



The Maine Voter

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Fall 2015

Dear League Members and Friends,



Summer has come and gone, and we are all left wondering how it could go by so fast! But somewhere in between the lobster rolls, beach days, long hikes, and going “uptah camp,” the League has been getting ready for the promise of a busy fall and a busy biennium after that.

Since the last edition of *The Voter*, we have held our State Convention where we elected a new state board and new officers; spent time with our New England colleagues sharing ideas and information at Quad States; and gathered as a new board in July for a day-long retreat to learn more about each other and what we want to see for the League and the state this year and beyond.

In case you missed it, May’s State Convention was quite the event. We heard from Rosalee Keech of the national board about the work of the LWVUS and the organization’s role as an observer to the United Nations. Colin Woodard gave a talk based on his best-selling book, *American Nations: The Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*. Maine Attorney General Janet T. Mills delivered the day’s keynote address, speaking about the role and work of her office, and Professor Jim Friedman led a discussion about the Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United*. Attendees also got updates on the Clean Elections initiative that will be on the ballot November 3rd and the Ranked Choice Voting Initiative that is expected to be on the 2016 ballot.

Not ones to let the grass grow under our feet, we moved right into the ninth annual Quad States Leadership Development Conference. (See article in this issue.) In June, a long and unprecedented legislative session finally wrapped. You can read more about the work of Advocacy Corps inside this issue. At the July retreat, your new Board laid out some ambitious goals for the League; we want to achieve more program wins, expand our educational outreach, and build our base of members and supporters. There is so much to do, but there is no doubt that this group is up to the task.

Looking to the future, the board has established six committees: advocacy, membership, events, fundraising, voter education, and communications. We welcome off-board members onto these committees – it’s where the real work gets done, and it’s a great way to make an impact on our so-vital mission. If you are interested in working with the state board in any of these areas, please contact me directly at jmward23@gmail.com. We are beginning work right now on our annual Voter Guide for this fall’s election. Let me know if you would like to help!

And, amid all the meeting and planning, the League continued to do what it always does: register new citizens to vote, educate the public about topics from ranked choice voting to Clean Elections, and foster civic engagement through forums and other community events across the state.

It is certainly true that the work of protecting our democracy is not for the faint of heart! In that spirit, we welcome new Board Members Joanna Bowers, John Brautigam, Helen Hanlon, Linda Lord, Stephanie Philbrick, and Sarah Skillin Woodard and thank returning members Barbara Kaufman, Ann Luther, Barbara McDade, Colleen Tucker, Polly Ward, and Cathie Whittenburg for their continued service.

We are also very excited that Sarah Robinson has joined our team to provide some much needed professional management and organizational support. For an all-volunteer organization, we get a lot done; but having Sarah on board will help us expand our capacity and grow our reach even further.

Finally, on behalf of the Board and all our members and supporters, I would like to thank out-going President Barbara McDade for her dedication and leadership. We are delighted she will remain on the state Board to continue to help lead us in our on-going work to ensure our elections are fair, free, and accessible.

- Jill Ward
President, LWVME

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*Edited by Martha Dickinson
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Ann Luther*

LWVME has a Blog!

Keep informed about the
Maine League's activities
through our blog at
<https://lwvme.wordpress.com>

Recent posts include one about a
Naturalization Ceremony and another about
Gun Control.

And like us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/LWVME

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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.



Join us on Twitter for news, updates & conversation

@LWVME

RANKED CHOICE VOTING GAINS MOMENTUM

As readers of The Voter know, the League has a history of actively supporting Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for state level elections in Maine. (RCV is also known as Instant Runoff Voting.) This support results from a three-year study of various alternative voting methods. The LWVME issued its position in support of RCV in March 2011. Since that time, League members have testified for legislative efforts to implement RCV for primary and general elections for members of the Legislature, Governor, members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U. S. Senate. In addition, in 2013, the League formed a working group made up of legislators, League members, attorneys, other interested parties, and FairVote: The Center for Voting and Democracy located in Tacoma Park, Maryland, to develop strategies to successfully adopt the RCV method in Maine.

In the fall of 2014, some members of the RCV working group formed the Committee for Ranked Choice Voting in order to gather signatures to put RCV on the ballot in November 2016. The Committee worked tirelessly and has been successful in generating statewide support for Ranked Choice Voting. Over the last nine months, hundreds of Mainers have collected signatures, written letters to editors, and volunteered with the campaign. Here are some of the accomplishments of the Committee for Ranked Choice Voting:

- 64,000+ valid signatures have been collected,
- 500 Mainers have volunteered to work on this effort,
- 120 endorsements have been gathered,
- 110 LTEs have been sent to newspapers statewide, and
- 40 house parties have already been held.

Through the work of volunteers gathering signatures, conversations with Mainers about endorsing the effort to implement Ranked Choice Voting, and feedback from house parties, what we already know about RCV has been reinforced. Overwhelmingly, these contacts have supported Ranked Choice Voting. This is not a partisan issue. Ranked Choice Voting does not inherently favor any party. Republican, Democratic, Green and Libertarian party members have signed petitions, endorsed the work of the Committee for Ranked Choice Voting, and made donations to support the campaign.

