



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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Dear League Members and Friends,

The League is known for its devotion to political education and its faith that an informed voter makes a stronger country. Our League needs to continue the fight to protect and empower voters, and we need your help to do it.

As a League, we strive to provide the public with all the facts so we can have an "informed electorate". In this election year, we are again working to bring needed, unbiased information by producing an **Easy-to-Read Voters Guide**. We pay for this from our Education Fund and through grants and partnerships. This is the 5th year the Guide will be distributed throughout the state. It is written in easy-to-understand language and includes information on statewide ballot questions and profiles of candidates seeking federal offices. More than 20,000 copies of the Guide will be printed and distributed through our partner organizations including libraries, adult education offices, literacy volunteer programs, schools, and social service agencies. We will put the Guide online, dramatically increasing the reach of this important publication. We are excited to be collaborating for the first time with the national League's **VOTE411** project at www.vote411.org.

We will hold **candidate forums** throughout the state this fall. Through a new "Forums in a Box" program, we will be partnering with other organizations statewide to hold forums for candidates to the state legislature, from "The County" to York and everywhere in between. The League will provide an easy-to-use checklist for local hosts and provide the moderator and format for the event. The League will even invite the candidates, if that is the local group's preference. If you are interested in having a candidate forum in your area, please contact Polly Ferguson for more information and to schedule a time. We are also working on partnerships for forums or debates for the U. S. Senatorial candidates—keep an eye open for more information.

Our founders understood that a full, fair discussion of the issues was in the best interest of our community. We continue to fight against measures we see that are unnecessary incursions on a citizen's right to vote—and on those that allow silent money to dominate the public debate. We in Maine are a small League; so while we work on our voter service mission, we know that we must also grow our membership and involve more people in our work. Please help us! If you are a member, please contact the State Board and volunteer. If you aren't a member, please join now!

*Thank you,
Barbara McDade, President of LWVME*

LWV Campaign Finance Report

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the methods of financing political campaigns should ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and allow maximum citizen participation in the political process.

The LWV Campaign Finance Task Force released a report in June of 2012. Excerpts from that report follow. The full report can be seen online at <http://lwv.org/content/lwv-us-action-campaign-finance>.

What Local and State Leagues Can Do Now

- Engage in the League's Money in Elections reform campaign. (The **DISCLOSE Act 2012**, fully supported by the League, was defeated in the Senate on July 17 on a party-line vote of 53-45. It takes 60 votes to invoke cloture and force final consideration of the bill. Senators Snowe and Collins joined their Republican colleagues in the defeat of the DISCLOSE Act 2012. – Ed.)
- Participate in the “**Stand by Your Ad**” campaign. LWVUS is encouraging Leagues to participate in a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania that identifies ways TV and radio stations can reduce the number of erroneous campaign ads run by third party organizations. (See the following article for more on Stand By Your Ad. – Ed.)
- Engage in **public education about how to watch TV campaign ads** – particularly those sponsored by third party (and supposedly independent) organizations – with a critical eye. This effort can build on work already done by many Leagues to develop skills on “**Debate Watching 101**” and “**How to Judge a Candidate**”. LWVUS/EF hopes to produce some tips on this topic, but we need your help! If your League has developed materials on how to watch campaign ads, please send them to Pam Sterner at <mailto:pssterner@lwv.org>, so that we can compile information that can be shared with all Leagues.

Stand by Your Ad!

Do you feel that you have little influence over campaigns and political candidates? Do you wonder how can you compete with the influence of those who can write a \$10 million check to the candidate or Super PAC of their choice? Well, there now seems to be a way.

FactCheck.org, a creation of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, University of Pennsylvania, is well known for evaluating the truthfulness of statements by politicians. Less well known is FlackCheck.org, an entity created to “hold the media accountable for their reporting on political campaigns.” It has launched an effort, called “Stand by Your Ad,” that allows us average citizens to actively participate in this process.

