Board, Augusta	Thursday, Apr 8, 10 am
Quad States, Wells, ME	Sat, Sun, May 22, 23
LWVME Council, Wells, ME	Sun, May 23
Election Day	Tuesday, June 8
LWVUS Convention, Atlanta, GA	June 11 – 15