However, Ranked Choice Voting is still a new idea for many voters. Over the next fifteen months, the Committee for Ranked Choice Voting will reach out to voters all across the state to broaden understanding of RCV, to gather additional support, and to demonstrate how Ranked Choice Voting enables each voter's ballot to have a meaningful impact on the outcome of an election.

But first, in early October, the Committee for Ranked Choice Voting will be delivering all of the signatures collected to date to the Secretary of State's Office. Once approved by the Secretary of State's Office, the initiated referendum will appear on the ballot for the November 2016 election.

There is still much work to be done in the months before November 2016. Anyone wishing to help in this effort may:

1. Endorse Ranked Choice Voting at www.rcvmaine.com/endorsements
2. Donate to the effort at www.rcvmaine.com/donate
3. Volunteer at www.rcvmaine.com to:
 - Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper in support of Ranked Choice Voting.
 - Stuff envelopes, make RSVP phone calls, and enter data, etc. at the Westbrook campaign office.
 - Host a house party with friends and neighbors to educate and build support for RCV.
 - Contact local organizations about speaking and presentation opportunities.

Join us in this valuable work!

- Kyle Bailey, Campaign Manager
Committee for Ranked Choice Voting

- Polly Ward
Vice President, LWVME

YES ON 1! CAMPAIGN

Now that the legislative session has wrapped up, the League has turned its focus to the November 2015 election.

Earlier this year, LWVME worked with Maine Citizens for Clean Elections Action to collect 80,000 signatures to place a landmark referendum on the November 3 ballot. The referendum, which will appear as Question 1, will increase transparency and accountability in our elections and limit the influence that special interests and corporations can have on elected officials by strengthening Maine's Clean Election Act so that lawmakers are accountable to us – the people – not corporate lobbyists and the ultra-wealthy. Question 1 is the only statewide referendum of its kind in the nation this year and serves as an opportunity for Maine to lead the way in campaign finance reform in the post *Citizens United* era. If successful in November, Question 1 will be not only a win for Mainers but also a momentum-building victory for organizations, funders, and activists across the country that care deeply about reducing the influence of money in politics.

Question 1 will:

- **Encourage strict spending and contribution limits** by strengthening Maine's Clean Elections system, *so that candidates aren't beholden to special interests and big money donors.*
- **Increase transparency** and disclosure by requiring special interest groups to list their top three donors on all political ads *so that voters know right away who is trying to influence their vote.*

• **Increase accountability** by toughening penalties and fines for candidates and special interest groups that break our campaign finance laws *so that politicians are accountable to the people – not wealthy special interests.*

This summer, the League teamed up with organizations from across Maine to form **Mainers for Accountable Elections**, which serves as the official campaign in support of Question 1. It represents the tens of thousands of Mainers – including Democrats, Republicans, Greens and independents – and the more than 30 organizations that are ready to get to work putting control of Maine’s elections back where it belongs – in the hands of the voters.

At the end of July more than 200 Mainers, including many League members, gathered on the steps of the State House to officially kickoff the campaign.

“We are pipefitters and teachers, small business owners and environmentalists, Democrats, Republicans, Greens, and independents. Mainers from all walks of life and all geographic regions are here today because we want a government that works for – and is accountable to – everyday voters and not one bought and paid for by wealthy special interests,” said Andy Bossie, the chair of Mainers for Accountable Elections and executive director of Maine Citizens for Clean Elections Action at the campaign kickoff.

Mainers for Accountable Elections has formed a strong, focused, grassroots campaign that seeks to achieve the following:

- Define Question 1 early, before opposition can.
- Build out and execute a robust field program to reach target voters.
- Establish communications with voters through paid media to supplement and reinforce our field outreach and earned media effort.

Here is how you can help achieve those goals.

Campaign offices in support of Question 1 are now open in Portland, Augusta and Bangor with additional offices opening throughout the state soon. In addition, the campaign now has a Virtual Voter Contact program statewide that allows you to make calls from the comfort of your own home!

This is a people powered campaign, and we can’t win without your support. There are many different ways to volunteer:

1. Make calls to voters educating them to support Question 1.
2. Write a letter to your local paper in support of Question 1
3. Volunteer to help stuff envelopes or provide support in your local office.

To get involved with the campaign contact Nicole Brown at Nicole@accountableelections.org or 1-855-279-1411 (Toll-Free Number), and she will connect you with your local organizer.

- Lizzy Reinhold, Communications Director
Mainers for Accountable Elections

LEAGUE LOBBY CORPS REPORT 2014 - 2015

From the second session of the 126th Maine State Legislature through the first regular session of the 127th, the League Lobby Corps has monitored bills in the priority areas set by the Board:

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

Our Lobby Corps team includes Gina Coppens, Helen Hanlon, Stephanie Philbrick, and Polly Ward. To read more about the bills summarized below or to read the League’s testimony, go to www.lwvme.org/about_action.html.