The Communications Act does not allow local television or radio stations or the Federal Communication Commission to censor or alter in any way political advertising from candidates for federal office (Section 312 of the Communications Act). Stations typically extend this application to candidates for office at all levels (although they are not legally required to do so). This requirement does not extend to third party advertising from political organizations outside the control of the candidate. Thus, ads from groups like American Crossroads or Priorities USA must meet the same requirements for accuracy as do product ads. Stations are not required to accept advertising from third party groups. If they do, they are responsible legally for material that airs on their stations and are required “to act with reasonable care” to ensure that ads aired on their stations are not false or misleading (www.fcc.gov).

PACs and super PACS have already spent almost \$121 million dollars and have received over \$220 million dollars in contributions – and we still have over four months to go before Election Day (see www.opensecrets.org). Stations are taking in huge amounts of money, charging top rates for such ads, and have little incentive to do anything to negatively impact this income. In fact, CBS President Les Moonves has said publicly, “Super PACs may be bad for Americans but they’re very good for CBS.” Obviously, the same is true for all other stations and networks.

So, what can you do? Let your local station managers know that you expect them to meet their legal obligations for truthful advertising, including advertising they choose to accept from the PACS and super PACs (yes, it is a choice!). FlackCheck.org has already done the research for you as to the electronic addresses for television stations in your area. Just go to www.flackcheck.org and follow the links to the Stand by Your Ad campaign.

In case you are wondering, there are not a large number of false claims being created. Like all effective advertising, there are just a few of them that are endlessly repeated. By encouraging stations to use their right to insist on the accuracy of these third party ads, stations can turn this windfall of money into protecting the public they serve.

Our democracy depends on an informed and active citizenry to survive. Take at least one small step to prevent falsehoods from overwhelming the political

process and our independence. Send that message to our station managers today!

- from LWV of Columbia-Boone County (MO)

Privatization

The LWVUS Board approved a new position on Privatization at its June 2012 meeting. The position is based on responses received from the 227 Leagues across the country that participated in the Privatization Study.

The Position

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that when governmental entities consider the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector, the community impact and goals of such transfers must be identified and considered. Further, the LWV believes that transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good must be ensured.

The League believes that some government provided services could be delivered more efficiently by private entities; however, privatization is not appropriate in all circumstances. Privatization is not appropriate when the provision of services by the government is necessary to preserve the common good, to protect national or local security or to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of society. While the League recognizes that the definition of core government services will vary by level of government and community values, services fundamental to the governance of a democratic society should not be privatized in their entirety. These services include the electoral process, justice system, military, public safety, public health, education, transportation, environmental protection and programs that protect and provide basic human needs.

The decision to privatize a public service should be made after an informed, transparent planning process and thorough analysis of the implications of privatizing service delivery. While specific criteria will vary by service and local conditions, the League believes the following considerations apply to most decisions to transfer public services, assets and functions to the private sector:

- On-going and timely communication with stakeholders and the public;
- Statement of the circumstances as they exist and what is to be gained;
- Definition of the quality, level and cost of service expected;
- Assessment of the private market; whether there are providers to assure competitive pricing and delivery; (in some cases there may not be multiple providers if a service is so specialized. i.e. high tech, airports.)
- Cost-benefit analyses evaluating short and long term costs of privatization, including the ongoing costs of contract administration and oversight;
- An understanding of the impact on customers, the broader community, environment and public employees;

- An open, competitive bidding process with clearly defined criteria to be used in selecting a contractor;
- A provision and process to ensure the services or assets will be returned to the government if a contractor fails to perform;
- A data-driven selection of private entities whose goals, purposes, and means are not incompatible with the public well-being;
- The careful negotiation and drafting of the controlling privatization contract; and
- Adequate oversight and periodic performance monitoring of the privatized services by the government entity to ensure that the private entity is complying with all relevant laws and regulations, contract terms and conditions, and ethical standards, including public disclosure and comment.

