



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

The Maine Voter

Volume 30, Number 2

Spring 2013

Contents	Page
Call to Convention	1
President's Letter	2
Convention Agenda	2
Program 2013 – 2015	4
Nominated Slate	5
Registration Form	7
Lobby Corps	7
Quad States Leadership	9
Portland Area LWV	9
Maine Clean Elections	10
Gun Control Legislation	10
LWV and Energy Policy	11
InforME	11
Join Us	11
Calendar	12

LWVME Officers

President:	
Barbara McDade	Bangor
Vice President:	
Jill Ward	S. Portland
Secretary:	
Colleen Tucker	Portland
Treasurer:	
Ann Luther	Trenton
Directors	
Martha Dickinson	Ellsworth
Polly Ferguson	S. Portland
Val Marsh	Pittsfield
Cathie Whittenburg	Portland



Editor: Martha Dickinson

Contributors: Ann Luther, Barbara McDade, Pam Person, Anne Schink, Jill Ward, Cathie Whittenburg, Karla Wight



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.



www.lwvme.org

LWVME • Convention • 2013

May 31 – June 1
Burton Fisher Meeting Room
One City Center
Portland, ME

Come to Convention! Learn, Meet Interesting People and Help Set the Agenda for Maine's League of Women Voters

The Convention will be held Friday and Saturday, **May 31 and June 1**.

On Friday evening, everyone is welcome to hear an incredible story from the fight to gain suffrage for women in the United States. Posie Cowan, of Blue Hill, was a history major in college, yet never learned the story of the militant suffrage movement that helped win American women the right to vote. She had no idea that her great-grandmother, Sophie Meredith, was a part of it. Sophie Meredith opened the Virginia branch of Alice Paul's National Woman's Party and served on its national advisory committee. Alice Paul had lobbied for a constitutional amendment to secure women the vote. Thanks to the work and sacrifice of the National Woman's Party, in 1919, both the House and Senate passed the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote. The three-fourths of the states needed to ratify the amendment to make it law occurred in 1920. Ms Cowan has done extensive research about the movement including finding family letters, photos, ledgers, and newspaper articles about Sophie and her work. Members of the League are invited to bring friends and prospective members to hear this fascinating story and view the banners Posie found in her father's attic -- banners that were used in marches in Washington, D.C. during the fight for women's right to vote.

On Saturday, the Convention will feature three interesting and informative speakers. BJ McCollister, Program Director for Maine Citizens for Clean Elections; Amy Fried, political science professor at the University of Maine and columnist for the Bangor Daily News; and Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap. These speakers will address voting issues including money in elections, recent efforts to limit voting and allowing early voting and what that could mean.

The business portion of the meeting will deal with defining where the state League should focus its efforts. The national, state and local Leagues have studied numerous issues and come to consensus. As a state with a small population and a League that isn't large, it is important that we select and adopt priority issues to direct our actions for change. But before the League can take action, it is essential that members are informed and that there be a discussion about the political realities of action. The studies we have done and our members' willingness to keep informed make the League uniquely credible. If you have an area you think Maine's League should study, please send it to LWVME President Barbara McDade at bmcdade@bpl.lib.me.us or phone us at 622-0256 by May 15.

From LWVME President:

Dear League Members and Friends,

It's time for the State League's Biennial Convention. That means it is a time to take stock of what we've accomplished and look forward to what more we can do.

It certainly has been a busy two years since our last Convention. It is a bit ironic that one of the proposed studies in May of 2011 was on the Citizens' Initiative and People's Veto. At that time we had no idea that we would soon be involved in a People's Veto ourselves. But we were, and we were successful in working with our many coalition partners in overturning a law passed that year that would have eliminated same-day voter registration. We also worked with other coalitions to pass a Citizen's Initiative entitled, "An Act to Allow Marriage Licenses for Same-Sex Couples and Protect Religious Freedom."

We concluded our Money in Politics Study with the consensus that we support reform in the financing of state candidate PACs consistent with the LWVUS position on Campaign Finance Reform. However we have seen backward steps in Clean Elections as the *Citizens United* decision plays out and as the state legislature weakens our citizen-initiated public financing program.

Voter Service is one of the key areas people think of when they think of the League—and we continue to play an important role around the state. Our Easy-to-Read Voters Guide is in demand throughout the state for readers of every stripe. Many rely upon our candidate forums to hear local candidate positions. The League worked with other nonprofit organizations to host a candidate forum for U.S. Senate to discuss women's issues, including economic

security, freedom from violence, healthcare, and civil rights. Our League members welcome new citizens and give them information on registering to vote at Citizenship Ceremonies in Bangor, Portland, and South Portland. Our Lobby Corp is a major presence in Augusta. This year we have provided testimony on good government, election laws, clean elections, and gun control.