Clean Elections

The League of Women Voters of Maine has been a staunch supporter of publicly financed elections since the beginning of the ballot initiative that won the Maine Clean Election Act (MCEA) almost 20 years ago, and LWVME has worked continuously ever since to defend and improve the Act. In June 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against triggered matching funds like those that made our law work in the most competitive races. In the aftermath, the League and its partners worked for measures that would strengthen the Act and for full funding, but the 125th Legislature instead passed measures that further weakened the Clean Elections program and made it less attractive to candidates.

In 2013, the Governor’s biennial budget recommended completely defunding the Clean Elections program for 2014. The League offered testimony in opposition to that budget proposal.

The 126th Legislature considered an important bill to strengthen the law -- LD 1309 An Act To Strengthen the Maine Clean Election Act. This bill would have replaced the Maine Clean Election Act matching funds system with a system of optional supplemental funding for participating Maine Clean Election Act candidates who collected additional qualifying contributions, and it provided 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 supported this bill. While the bill passed both chambers of the legislature, it failed in budget negotiations.

With that loss, the League joined partners at MCCE/MCCE Action to gather sufficient signatures to put a new question on the ballot that would include the main provisions of LD 1309 plus other measures to strengthen transparency and accountability. In early 2015, the Secretary of State certified 81,000 signatures to put the question on the ballot in November, 2015.

Voting and Voting Rights

The League of Women Voters advocacy priorities have consistently emphasized voting issues, voting rights, and the smooth conduct of elections. For the last few years, voting rights have been under attack all around the country. But here in Maine we've fought back, and the League of Women Voters has been central to that fight.

During the 126th Maine Legislature, the League strongly supported LD 156, a constitutional amendment to establish a statewide system of early voting, which would:

- Reduce congestion on Election Day
- Help eliminate long lines at the polls
- Reduce pressure on election officials
- Provide an important convenience to many voters
- Contribute to a more secure and orderly process for the conduct of elections

Currently, the Maine Constitution prohibits early voting. Implementing true early voting requires an amendment to the Constitution to the Maine Constitution. LD 156 was a RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Concerning Early Voting and Voting by Absentee Ballot. It required a two-thirds majority in both chambers to pass. Alas, it narrowly failed. Early voting has not been taken up again in the 127th Legislature.

In the 127th Legislature, we monitored and opposed LD 197, which would have required a photo ID to vote in Maine. That bill ultimately failed to pass. Altogether, we offered testimony on nine bills that affect the conduct of elections and voting rights.

Ranked Choice Voting

After the defeat of LDs 518 and 860 in the first session of the 126th Legislature, the League convened a working group on ranked choice voting to plan a more concerted effort to pass RCV in the future. This group, comprised of civic leaders, legal scholars, elected officials, and reform advocates, eventually spawned the Committee for Ranked Choice Voting, led by former State Senator Dick Woodbury. The Committee for Ranked Choice Voting launched a signature drive in the fall of 2014 to put RCV on the ballot as a citizen initiative. As of this writing, that measure is headed for the ballot in 2016, and the League remains an active supporter of the effort.

During the 127th Legislature, the League offered testimony Neither for Nor Against LD 720 An Act To Establish an Open Primary System in the State. In our testimony, we supported RCV as a preferable method of establishing a majority winner in single-seat elections. LD 720 failed to pass.

Governmental Ethics

The League supported LD 6 Resolve, To Implement Recommendations of the Government Oversight Committee To Strengthen the Ethics Practices and Procedures for Executive Branch Employees. This resolve would implement the recommendations of the Government Oversight Committee by directing the Department of Administrative and Financial Services to take steps to strengthen the ethics

standards and practices for executive branch employees. Although the resolve had bipartisan support from members of the Government Oversight Committee, it got a divided report from the State and Local Government Committee, and it got a significant fiscal note. As of this writing, it has been scaled back significantly, and the amended bill was carried over to the second session.

Based on our observations of the conduct of legislative committees, we also advocated using blog posts, letters to the editor (LTEs), and the like, for an end to the common committee practice known as “corner caucus,” where committees break during work session to conduct key consultations in secret, and off-mic. This practice may or may not be strictly legal, but it contravenes the spirit of Maine’s Freedom of Access law. Whether legal or not, this practice is not in the public interest. You can read our blog post at lwvme.wordpress.com and our LTE at www.centralmaine.com/2015/06/26/freedom-of-access-law-mandates-open-doors/.

Other Matters

Altogether, the Lobby Corps followed over 70 bills of interest in the 127th Legislature and offered testimony on twenty. In addition to the priority areas above, we used older state and national positions to testify on three bills where a special opportunity presented:

- LD 409 An Act To Lower the Individual Income Tax Incrementally to Zero. LWVME opposed based on our lead role in passing the state income tax in the early 1970s. Dead.
- LD 652 An Act To Authorize the Carrying of Concealed Handguns without a Permit. LWVME opposed using our national position on gun safety. Enacted law.
- LD 1103 Resolve, To Study Understaffing in State Agencies. LWVME supported based on League principles. Died between chambers.