The League believes that the enactment of state laws and issuance of regulations to control the process and delivery of privatization within a state's jurisdiction is often appropriate and desirable. Best practices for government regulation of the privatization process should include the following requirements:

- An open process that allows for citizen input and oversight in a timely manner;
- A reasonable feasibility study and project evaluation appropriate to the size and scope of the project;
- The establishment of carefully crafted criteria for selection of the private-entity (beyond the lowest cost bid);
- Additional consideration for local bidders in order to support the local economy;
- The retention of liability and responsibility with the government entity;
- Allowance for and promotion of opportunities for innovation and collaboration; and,
- Provision for employment, benefits and training plans on behalf of employees displaced as a result of privatization.

- Colleen Tucker, Portland

LWV Agriculture Policy

The 2012 LWVUS National Convention approved a motion to conduct a national study to review and update the LWVUS agriculture position, most recently updated in 1988. A discussion of the League's history on this issue and our current policy position is located at <http://www.lwv.org/content/agriculture-policy>.

The national study will investigate genetic modification, consolidation in the food industry, money in the regulatory process, and the consumer's right to accurate and comprehensive food labeling.

According to an informational meeting held before the vote, genetically modified foods started showing up in our food markets in the 1990's, after only six months' study. Food producers were seeking to develop "Round-up Ready" foods that were genetically altered to resist herbicides. The speakers stated that 90% of our current soy, 93% of our canola (rapeseed) and 88% of our corn is

genetically modified, and recommended that the audience read the article, "The GMO Emperor Has No Clothes," which can be found at <http://www.foodfirst.org/en/failure+of+GMOs>. In addition, 80% of the antibiotics used in this country are used on livestock, which contributes to the dramatic increase in antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria.

One of the speakers at the informational meeting was a farmer, who discussed how difficult it is, now, to be a small farmer. She stated that over half of the small farmers needed to generate "off-farm" income; that it was difficult to find non-GMO feed for livestock; that most state and federal regulations failed to differentiate between small farms and large corporate farming enterprises. Maine was distinguished in being one place where municipalities had achieved success in passing local "food sovereignty" ordinances, allowing some small farmers to sell directly to their customers without having to abide by some of the more onerous, and perhaps unnecessary, regulations.

The informational meeting became emotional when the speaker discussed how difficult it was to make a living as a small farmer; how economic stress led many small farmers to suicide, including over 200,000 lives lost that way in India, alone. Farming accidents and fires can also fatally cripple a farm or a farmer's will to continue. I was surprised to learn that 30% of farm operators are women.

Be on the lookout for more information on this subject as the year proceeds. Local leagues will be holding informational meetings as the LWVUS national study materials become available. If you are particularly interested in this subject, please make your interest known to us, and we'll make sure you are involved!!

- Colleen Tucker, Portland

Reflections on National Convention

My last national convention was a good many years ago, so I was looking forward to attending the convention in June as a moment to re-establish my connection to the national scene as well as an opportunity to look at it with fresh eyes from the perspective of a nominee to the national board. Much of the format was familiar: the flurry of activity to find one's place among the states, the rush of excitement at finding old friends, the gnashing of teeth over parliamentary procedure, bylaws, and the budget.

My assignment as a nominee for the board was to serve as a parliamentary aide during the convention business, sitting next to a microphone and providing assistance to delegates who wanted re-assurance that what they were proposing at the microphone was consistent with the rules of the convention and Roberts Rules of Order.

Of particular interest was the fact that the Girl Scouts were in Washington, D.C. to celebrate their 100th anniversary. We passed a resolution congratulating them, and when asked to stand if we had ever been a Girl Scout, well over half the group stood and cheered! Our path to leadership began early.

Since I was not a delegate to convention, I had the chance to take a more objective look at convention business than I did in the past when I usually went to convention armed with some important cause to defend or endorse. The willingness of delegates to really listen to the concerns of others—respectfully—is a hallmark of the League of Women Voters. Even when some delegates attempted to railroad the body to abandon some of its most cherished principles (i.e. study before endorsement or action), calm prevailed and the effort was defeated.