I want to publicly thank the members of our State Board for going above and beyond what can be expected. We greatly miss two of our members who needed to resign from the board before their terms were finished: Sarah Walton and Michelle Small, both of whom were tireless workers are sorely missed. Anne Schink left our Board to serve on the National Board. Her absence is also felt, but we get to work with her occasionally in her new capacity. My thanks to Valerie Marsh for joining our board mid-term -- she has been busy helping as she learns how everything works.

I look forward to the next two years. We need your ideas and energy to get things done. We are an organization that can and does work at the grassroots level to inform voters, to encourage active participation in government, to increase understanding of major political policy issues, and to influence public policy after study by our members and consensus from them.

- Barbara McDade, Bangor
LWVME President

League of Women Voters of Maine AGENDA FOR CONVENTION 2013

Burton Fisher Meeting Room
One City Center
Portland, ME

Friday • May 31

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm Old Board Meeting

The retiring Board meets for the last time – League members welcome to attend

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm **Posie Cowan and the Women's Suffrage Movement of the Early 1900s**

Blue Hill resident Posie Cowan recently stumbled upon a piece of American history while cleaning out a space in her father's attic. What she assumed was just an old box of dusty drapes and loose scrap material was, in actuality, a box filled with banners used during the women's suffrage movement of the early 1900s. Upon further research, Posie discovered that her great-grandmother was one of the original suffragists who marched on Washington for women's right to vote and who were arrested for their efforts and beliefs. Posie speaks passionately about how she found this great piece of American history, the beliefs for which her great-grandmother fought so hard, and how everyone should remember the importance of their one vote.

7:00 pm

Dinner

TBA

9 am – 9:30 am Coffee and Registration

9:30 am – 10:30 am **Plenary Session I**
Presentation of Nominating Committee
Presentation of Proposed Budget 2013-2015
Presentation of Proposed Program 2013-2015

10:30 am – 11:15 am **Amy Fried: Democracy, the Economy, and Access to the Vote**

Amy Fried is Professor of Political Science at the University of Maine. She is also the ADVANCE-Rising Tide Policy Advocate and oversees the Maine Policy Scholar Program at the University. Fried's research largely focuses on the history and political uses of public opinion in the United States. Professor Fried is a past recipient of the John C. Donovan award from the New England Political Science Association for her work on Alexis de Tocqueville and social capital. She provides analysis to a wide range of media outlets and writes a biweekly column for the Bangor Daily News.

11:30 am – 12:15 pm **B. J. McCollister: Money in Politics**

BJ McCollister came to Maine Citizens for Clean Elections in September of 2012. BJ has an extensive background in political campaigns and issue advocacy organizations. Prior to joining MCCE, BJ worked for CIEE, an international educational non-profit. In 2010, BJ worked as the Southern Maine Field Director for State Senate races and witnessed first-hand the invasive role money plays in politics. After attending and organizing fundraisers with high profile lobbyists and organizations, he came to the conclusion that government needs to be more accountable to people, not the donors.

12:15 pm – 1:30 pm Lunch

1:30 pm – 2:00 pm **Plenary Session II**
Report from Local Leagues
Vote on the Budget
Vote on Proposed Program
Election of Officers and Directors
A Thank You to the Retiring Board

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm **Matthew Dunlap, Secretary of State: Early Voting and Other Issues**

Matthew Dunlap of Old Town, Maine's 49th Secretary of State, is the first person to serve non-consecutive terms in that office since 1880. He previously served three terms as Maine's 47th Secretary of State. During his previous tenure, he served as President of the National Association of Secretaries of State and was named Maine's Public Administrator of the Year in 2008. In 2005, he was appointed by U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta to serve on a national rulemaking panel on driver's license and identification card security, and he has remained active in the national debate on privacy and national security. He previously served four terms in the Maine House of Representatives representing part of Old Town and the Indian Island Voting District. He served three terms as House Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, as well as House Chair of the Government Oversight Committee. A founder of the Maine Youth Fish and Game Association, he is an award-winning monthly columnist for *The Northwoods Sporting Journal* and is active in many civic endeavors.

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm Meeting of the New Board

LWVME Proposed Program 2013-2015

Positions: Retain all current positions

Recommended Program:

Agriculture Study

The League nationally has undertaken a review of our agriculture policy position.