We also offered testimony neither for nor against LD 957 RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Provide for the Popular Election of the Attorney General, Secretary of State and Treasurer of State. Dead.

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, Chair, Lobby Corps

PORTLAND AREA UPDATE

This past May, the Portland Area League celebrated the end of its first official year as a newly revived official Chapter. At that time, we approved three goals for 2015-16:

- Learning about and helping improve the structures and themes of democracy
- Expanding voter services
- Increasing active membership development

In June, at our retreat, the board developed 6 “Teams” that align with our goals and provide opportunities to volunteer in a way that is meaningful both to members and the greater community. For those new to these volunteer opportunities, we suggest a commitment of 2-6 hours a month and offer training and informal mentoring.

Portland Volunteer Teams:

1. Voter Registration – During September’s National Voter Registration Week and at monthly US Naturalization Ceremonies held in Portland and South Portland.
2. Moderator Corps – Moderate local forums or debates on issues and candidates.
3. Observer Corps – Identify, attend and publicly comment on local meetings that match League areas of interest.
4. Monthly newsletter writers/readers.
5. Study committee organizers for national or local studies.
6. Membership Committee – Help reach out to renewing members and determine areas of interests as well as plan member gatherings

The Portland Area board is particularly proud of its new yearlong calendar highlighting at least one event each month and an open board meeting at DiMillos every other month. The calendar will be posted online and emailed to our area list.

On September 2, we co-sponsored a panel discussion at USM moderated by PA League member, Alison Smith on money in politics. The panel featured Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD3), former Republican State Senator Peter Mills, MCCE Action Executive Director Andrew Bossie and LWVME President Jill Ward discussing the importance of public campaign finance systems like Maine’s and of supporting the Yes on Question 1 on November’s ballot.

Three separate but important highlights for the fall are the publication of a separate Portland Area Voter Guide which will explain ranked choice voting; the US Naturalization Ceremonies, particularly the judicial ceremony on September 17 that coincides with US Constitution Day (contact Peg at peg.balano@gmail.com); and National Voter Registration Week in September (contact Barbara at kaufman.barb@gmail.com).

Board members include Peg Balano, Lorraine Glowczak, Barbara Kaufman, Valerie Kelly, Polly Ward, Karla Wight, and Tammy Wing.

- Barbara Kaufman
President, LWVPA

BANGOR LEAGUE IS GROWING

The League in the Bangor area continues to grow and encourages others to join the ranks. The Leadership Committee has exciting plans for the coming year. There was a voter registration table at the American Folk Festival in August, and there will be a celebration of our country’s Constitution along with voter registration at Beal College and the University of Maine on September 17; a Candidates Forum for School Committee and City Council Candidates is scheduled for October 7, with the possibility of a second forum in the Capehart section of the city later that month.

The group is planning to show documentary films in October and January at the Bangor Public Library—titles to be announced at a later date. Members from the Bangor Area and Downeast will participate in the Naturalization Ceremony held in Bangor in the fall. Meanwhile the group will continue to meet once a month to discuss books. Everyone is invited to a book discussion on Thursday, September 24 at 5PM at Seasons Restaurant in Bangor to discuss *The Quartet: Orchestrating the Second American Revolution, 1783-1789* by Joseph J. Ellis.

The publisher touts the book saying, “The prizewinning author of *Founding Brothers* and *American Sphinx* tells the unexpected story of why the thirteen colonies, having just fought off the imposition of a distant centralized governing power, would decide to subordinate themselves anew. The triumph of the American Revolution was neither an ideological nor political guarantee that the colonies would relinquish their independence and accept the creation of a federal government with power over their individual autonomy. *The Quartet* is the story of this second American founding and of the men responsible—some familiar, such as George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison, and some less so, such as Robert Morris and Gouverneur Morris. It was these men who shaped the contours of American history by diagnosing the systemic dysfunctions created by the Articles of Confederation, manipulating the political process to force a calling of the Constitutional Convention, conspiring to set the agenda in Philadelphia, orchestrating the debate in the state ratifying conventions, and, finally, drafting the Bill of Rights to assure state compliance with the constitutional settlement.”

Those wishing more information can contact Barbara McDade at the Bangor Public Library at 947-8336 or bmcdade@bpl.lib.me.us.

- Barbara McDade, Bangor

THE LEAGUE DOWNEAST

The League Downeast recently read and discussed two thought-provoking books: Burt Neuborne's *Madison's Music: On Reading the First Amendment and American Nations, A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*, by award-winning Maine author Colin Woodard.

On September 2, we co-sponsored a panel discussion at the Jesup Public Library in Bar Harbor moderated by former State Senator Jill Goldthwait on money in politics. The panel featured Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD3) and MCCE Action Executive Director Andrew Bossie discussing the importance of public campaign financing and supporting the Yes on 1! Campaign for this November's ballot.