The overwhelming feeling I had was of people who celebrated being together, who were committed to a common goal of civil discourse and civic engagement, who were passionate about issues, and who retained their sense of humor even when the debate was heated. It was a time to re-ignite my own passion for the work of the League of Women Voters, and I will be honored to be a part of the national board.

- Anne Schink, South Portland

State-wide Ballot Measures for November 2012

As of this writing, the Secretary of State's office has not published the final wording of the November ballot measures but has said that a people's initiative and four bond measures will appear on the November ballot.

The petition for this year's **People's Initiative** was titled, "An Act To Allow Marriage Licenses for Same-sex Couples and Protect Religious Freedom." The wording the Secretary of State has proposed for the ballot, "*Do you want to allow same-sex couples to marry?*" leaves off the essential part of the title, "and protect religious freedom." Without this last phrase, some people will be misled by false campaign ads that claim allowing same-sex couples to marry will infringe on the rights of churches to refuse to marry same-sex couples. We have urged the Secretary to include the religious freedom phrase in the ballot question. After a thirty-day period for public comment, which closed July 16, the Secretary is due to announce the final wording by July 26.

The **four bond measures** to appear on the November ballot were all approved by at least 2/3 of the legislature and became law without the governor's signature. They must be approved by the voters in order to be enacted. The governor has said he may not implement them even if approved by the voters. Below are the titles of the bond measures as approved by the legislature. Their

Legislative Document (LD) numbers are also given, and the title is a hyperlink to their bill summary. The ballot order of the bond measures has not been announced.

LD 359 "[An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Wastewater and Drinking Water Revolving Loan Funds](#)"

LD852 "[An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Support Maine's Natural Resource-based Economy](#)"

LD894 "[An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Invest in Highway and Bridge Infrastructure To Meet the Needs of the Business Sector and To Create Jobs](#)"

LD874 "[An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Invest in Highway and Bridge Infrastructure To Meet the Needs of the Business Sector and To Create Jobs](#)"

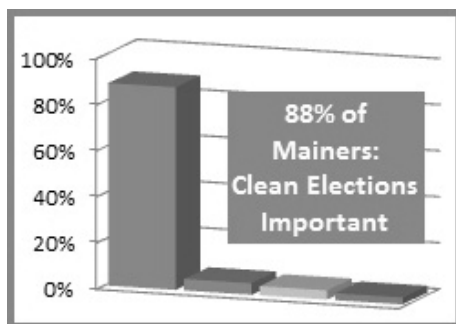
As well as clicking on a bill title above, you may find the bill text by searching on the LD number at <http://www.maine.gov/legis/>. See our Elections webpage at <http://www.lwvme.org/> for more information on the November election.

Our state-wide Voter Guide due out in the fall will contain non-partisan information pro and con about all of the ballot measures. This election season, in addition to our printed Voter Guide, we plan an online voter guide at www.VOTE411.org. The Maine section of VOTE411.org is under construction and should be underway by the end of the summer.

- Martha Dickinson, Ellsworth

New Series of Reports on Money in Politics from MCCE

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) is preparing a series of twelve reports about the role of money in Maine politics. The reports combine a review of publicly available campaign finance data with on-the-ground analysis of how money influences Maine's elections, government, and public policy.



The first report, *PACs Unlimited: How Legislator PACs Distort Maine Politics*, was released on June 7 and documents the flow of big money through PACs controlled by legislators. These legislator PACs exist to advance personal interests and party agendas, and big donors contribute to them with the goal of influencing the legislative agenda and assuring access to legislative leadership. The success or failure of policy initiatives in the legislative process cannot be fully explained without understanding the role of money in Maine legislative elections. Along with the report, MCCE also released **new poll results** confirming that **Mainers want more reforms like the Clean Election system, not less**. The poll shows 88% of Mainers say that it is important that Clean Elections continue and nearly 8-in-10 respondents feel that there is too much money in politics and that Maine should push forward with reform. Additionally a large majority of Maine people (75%) holds the view that gubernatorial candidates should use or have the option to use Clean Elections to fund their campaigns.