The scope of the study as adopted by the national convention delegates and the national board includes a range of issues that were not even dreamed of in 1986 when the first agriculture study was undertaken. The motion adopted at the 2012 National Convention is: *review and update the LWVUS agriculture position, approved in 1988. Such a review would investigate genetic modification, consolidation in the food industry, money in the regulatory process, and the consumer's right to accurate and complete food labeling.*

It is a complex topic with lots to learn and share. Starting at the individual and family level, it is the health and social justice issue of meeting basic human needs. It is a natural resource issue in terms of its impact on land, air and water. It is an economic issue of how the government supports the business of providing food for a hungry nation. It is an international trade issue in terms of the role that United States agriculture policy plays in shaping food quality and supply across the globe. And, without question, one of the thorniest issues is the power of the agricultural industry to influence public policy through unlimited campaign contributions.

LWVME and Local Leagues in Maine will be participating in various ways in the Agriculture Study.

Positions in Brief 2011-2013

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY (CIVIL MARRIAGE) adopted by the League of Women Voters of Maine, April 27, 2009: supports equal rights for all under Maine law. LWVME supports efforts to equalize the legal rights and benefits available to same-sex couples with those available to heterosexual couples. LWVME supports legislation and ballot initiatives to permit same-sex couples to marry. The League believes that the civil status of marriage should be clearly distinguished from the religious institution of marriage and that religious rights should be preserved. LWVME believes that Maine should recognize the civil unions and same-sex marriages of other states.

ELECTION REFORM: adopted by the League of Women Voters of Maine, March 7, 2011: supports election systems for elected offices in single seat

elections that require the winner to receive a majority of the votes, as long as the majority is achieved by Instant Runoff Voting/Ranked Choice Voting, rather than a second, separate runoff election.

MONEY IN POLITICS: adopted by the League Board in December 2011: supports reform in the financing of state candidate PACs consistent with the LWVUS position on Campaign Finance Reform. This means that LWVME supports measures to improve the financing of candidate PACs in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office, and promote citizen participation in the political process. Applying these principles to PAC reform in Maine provides a basis for sound action in the changing constitutional context as the Supreme Court of the U.S. reshapes the landscape of permissible reform.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Support action to promote sustainable use of natural resources and prevent degradation of natural resources in Maine, especially in the areas of:

- Air Quality
- Pesticides
- Water Quality
- Land Use
- Farmland Preservation
- Energy
- Nuclear Power
- Food Irradiation
- Low-level Radioactive Waste

COUNTY GOVERNMENT: Support an intermediary form of government, such as county government, between municipalities and the state.

EDUCATION: Strengthen education in Maine, especially in the areas of:

- Education Finance
- School Libraries
- University of Maine System

HEALTH CARE IN MAINE: Support a unified state health care program that provides coverage for all residents of the state, including those now insured.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: Support for a juvenile justice system that has as its primary purposes the prevention of juvenile crime and substance abuse and the prompt response to and rehabilitation of juveniles who have committed crimes.

TRANSPORTATION: Support energy-efficient and environmentally sound transportation systems that improve access to housing and services. Support initiatives that improve rail transportation in Maine.

League of Women Voters of Maine Nominated Slate for 2013-2015

President

Barbara McDade

bmcdade@bpl.lib.me.us

Bangor

947-8336 (w)

Barbara has served as President of the Maine League for the past four years. Before that, she served as Co-president from 2007-2009. 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, she served as president of the Waynesboro League. She is Vice President of the Rotary Club of Bangor and is organist of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Bangor.

Vice President

Jill Ward

jmward23@gmail.com

South Portland

799-1596

Jill currently serves as Vice President of the League of Women Voters of Maine. Jill joined the League four years ago and works from home as a full-time, non-profit consultant and mom to 6-year-old Michael and 3-year-old Nicholas. 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 (MD) and George J. Mitchell (ME).

Secretary

Colleen Tucker

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. She currently serves on the City of Portland Land Bank Commission and volunteers on the Lands Committee of the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust.

Treasurer

Ann M. Luther

ann.m.luther@gmail.com

Trenton

664-0696

Ann currently serves as Treasurer of the League of Women Voters of Maine. She served as President of LWVME from 2003 to 2007 and as co-president from 2007-2009. Representing LWVME at Maine Citizens for Clean Elections, she served that coalition as co-president from 2006 until 2011. She remains on the board of MCCE and serves as Treasurer, and she also serves on the board of the Maine Center for Public Interest Reporting. She is active in the LWV-Down East MAL unit. She joined the League in 1998 when she retired as product manager from SEI Investments. 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

Martha Dickinson

marthad@gwi.net

Ellsworth

667-5863

Martha joined the League eight years ago, and has served on the Board for nearly that long. Before retirement, she taught physics at Maine Maritime Academy, College of the Atlantic, and colleges on the West Coast. She is active in the LWV-Down East MAL unit. She is currently editor of the Maine Voter, the newsletter of the LWVME. She is active in several political and social change organizations as well as her church. Martha reviews books on astronomy, cosmology, and climate change for a library journal. She enjoys swimming, walking, painting and singing.