As we head into the fall season, we are preparing for a series of four events we're calling *Food and Fun for Ranked Choice Voting*. For these events, we've been working locally with our colleagues at One Hancock. These events are co-sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ellsworth and the Community Union of Hancock County. Scheduled between September 14 and September 23, each will feature a **lively demonstration of ranked choice voting**. We'll sample delicious food from four of the area's top restaurants, and we'll see how ranked choice voting works as we "elect" our favorites.

In October, we hope to arrange a luncheon with our area legislators to reflect on the current state of play in the Maine State Legislature and to look ahead to the second session. We are also planning to lend our energy, as needed, to the Yes on 1! Campaign with phone banking or canvassing.

On November 11th and 18th, we will meet from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. to participate in the LWVUS Constitutional Amendment Study; and on January 23rd and 30th, we will work on the LWVUS Money in Politics Update.

- Ann Luther, Trenton

LEAGUE HELPS NEW CITIZENS REGISTER TO VOTE AT ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

Jordan Pond House in Acadia National Park was the setting of a recent naturalization ceremony. Thirty new citizens were sworn in on August 12 just as the fog over Jordan Pond lifted. Martha Dickinson and I attended as members of the League of Women Voters of Maine to help the new citizens register to vote. We were able to register nearly half of those naturalized that day.

It was a diverse group with people who have come here from countries all over the world, including: Antilles, Canada, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Senegal, South Korea, Thailand, UK, Vietnam, and the Netherlands. Everyone was quite excited, and it was a pleasure to help them in their next phase of citizenship.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services hold ceremonies in the Portland area at least once a month. Qualified immigrants are granted citizenship and the LWVME regularly attends naturalization ceremonies to help them register to vote. Peg Balano, a member of the Portland LWV is present at almost all the ceremonies, and she reports, "Since the beginning of the year, we have helped register 178 new citizens to vote." The Bangor and Downeast Leagues are also present with registration cards at the ceremonies in Bangor, held at least twice a year.

The *Bangor Daily News* featured an article about the naturalization ceremony at Jordan Pond. One new citizen said: "I'm thrilled I'll now be able to take part in the electoral system. I can hopefully make my vote count." Another added, "...that Americans who work hard can have opportunities unavailable in other countries and that she wants to be able to take advantage of them."



We Need Your Help!

Many new citizens need help completing the voter registration form, and we welcome volunteers. We work to make sure that they all are able to register to vote on the day they become citizens. It's the perfect time to explain the importance and process of voting — and it's very rewarding work because people are thrilled at the prospect of exercising their newly gained rights. If you're interested in volunteering in this effort, contact Peg for dates and more information at peg.balano@gmail.com, or in the Bangor Area, contact Barbara McDade at bmcade@bpl.lib.me.us.

- Regina Coppens, Bgrade

LWVME AT OXFAM'S INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

For many years Oxfam-America has been celebrating International Women's Day by organizing meetings that focus on an unresolved issue of particular interest to women. Participants include a wide range of women, many of whom are Oxfam "Sisters on the Planet Ambassadors"¹. Experts on the selected issue provide participants with background information and suggestions for concrete actions they can take as individuals to move favorable legislation through the U.S. Congress. Pam Person has regularly represented LWVME at these meetings; because she could not attend this year, I was honored to be a substitute "Sister".

The issue:

This year's issue was the paradox of countries that are endowed with oil, gas, and mineral resources having a large share of their populations—particularly women and children—living in poverty. Resource-rich countries tend to suffer more than others from crippling debt, corruption, and low levels of human development. Oxfam argues that this "resource curse" is caused, in large part, by a lack of transparency surrounding payments made to governments for access to natural resources.

Surprisingly, it is the implementation of a section of the Dodd-Frank Act (which we tend to identify with cleaning up our U.S. banking and investment sector) that Oxfam views as critical to ensuring that payments made to all Governments are transparent and used—at least in part—to compensate those negatively affected by the extractive industries. Section 1504 is expected to do the following:

- Require oil, gas, and mining companies to disclose what they pay to the U.S. government and foreign governments in their annual filings to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
- Provide free public access to this information from the SEC website.
- Create a new global standard for company disclosure that will give citizens in resource-rich countries information to combat oil and mineral sector corruption and to demand government accountability for responsible resource use.

The most negative impacts of extractive industries affect local communities and often come about through appropriation of land, loss of livelihoods, and pollution of soils and water. Case studies from Kenya (oil), Ghana (oil), and Burkina Faso (gold) were presented by citizens of those countries, illustrating that even when reparations were paid to local people, women were not involved in the discussions and payments tended to go to men with little consideration of the losses suffered by women. The Ghana case study, however, was a promising example of

what can happen when communities organize and stand up for their rights. The Ghanaian Government has passed a law allocating 15% of oil revenues to agriculture and fishing and another 15% to education for three years (work is underway to increase that percent and make it permanent).