The second report, *The Leader Board: Maine's Top Legislative Fundraisers and How They Earned Their Spots*, was released on July 19, and profiles the top ten campaign spenders among privately funded candidates. MCCE analyzed data provided by Maine's Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices (Ethics Commission) over a period of ten years and the report shows distinct styles of fundraising. According to MCCE Executive Director, Andrew Bossie, "there are the wealthy self-funders, the ones who rely largely on corporations and political action committees, and the candidates who raise money from a broad array of sources, including many individual donors." The report is another in MCCE's series designed to help Maine people understand how campaigns in Maine are financed and where the money is coming from. MCCE is also using the reports to illustrate the value of our campaign finance laws – like the groundbreaking Maine Clean Elections Act, the contribution limits that ensure that no single donor wields outsize influence, and the transparency that allows voters to see the flow of money in our election system.

To learn more about the series, read the first two reports, and see the latest poll results, go to my.maineccleanelections.org.

- Jill Ward, South Portland

SISTERS ACROSS THE STRAITS A DELEGATION TO CUBA

The League of Women Voters Florida Education Fund has obtained a license from the US to sponsor educational and cultural trips to Cuba. The trips of a dozen participants are led by the very charming (and Spanish-speaking) Annie Betancourt, a former Florida state legislator, and are very reasonably priced at approximately \$2,000 double occupancy and \$2,300

single occupancy, which includes: round-trip airfare from Miami; six-night accommodations in first-class hotel; full schedule of people-to-people educational exchanges; some meals, including six breakfasts and five dinners; all ground transportation aboard air-conditioned motor coach; professional guide (bilingual) plus League group leader; thought-provoking exchanges with academics and women leaders, and visits to museums and historical sites. The agenda for each trip is in accordance with the specific interests and composition of each delegation, so if you're interested in going, please make your interests known! Trips planned for this September, October and November are fully booked, but you may be able to join a trip in the spring of 2013. For more information, please check out <http://thefloridavoter.org/events/sisters-across-the-straits> or write to Annie Betancourt at anniebetancourt9@gmail.com.

- Colleen Tucker, Portland

Mainers United for Marriage

Mainers United for Marriage, the campaign to win marriage for same-sex couples in Maine, is making exciting progress towards the big day on November 6, with lots of special events, fundraising success, and amazing volunteer efforts.

June was LGBT Pride month, which meant hundreds of people marched in the Southern Maine Pride Parade, including Portland Mayor Michael Brennan, former Governor John Baldacci, Portland Police Chief Mike Sauschuk, and 250 people of faith from 9 different denominations. 75 marchers represented the Mainers United for Marriage Coalition, and tireless Mainers United volunteers worked throughout the day, collecting \$5,000 in donations and registering 300 people for new volunteer shifts!

Meanwhile, donations to Mainers United for Marriage doubled this spring when Freedom to Marry Senior Advisor Sean Eldridge and his husband Chris Hughes, Facebook Co-Founder and Publisher & Editor-in-Chief of The New Republic, matched every dollar donated during a four-week period in May and June. We beat our \$100,000 goal, raising more than \$200,000 after contributions were matched by Sean and Chris!

In July, the campaign reached two milestone accomplishments: \$1,000,000 raised and 100,000 conversations -- that means Mainers United for Marriage has had one-on-one conversations with more than 10% of Maine voters! With polls showing that more Mainers are changing their minds and

supporting the freedom to marry for all Maine couples, these one-on-one conversations about why marriage matters are the most important part of what Mainers United does.

To take part in these conversations or to learn about other ways to help move this campaign forward, visit MainersUnited.org or e-mail Jacob Wolk at jwolk@equalitymaine.org. Mainers United for Marriage has offices in Brewer, Lewiston, Portland, and Kennebunk, and satellite teams working in Arroostook, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Oxford, Waldo, and Washington counties.