Director

Leslie Harlow

leslieharlow123@gmail.com

Ellsworth

266-0621

Leslie is a relatively new League member and is a resident of Ellsworth. She has resided in the Downeast area for over 40 years where she has raised a family, owned and operated a few notable food service and production businesses, and involved herself in the applied arts. Currently Leslie is the co-owner of a historic property development project in Ellsworth and of the Brunswick-based Maine Arts Publishing. Leslie has deep political roots in Maine, her early political interests having been nurtured through her own mother's friendship with Maine's iconic politicians Margaret Chase Smith, John Reed, and Edmund Muskie, where she learned to appreciate respect and civility among people with differing party affiliations. In her free time Leslie is a metal-works artisan. Her hobbies include skiing, biking, hiking, boating and goofing off. She has recently completed a book and is seeking a publisher.

Director**Barbara Kaufman**kaufman.barb@gmail.com**South Freeport**

865-9089

Barbara became a League member last year to support our efforts to protect voting rights. Barbara recently retired from her position as a volunteer coordinator at Independence Association, a Brunswick agency that provides services for people with disabilities. Before that, she worked for over a decade with KIDS Consortium, helping school districts, teachers, students, state departments of education, and many other local and national non-profits to create and sustain programs that incorporate civic engagement into education standards. During the 1990s, Barbara taught Language Arts at Brunswick Junior High School. She is now an astrologer, one who maintains a passion for earthbound society as well as that of the stars and planets!

Director**Val Marsh**valerie.marsh@gmail.com**Pittsfield**

487-3673

Val has been a member of the LWVME Board since August of 2012. She moved to Maine in 2008 to make a home for her family. A career social worker, Val has been working for social justice for over 35 years. She is a longtime community organizer, and has advocated on behalf of the homeless, people with mental illnesses, disadvantaged minority populations, impoverished families in need of affordable housing and more. Val came from Virginia, where she spent ten years working in the Virginia legislature on behalf of families and individuals who face serious mental illnesses. Val especially enjoys advocacy work, as well as budgeting and fundraising. Val is deeply committed to voting rights and ensuring an inclusive, democratic system of governance.

Director**Polly Ward**polly.ward@gmail.com**South Freeport**

865-3530

Polly Ward is a member of the Portland Area League of Women Voters and a member of the Leadership Team for the LWVPA. She moved to Maine in 1981, and retired in 2010 from a long career in the public sector, working primarily in human resources. She has served as Deputy Commissioner for the Maine Department of Education, Director of Personnel and Administrative Services for the Maine School Management Association, for the South Portland School Department as Business Manager, and in human resources for Portland Public Schools. She now works intermittently for Wilbur's Chocolates, a very sweet deal.

Director**Cathie Whittenburg**cathiewhit@gmail.com**Portland**

318-0771

Cathie is currently a Director on the LWVME Board. Cathie is the Communications Director for States United to Prevent Gun Violence. She was the Director of Maine Citizens Against Handgun Violence. She plays tenor drum in the Blueberry Pancakes steel drum band and sings soprano in the Maine Peace Singers. She attended her first League of Women Voters board meeting while still in her mother's womb.

Director**Karla Wight**karlanjoe@aol.com**Portland**

210-6572

Karla is currently the Leadership Team Coordinator for the Portland Area League, where she has been a member for over three years. Before moving to Maine, she was a 50-year member of the LWV-Seattle, focusing on membership development. She served as Unit Leader and Board member in Seattle and as Membership Chair for the Mason County League, Washington. She has served on various League study committees. In her professional life, Karla worked in psychiatric nursing, casework and medical social work at private agencies and medical facilities in Seattle and in the Boston area. Her other volunteer activities include serving as mediator for the Dispute Resolution Center of Snohomish County, a Mennonite supported organization also in Washington, and as facilitator for support groups sponsored by Alzheimer's Association, ME chapter.