The political process:

As some of you may know, implementation of the Dodd-Frank Act has been slow because the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) must write up the rules to implement each section of the Act. The SEC prepared rules for Section 1504 in August 2012, but they were challenged by industry. In July 2013 the D.C. District Court vacated the initial rules on narrow grounds, making it necessary for the SEC to resubmit the rules with additional justification for its regulatory choices. To date, the SEC has been dragging its feet.

The bottom-line message from the gathering was that we need to push our representatives in Washington to write letters to the SEC asking them to move forward with implementation of rigorous rules for Section 1504 of the Dodd-Frank Act. Oxfam's website has excellent background materials on this issue if any are interested in following up with their own representatives as does an organization called "Publish what you pay" that is devoted exclusively to this issue.²

Networking:

Although I was the only participant officially representing the LWV, I was impressed by the number of participants I met who were not only Leaguers but also involved with other organizations supporting Oxfam's efforts to improve the lives of women and children around the world. A special bonus was that I met in person, for the first time, a member of the League's Agricultural Update Committee with whom I had communicated virtually for several months when we were working on the study. Maggie Robertson was attending the Oxfam meeting as a representative of Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network but is also a member of the LWV in Pennsylvania—small world, but not surprising since Leaguers seem to be so active in so many areas

A participating organization that was highlighted this year was Dining for Women—a global giving circle that funds grassroots programs working in developing countries to fight gender inequality while also fulfilling a mission to educate their members about other cultures and living conditions in the rest of the world. There are already three chapters in Maine, and those of you who are interested in global issues may want to consider creating a chapter for your community. For more information see: diningforwomen.org.

- Valerie Kelly, Portland

¹ <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/inside-oxfam-america/ambassadors/sisters-on-the-planet/>

² <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/oil-gas-and-mining-industries-womens-rights-at-risk/>
<http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org/>

MEET BETTY WILLHOITE

Without the devotion of its passionately motivated members, the League's voice would not be as effective, and its mission and presence would lack success. As a result, we'd like to take a moment and highlight Betty Willhoite, a member of 63 years, for her years of dedication to the League.

Betty Jean Peterson was born in 1922 to a socially and politically active mother who acquired her high school diploma and college degree in Education while raising Betty. Her father, a Professor of Political Science at Eastern State Teacher's College in South Dakota was also politically active and a lifelong learner. Her parents were both passionate about education and their appeal to continuous study and knowledge were examples of determination and persistence that Betty emulated later in life.

The event that made the greatest impression on Betty and began her compassionate concern for the well-being of others was the Dust Bowl. She witnessed firsthand the economic toll the manmade and natural disaster created for the once successful farmers in her community. Witnessing the displacement and homelessness of once prosperous families, her concern for these individuals became deep seated and would be a root motivation in her politically active adult life.

Betty attended the University of Iowa in Iowa City. She majored in Political Science and Speech and met the love of her life, fellow student and future husband, George Willhoite. George and Betty married in 1944. One week after the ceremony, George left for war in Europe. Betty stayed at their home in Iowa, focusing her attention on teaching and coaching debate at the local high school.

Upon his return in 1947, George attended the University of Iowa, received his law degree in 1948 and went on to a career with Amoco Oil Company. His first assignment moved them to Texas, where they lived for ten years and had two sons.

In 1958, Amoco transferred George to New York City and the family moved to Connecticut. It was on a visit with her parents with her sons that Betty's interest in the League began.

Although her mother was a member of the League, it was a conversation she overheard her father having with a colleague that sparked her interest to learn more. In that conversation, her father was discussing a certain public policy issue and it was his final analysis that grabbed her attention when he said, "If the League of Women Voters is for it, then I am for it."

His statement prompted Betty to learn more. She was impressed with the League's non-partisan approach, the two-year analysis and study on public policy issues, and the resulting *Impact on Issues*. Betty was instantly hooked by the League's methods and, at the age of 30, became a member of the League of Women Voters of Stamford. Her first role as a contributing member included a study on Foreign Affairs.

Betty's participation in the Stamford League continued for the next 10 years until she and her family moved to Illinois. She immediately became an active leader in the League of Women

Voters of Chicago, serving as President 1980-1986. Being an active member and leader in Chicago required intense study of local issues. Betty educated herself on welfare reform as well as urban issues and politics by attending classes taught by the well-known civil rights leader and political scientist, Charles Hamilton. She worked tirelessly on the war on poverty and lobbied at local and state levels for a safety net to meet basic human needs – a position developed as a result of study and consensus in 1988.

Betty's League participation also led her to become an active participant and board member of the Community Renewal Society, an organization with the mission of reducing racism and poverty. These efforts brought Betty in contact with others working on the urban renewal effort, including the then community organizer, Barack Obama. Although Betty and President Obama did not meet on a personal level, their paths would often cross as their individual organizations focused on the same issues and challenges facing the Chicago community.