- Anna Flanagan, Mainers United for Marriage

Judge Torresen

On October 3, 2011, the United States Senate confirmed Nancy Torresen as the 17th and also the first female federal judge in the United States District Court for Maine. When Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee, they supported Ms. Torresen as eminently qualified for confirmation. Senator Snowe stated "Ms. Torresen brings a critical depth and breadth of experience as she has practiced law for 24 years across a range of roles and responsibilities." She presides in Portland and fills the seat that was held for more than 20 years by Judge D. Brock Hornsby who is now on senior status.

Ms. Torresen earned a B.A. at Hope College in Michigan and graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1987. She then served one year as law clerk for Judge Conrad K. Cyr before joining the firm of Williams and Connally in Washington D.C. in 1988. Two years later she returned to Maine to join the U.S. Attorney General's Office. In 1994 Torresen went to work in the Appellate Section of the Criminal Division of the Maine Attorney General's Office. In 2001 she returned to the U.S. Attorney's Office. Judge Torresen has commented that she "is proudest of her criminal prosecution efforts because of the urgent need to protect the public from violent criminals and the desire not to let down the victims of violent crime."

On May 4, 2012, at the Edward T. Gignoux U.S. Courthouse in Portland, Nancy Torresen was sworn in as a District Judge. In her tribute to the outstanding women who preceded her and have been her role models, the Judge made a reference to the suffragists who won the vote for women.

- Polly Ferguson, South Portland

Thank You!

Our thanks to the friends and members of the League who contributed to our spring appeal. Donations ranged in amount from \$10 to \$500. Every single contribution, no matter how large or small, supports the work of the League and is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Contributions to the League's general fund exceeded \$2,500!

Bonnie Anderson
Connie Baskett
Martha Dickinson
Nellik Doble
Polly Ferguson
Margery Forbes
Jane Freeman & Darrell Wilson
Betty & Roger Gilmore
Margaret Guilkey

Patricia & John Hatton
Barbara Hero
Kristin Hutchins
Judy Kimball
Ann Luther & Alan Vlach
Barbara & Michael McDade
Carolyn Murray
Tobi Schneider
Janet Silvers

Alison Smith
Julia Stevens
Lois & Richard Wagner
Sarah Walton
Jill Ward
Karla Wight
Betty & George Willhoite

Contributions to the League's Education Fund exceeded \$2,000!

Bonnie Anderson
Thomas Bjorkman
Anthony Corrado
Martha Dickinson
Nellik Doble
Peter Enggass
Polly Ferguson
Margery Forbes
Betty & Roger Gilmore
Kristin Hutchins
Julia Kahrl

Judy Kimball
Lois Lamdin
Ann Luther & Alan Vlach
Nancy Masterton
Barbara & Michael McDade
Carolyn Murray
Pamela & Phil Person
Patrice Putman
Rebecca Recor
Colleen Sanders
Trudi & Jack Schneider

Tobi Schneider
Janet Silvers
Edward Snyder
Julia Stevens
Julia & Robert Walkling
Linda Washburn
Cathie Whittenburg
Karla Wight
Betty & George Willhoite

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK – SEARCH FOR LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MAINE

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 lwwme@zwi.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 \$55 for one membership, or \$82.50 for two members at the same household. Our Mailing Address is: **League of Women Voters of Maine, PO Box 863, Augusta, ME 04332-0863**. You may also join on-line. Go to www.lwvme.org and click on the JOIN NOW! button. Thank you very much!

League of Women Voters of Maine
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Augusta, ME 04332-0863

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Calendar for 2012

LWVME Board Retreat, Searsport
Democracy Forum, WERU, 89.9 FM and 99.9 FM
LWV-DE Luncheon, Shinbashi Restaurant, Ellsworth
Candidate Forums, statewide
General Election

Fri, Aug 10, 10 am – 2 pm
Mon, Aug 13, 10 – 11 am
Mon, Aug 13, 11:45 am
tba
Tues, Nov 6, 2012