Director**Tammy Wing**twhewitt5@live.com**Windham**

766-1388

Tammy is a brand new League member who is eager to learn. She is currently employed as the Office Manager at Maine Geriatrics. She has been active in her community over the years helping to raise funds for the Project Graduation Committee's, Athletic Boosters, as well as other school organizations. She takes an active part in the Relay for Life Organization's fight against cancer, the Alzheimer's Association, and Stop Domestic Violence, among others. In her spare time she likes to stay active, and she enjoys running, hiking, and going to the gym.

Convention 2013 Registration Form

Member Name: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

____ people @ \$40 (includes lunch and food and drink for breaks) \$_____

Mail check and completed form to LWVME, Convention 2013, P.O. Box 863, Augusta, ME 04332-0863

Register now! Registration Deadline is May 15, 2013

Contact: (207) 622-0256 or email lwvme@gwi.net

The League Lobby Corps Update

The first regular session of the 126th Maine State Legislature convened on December 5, 2012. Statutory Adjournment is June 19, 2013. The first regular session is always a busy one in the Maine State Legislature. This year, somewhere between 1500 and 2000 bills will be considered.

The League Lobby Corps will monitor bills in the priority areas set by the Board last fall:

- Clean Elections & Campaign Finance Reform
- Voting Rights
- Election Methods & Administration
- Ethics & Disclosure

The Lobby Corps acts for the Board in developing testimony and monitoring legislation in those areas where we can make a significant impact. Here are some highlights of the bills we're working on in those areas.

Clean Elections

Almost 20 years ago, voters across Maine delivered 65,000 signatures to the Secretary of State to put Clean Elections on the ballot. A few months later 320,000 Maine voters passed the nation's first full public funding law so that all candidates for state office -- legislative and gubernatorial -- could run for office without relying on special interest funding. More citizens voted "Yes!" on Clean Elections than have voted for any winning governor since 1990.

Today, Maine elections are Clean Elections, thanks to the enthusiastic participation of Maine people, including the members of the League of Women Voters.

The courts recently invalidated triggered matching fund provisions of the Clean Election Act. These

matching funds helped level the playing field for candidates. The last legislature failed to replace the invalidated law, making it less attractive to candidates. The legislature also raised the contribution limits for privately funded gubernatorial candidates.

Now our Clean Elections system is under direct attack in Augusta. The Governor's biennial budget recommends completely defunding the Clean Elections program for 2014. The League offered testimony in opposition to that budget proposal. You can read our testimony at www.lwvme.org/files/LR_1046_MCEA_in_the_Biennial_Budget_2013-03-20.pdf.

The 126th Legislature is slated to consider an important bill to strengthen the law -- LD 1309 **An Act To Strengthen the Maine Clean Election Act**. This bill replaces the Maine Clean Election Act matching funds system with a system of optional supplemental funding for participating Maine Clean Election Act candidates who collect additional qualifying contributions, and it provides the potential for sufficient resources to publicly funded gubernatorial candidates to keep them competitive with privately funded candidates under the new, higher contribution limits. LWVME will support this bill.

You can read more about LD 1309 and all other legislative bills at www.maine.gov/legis/.

Early Voting

The Maine Legislature is set to consider LD 156, a constitutional amendment to establish a statewide system of early voting. It's time for true Early Voting to come to Maine. Some people think we already have that, but actually, we don't. Not really. What we sometimes hear called "early voting" is really in-person absentee voting. Early voting is different

because, unlike in-person absentee voting, ballots are cast immediately - not put aside to be cast by a clerk on Election Day. With true early voting, voters cast their own ballots into the ballot box or optical scanning machine when they vote before Election Day. Early voting:

- reduces congestion on Election Day
- helps eliminate long lines at the polls
- reduces pressure on election officials
- provides an important convenience to many voters
- contributes to a more secure and orderly process for the conduct of elections

This legislation is supported by the League of Women Voters, the ACLU of Maine, the Office of the Secretary of State, the Disability Rights Center, the Maine Women's Coalition, Speaking Up for Us of Maine, and many others.

Currently, the Maine Constitution prohibits early voting. Implementing true early voting requires an amendment to the Constitution to the Maine Constitution. **LD 156 is a RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Concerning Early Voting and Voting by Absentee Ballot.** It will require a two-thirds majority in both chambers to pass. It will then require the Governor's signature, and finally it will appear on the ballot in November 2013 to be ratified by the voters. If the Constitutional amendment passes, there will be legislation in the second session to establish the particulars of how it will actually work in Maine. Stay tuned.

Other Voting Matters

The League is working on other voting bills, too. Here are just a few:

LD 511 An Act To Implement the National Popular Vote for President. LWVME Supports.

LD 573 RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Restrict the Voting Privileges of Persons Incarcerated for Murder or Class A Crimes. LWVME Opposes.