Betty remained an active member of the Chicago League for 34 years. In 2005, the Willhoites moved to Maine to join their oldest son John and his family who now lived along the beautiful and rocky eastern seaboard. Betty, George, and their other son, Mark, settled in Falmouth where she and Mark continue to live. Unfortunately, after 70 years of a happy and successful marriage, George passed away in October 2014.

In retirement, Betty continues her work and participation with the League. From 2007 to 2009 she was a member of the Board of Directors for LWVME. In recent years, Betty has settled into a more tranquil retirement involving herself in the various activities at her home, Ocean View at Falmouth. She still finds time to join on informational meetings and panel discussions held by the LWVPA.

The knowledge she gained as a result of her participation and leadership helped Betty to judge candidates and the issues that were imperative in each of the local, state and national elections. The education she acquired facilitated a balanced understanding as to the needs of her community and the country as a whole. She became the informed voter the League of Women Voters hopes to create.

What advice does Betty have for the future of the League? She recommends that lobbying efforts and public policy issues should be considered with and focused on the federal level. She also recommends encouraging the younger generation to become more involved in civic action. To accomplish this, she suggests the League incorporate topic issues that Millennials deem important, such as job creation, a living wage, and other economic issues they face. Focusing attention on voter turnout, job creation and training, as well as establishing a living wage should be a top priority of the League's efforts.

The League is lucky that members like Betty are among us. May we be motivated by Betty's story and advice to continue the League's mission and success. Thank you, Betty. Your life inspires us to move forward and continue to do great things.

- Lorraine Glowczak
Vice President, LWVPA

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

This 2015 legislative session had its share of proposals to amend the Maine and U.S. Constitutions, from how we balance the federal budget and how we finance elections to how we conduct citizen initiatives in Maine. “Circus Maximus” prevailed on May 27th with a number of controversial measures drawing a standing-room-only crowd at the State House. Dressed in all kinds of eye-catching garb, folks concerned with *Citizens United* and other issues lined up to testify before the State and Local Government Committee. It’s clear. Government means a lot to a growing number of Mainers from across the political spectrum.

Thinking a proposal (HP 804) for a U.S. Constitutional Convention would be quickly dispatched, I was surprised to say the least, when the debate lasted long into the afternoon and into the early evening. The degree of deference by the State and Local Government Committee to one self-described national grass roots group, “Citizens for Self Governance, “represented by Kevin Quinn, was particularly surprising. Their bill, JOINT RESOLUTION MAKING APPLICATION TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES CALLING A CONVENTION OF THE STATES TO PROPOSE AMENDMENTS TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION TO IMPOSE FISCAL RESTRAINTS, LIMIT FEDERAL POWER AND IMPOSE TERM LIMITS, was opposed by the League for both the balanced budget and term limits provisions. You can read about the League’s testimony on HP 804 at lwvme.org/about_action.html.

Mr. Quinn spoke for several hours, despite a 3-minute maximum time limit imposed by Chairman Roland Martin. Quinn spoke about the need to retake, rethink, and act on what his group believes were the intention of our founding fathers regarding government (Federal vs. State) in our lives and our rights and duty as citizens to do so. This group is well organized and has been successful in a number of state legislatures to date to enlist support for this movement.

Many, many others were there that day to support HP 956, JOINT RESOLUTION MAKING APPLICATION TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES CALLING A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION TO PROPOSE AN AMENDMENT TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION REGARDING THE STATUS OF CORPORATIONS AS PEOPLE AND THE ROLE OF MONEY IN THE ELECTION PROCESS. These determined folks waited well into the evening for the chance to have their say. The gallery in attendance at this hearing, their studious love of government and the activism they brought to the debate, was amazing. One legislator, Jeff Evangelous (unenrolled) commented on the debate intensity and the numbers of e-mail he received from “armchair constitutional scholars” voicing their insights.

There is a hunger, perhaps unobserved by too many of us, to rethink how our government works and to bring restructuring to fruition. With interest running high on amending the U.S.

Constitution, the time is ripe for the League’s fall study on this very topic. Local Leagues around the state will be reading, discussing, and seeking consensus on key questions. How should we evaluate the appropriateness of constitutional amendment proposals? What factors are important in conducting an Article V Constitutional Convention? How should the League put these guidelines into practice?

You can read more about the upcoming study at the LWVUS web site: forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/our-work/constitutional-amendment-study. Watch for more information from your local League on fall programs to support the study.

- Helen Hanlon, Winthrop

FINALIZED CLEAN POWER PLAN OUTLINES KEY WAYS TO STOP CLIMATE CHANGE

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released the final version of the **Clean Power Plan** - the first ever limits on carbon pollution from power plants. The Clean Power Plan takes the necessary steps to reduce this dangerous greenhouse gas effectively protecting our children and future generations from the effects of climate change.

The EPA sought the public’s involvement throughout the regulation process. League supporters generated over 90,000 messages to President Obama and the EPA over the course of the rules finalization process. League supporters also attended the public hearings and listening sessions that the EPA held across the country. The final rule reflects much of the feedback that the EPA received.