LD 518 An Act To Establish Ranked-choice Voting in the State and **LD 860 An Act To Require That the Governor, Senators and Members of the House of Representatives Be Elected by the Ranked-choice Voting Method.** LWVME supports.

Governmental Ethics

Last, but not least, the League is working on a group of bills related to Governmental Ethics. In a report published last year, *State Integrity Investigation*, Maine ranked 46th in the nation on measures of accountability and transparency. Three nonpartisan, good government and journalism groups -- Global Integrity, the Center for Public Integrity, and Public Radio International -- commissioned this report. (To

read the report, see www.stateintegrity.org.) Our low ranking in Maine does not mean that we are among the most corrupt states in the country, but it does mean that our laws are weak, and weak laws create vulnerability.

As this article goes to press, the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee has advanced three important bills to remedy some of the deficiencies in our laws. The League supported all of these bills.

LD 1001 An Act To Improve Laws Governing Financial Disclosure by Legislators and Certain Public Employees and Public Access to Information Disclosed requires more disclosure of financial interests by legislators and senior executive branch employees so that members of the press and the public can more easily detect conflicts of interest.

LD184 An Act To Enhance Transparency in Government by Implementing a Waiting Period for Legislators before They May Register as Lobbyists as amended requires a 12-month cooling off period before former legislators can register as lobbyists.

LD 859 An Act To Increase Ethics and Transparency in Government Service as amended requires a 12-month cooling off period before senior executive branch employees can register as lobbyists.

Unfortunately, a fourth bill did not survive a committee vote and appears to be dead for this session. The League will continue to look for ways to advance this measure.

LD 69 LD 69 An Act To Strengthen Financial Disclosure Laws for the Legislative and Executive Branches of State Government would have provided a 12-month cooling off period during which senior executive branch employees would be prohibited from accepting employment with companies engaged in business sectors that were regulated by that employee during their government service.

You can read more about all of these bills by entering their LD number at www.maine.gov/legis/. You can read the League's testimony on these bills at www.lwvme.org/about_action.html.

- Ann Luther, Trenton
Chair of LWVME Advocacy Committee

Quad States Leadership Conference

The League's seventh annual Quad States Leadership Development Conference will be held April 27 & 28 in Wells, Maine. State League leaders from Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont have planned the agenda. We will gather once more at the Hampton Inn in Wells.

Using the new LWVUS Agriculture Study as a case study, workshops will combine traditional skill building with training in best practices from the LWVUS Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) program. Maine's Valerie Kelly will be the resident expert on LWVUS's study. John E. Carroll, Professor of Environmental Conservation in the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment at the University of New Hampshire, will deliver the Keynote Address on Saturday morning. He will speak on food sufficiency and farm sustainability in New England. That will launch us into some great workshops and some fun fellowship with other League members from our sister Quad States. For the agenda and more information, see www.lwvme.org/Quad.html. Registration information will be found there. If you've been to Quad States before, you know how much fun and worthwhile it is! If you've never attended before, make this your first year!

- Barbara McDade, Bangor

How the Portland Area LWV Was Revitalized

When I moved to Portland in 2008, I learned that the Portland Area LWV was not active, and I joined the LWVME. I attended the LWVME State Convention in Portland in 2011 and met some Leaguers and Board members. Anne Schink, a member of the Board, later contacted me, and a group of us began to meet and eventually hold general meetings. Attendance was good, and we became brave enough to form a Leadership Team. With coaching from Anne Schink, we planned meetings and events to encourage attendance of new members, as well as those who had been active in the past. When Anne was elected to the national League Board and had to assume a more advisory role with us, we took a collective deep breath and moved on.

We began meeting regularly just a year ago in May. It seems twice that long! We have held monthly meetings at the Burton Fisher Community Room at One City Center. Meeting topics have included Know Your Community; Power the Vote; Our New Neighbors- Immigrants in Portland; Becoming a Citizen; and Maine's Charter School Commission.

Several Portland Area LWV members formed a study committee that complements a newly formed national league study to gather data to update an earlier **Agricultural Position**. Both committees are surveying new issues facing us including proposed legislation to the Farm Bill. Our local committee will focus attention on issues as they relate to us here in Maine.

Under the leadership of Polly Ferguson, members of the Portland Area League continue the League tradition of attendance at **Citizenship Naturalization Ceremonies** in order to provide new citizens with voter registration information. Lorraine Glowczak has been attending a Portland 101 course sponsored by the League of Young Voters, along with other community organization leaders, to broaden efforts to reach new citizens and others who are learning how to more effectively participate in their government at all levels.

On April 17, the Portland Agriculture Study Committee will show the film, *Seeds of Freedom*, with a discussion following. On May 15, a panel presentation is scheduled including Nisha Swinton, of New England Food and Water Watch; Kyle Mollton, a staff member from Representative Chellie Pingree's Office, who will discuss the proposed Farm Bill; and Valerie Kelly, member of the Portland area League who is a member of both the local and national Agriculture Study Committees.

We welcome all members, friends, and the curious to our meetings at One City Center, Portland, in the Burton Fisher Community Room from 5:45 PM to 7:30 PM on the third Wednesday of every month. Those who are interested in any of the activities described above are encouraged to let us know of your interest at 207-210-6572 or email lwvportland@maine.rr.com.

- Karla Wight, with Polly Ferguson, Lorraine Glowczak and Polly Ward, Leadership Team of LWV of the Portland Area

Update from MCCE

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE), of which the League is an organizational partner, has had a very busy year in 2013 already. Most of MCCE's activity has been around the first session of the 126th Legislature and three major priority areas:

1. **Strengthen Clean Elections.** The League shares this as a top priority this year (see League Lobby Corps Update). We are excited to be able to work closely with MCCE and other organizational partnerships to speak out against proposed budget cuts to the citizen-initiated program and to actively support legislation to keep the system viable for 2014 and beyond.
2. **Improve transparency.** MCCE will be working with legislative allies and other partners to advance a campaign finance disclosure bill aimed at enhancing the information available to voters prior to an election, increasing compliance with disclosure laws, and regulating the money raised and spent by governors-elect

for transition and inaugural activities. Legislation being supported by MCCE and the League would require greater disclosure of the source of funds for independent expenditures; simplify the reporting schedule; increase accessibility of campaign finance information; and increase penalties for reporting violations that occur close to an election.

3. **Endorse a U.S. Constitutional Amendment on Campaign Finance.** MCCE and others across the state are calling on the Maine Legislature to support a U. S. Constitutional Amendment on Campaign Finance. The intent of the amendment is to undo the damage done by U. S. Supreme Court decisions, like *Citizens United v. FEC*, that have inappropriately elevated the role of money in our elections at the expense of voters. The amendment would make clear that regulating money in campaigns is allowable, as is limiting the role of corporations in elections. The League is neither supporting nor opposing the Constitutional Amendment strategy at this time.

Money in Politics Presentations

Continuing its work to educate Mainers about the growing role of money in our political system, MCCE has developed a community presentation that will be hitting the road throughout the year. Following up on its series of Money in Politics reports, the presentation boils down the problem of unlimited money in our political system and the recent and historical events that have contributed to the campaign finance system we have today, and it offers possible solutions to reduce big money in elections and return democracy to the people. MCCE hopes to engage as many Maine citizens as possible in this critical conversation. For more information or to schedule an event in your neighborhood or community, email BJ McCollister at bj@mainecleanelections.org or call (207) 831-6444.

- Jill Ward, South Portland

Gun Control Legislation in Maine and US

In 1990, the League of Women Voters adopted a position on gun control. For over twenty years the League has pushed for common sense solutions to gun violence. The League supported the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban and urged that the ban be renewed in 2004. The League also supported a measure before the 106th Congress (1999 – 2000) mandating background checks for all gun show purchases. Currently, the League is supporting federal legislation to require background checks on gun purchases and place limits on high capacity ammunition magazines. The League of Women Voters of Maine is supporting similar legislation at the State level.

The Maine Legislature is currently debating two bills of particular interest: **LD 997 An Act to Establish Restrictions on Ammunition Feeding Devices** and **LD 1240 An Act to Promote the Safe Use and Sale of Firearms.**

LD 997 would limit ammunition magazines to 10 rounds. High capacity magazines that hold 20, 30 or 100 rounds allow a shooter to fire a large number of bullets quickly without having to reload. While LD 997 will not stop all mass shootings -- no legislation will do that -- it will help limit the number of victims, and give people in these horrific situations a fighting chance. During the Newtown shooting, there was a brief moment when the shooting stopped because the shooter had trouble reloading the weapon. And during those few seconds, six children were able to run to safety. One can only imagine what might have been different had the shooter not had 30 round magazines. Limiting magazines to ten rounds makes sense.