The Clean Power Plan is the biggest and most ambitious action the U.S. has ever taken to tackle climate change. It will save lives, improve health, spur economic growth and protect our environment. Here are just a few key parts of the plan:

Cuts Carbon Pollution from Power Plants

The Clean Power Plan will cut carbon emissions by 32 percent by 2030 based on 2005 levels.

Provides States Flexibility to Meet State Goals

Drafting State Implementation Plans is the next step to a successful Clean Power Plan.

Invests in Renewable Energy

The final Clean Power Plan makes aggressive and necessary investments in clean energy technologies, resulting in 30 percent more renewable energy generation by 2030 while continuing to lower costs. It also gives states a reward for making early investments in clean energy by establishing a Clean Energy Incentive Program.

Protects Public Health

It's not just the environment that is affected by climate change. Cutting carbon pollution will reduce premature deaths by nearly 90 percent. It will also lead to 90,000 fewer asthma attacks in children by decreasing the pollutants that contribute to this health issue.

Paves the way for an International Climate Agreement

In December, leaders from around the world will meet in Paris for the UN Climate Change Conference. Countries from around the world have already made preliminary pledges to reduce carbon emissions. The Clean Power Plan is a major step in international leadership. The US coming to the table with a plan to cut carbon dioxide emissions will go a long way in procuring commitments from others to do the same.

The rule may be finalized, but there is still more work to come as states work to draft plans for implementation and we work to fight off attacks from big polluters and their allies in Congress. It will be up to all of us to encourage our state and local leaders to fulfill the commitments of the Clean Power Plan in our own communities. The League will continue to work to ensure that the Clean Power Plan is implemented properly in every state and that these life-saving measures are enacted. **Join the League in thanking EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and President Obama for their leadership in fighting climate change and protecting public health.**

- Jessica Jones, LWVUS

Calendar Fall 2015

Weeks of Sept. 21 st & 28 th	Various Portland High Schools.	Voter Registration. Lunchtime voter registration at area high schools. Please check with the Portland Area League for details.
Tuesday, September 22	Maine State Library	National Voter Registration Day For other events and details, call your local League or check the LWVME website.
Tuesday, September 22 4:00 - 5:00 pm	Havana 318 Main St., Bar Harbor, ME 04609	Food and Fun for Ranked Choice Voting. Join us for lively demonstration to see how ranked choice voting works featuring delicious food provided by Havana.
Wednesday, September 23 4:30 - 5:30 pm	Ironbound 1513 US Rt 1, Hancock, ME 04640	Food and Fun for Ranked Choice Voting. Join us for lively demonstration to see how ranked choice voting works featuring delicious food provided by Ironbound.
Thursday, September 24 5pm	Seasons Restaurant 427 Main St., Bangor, ME 04401	Bangor Book Group Discussion. Join us for dinner and a discussion about <i>The Quartet: Orchestrating the Second American Revolution, 1783-1789</i> by Joseph Ellis.
Tuesday, October 6 5:30-7pm	Portland Public Library, 5 Monument Way, Portland, ME 04101	Portland Mayoral Forum and Ranked Choice Voting presentation. Come learn about the candidates and Portland's ranked choice voting system.
Wednesday, October 7 6:30pm	Bangor City Hall 73 Harlow Street, Bangor, ME 04401	Bangor Candidates' Forum. Come hear what the candidates for City Council and School Committee have to say about their vision for Bangor.
Tuesday, October 13	Portland area - TBA	Money in Politics House Party. Details to come!
Wednesday, October 14 Noon-2pm	Midcoast Senior College 9 Park St, Bath, ME 04530	Presentation on Public Discourse and the League's Study Process
Tuesday, November 3	Polls	Election Day
November 11 and 18 5-7 pm	Downeast locations TBA	LWVUS Constitutional Amendment Study Consensus Meetings
Saturday, November 21 9am-Noon	Preti Flaherty, One City Center, Penthouse Floor, Portland, ME 04101	LWVUS Constitutional Amendment Study Consensus Meeting
Wednesday, December 9 5:30-7pm	Portland Public Library, 5 Monument Way, Portland, ME 04101	Presentation: "How to Effectively Communicate with Your Legislator" with Joanne D'Arcangelo

Join the League!

Join the League and be part of the solution! Your community needs leaders like you to be a strong, safe and vibrant place to live. Become a member and make a positive impact on your community.

Sign up on line at www.lwvme.org and pay by credit card or PayPal, or mail this form and a check made payable to **LWVME to PO Box 863, Augusta, ME 04332-0863**. *Dues are not tax deductible.* But contributions made payables to LWVME Education Fund are deductible and are always appreciated. Thank you!

Member name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone (home): _____ Telephone (cell): _____

Email: _____ Check amount: _____

- ☐ Introductory Member (First Year) - \$25 ☐ Student Member - \$25 ☐ Single Member - \$55
- ☐ Two-person Household - \$85 ☐ Mentor (Supports First-Year Membership Program) - \$100



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