LD 1240 would require firearm safety training before purchasing a gun and would also **require a criminal background check on all gun purchases.** Background checks work. They stop felons, domestic abusers, and other dangerous people from buying firearms. But under current Maine law, someone can purchase a gun from a private seller, and there will be no background check run and no records kept. It is a system that invites abuse. While we are fortunate to live in a state with a low crime rate, Maine is not immune from gun violence. And a recent study ranked Maine as 25th in the nation for crime-gun export rate. As our neighboring states like Connecticut and New York tighten their gun laws Maine will attract even more criminals looking to buy guns with no background checks and no record keeping. The Legislature must act now to close this gaping loophole.

LWVME has testified before the Criminal Justice and Public Safety committee in support of both of these important bills. Let your state senator and representative know that you support these common sense gun laws. Tell them that you stand with the 63% of Mainers who support limiting the size of ammunition magazines and with the 89% of Mainers and 95% of Maine women who think there should be background checks on all gun sales.

Curbing gun violence is a critical matter of public safety and public health. Tell both your state legislators that this issue is too important to ignore any longer. Common sense solutions to gun violence will save lives. Let them hear from you today!

- Cathie Whittenburg, Portland

LWV and Energy Policy

The League Continues Strong Opposition to the XL Pipeline

On April 8, LWVUS announced that it has joined a coalition, **All Risk, No Reward**, formed to educate the American people on the 'all risk and no reward' nature of TransCanada's Keystone XL tar sands pipeline and to urge President Obama and Secretary Kerry to reject it. The coalition brings together a unique group of organizations, and is using paid media in a way that has not been part of the anti-Keystone movement. Current TV ads can be viewed at the *All Risk, No Reward* website: allrisknoreward.com. The [press release of LWVUS](#) is available through the Defending the Environment section of lwv.org.

"The League opposes the Keystone XL pipeline proposal because it puts enormous and unacceptable risks on the American people," said Toni Larson, Advocacy Chair for the League of Women Voters of the U.S. in [her remarks](#) to the press. "It threatens clean water and public health, makes climate change worse, and sends our nation's energy policy in the wrong direction."

League Expresses Support for Wind Energy

On March 18, the national League joined members of the environmental community in sending a letter to members of the U.S. House of Representatives expressing strong support for H.R. 924, which extends the Investment Tax Credit for offshore wind and encourages investment in the growing wind energy industry. For more information, see <http://www.lwv.org/content/league-expresses-support-wind-energy>.

- Thanks to Pam Person for information in this article

InforME

InforME (Information Resource of Maine) is the Internet gateway for businesses and citizens to interact with government electronically. Even when InforME was little more than a concept, the League of Women Voters was involved. I have had the privilege of representing LWVME on the InforME Board since the beginning. I serve as the Citizen Member "representing a nonpartisan organization advancing citizen's right of access." The InforME Board was formed in 1999 after the Legislature passed a law establishing it as the governing body between the information technology department of the State of

Maine and a private vendor to provide web-based services.

InforME, represented by a contract with Maine Interactive Network, a subsidiary of NIC Inc, has a long queue of services requested by departments who recognize that they have neither the time nor the expertise to develop these online services themselves. Many of the services are free to the customer, but the development costs can be very expensive. The costs are underwritten in part by subscription fees, statutory fees, transaction fees that are negotiated between the department and InforME, and, as a result of recent contract changes, by time and material contracts.

Among the first services was Rapid Renewal, which allows car owners to register their vehicles online. Other services include everything from batch services of driver's records and filings of corporation records to moose lottery permits, fishing licenses, and campground reservations. Today we see public records of all kinds available on department websites. Among the things the League cares about are the online polling place lookup service and information about registering and voting.

The InforME Board is concerned with transparency, confidentiality where relevant, access where important, and broad community benefit. Often Board discussions revolve around the balance of investing in high profile services for a limited audience or developing services with high development costs that benefit broad numbers of citizens. Serving on this Board has been educational and rewarding. I appreciate the League's support of my representing them as a member of the InforME Board. Check us out at www.maine.gov/ and <http://www.maine.gov/informe>.

- Anne B. Schink, Portland

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 \$55 for one membership, or \$82.50 for two members at the same household. Join online or print off a membership form at www.lwmve.org. Our Mailing Address is:

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

[VISIT US ON FACEBOOK \(http://on.fb.me/10ZtCNQ\)](http://on.fb.me/10ZtCNQ)

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit U.S. Postage Paid Portland, Maine Permit 117
--

Calendar for Spring 2013

LWVPA, Seeds of Freedom, Portland	Wed, Apr 17, 5:45pm – 7:30pm
Leadership Development Conference, Wells	Sat, Apr 27 – Sun, Apr 28
LWVME Board Meeting, Portland	Fri, May 31, 4 pm – 5 pm
LWVME Convention, Portland	Fri, May 31 – Sat, June 1