



**LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS**

League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford

Rockford VOTER

October 2014

League Awarded Ed Fund Grant

Thanks to the efforts of Susan Janson, the League has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$800 from the Education Fund.

Susan wrote for a grant to the LWV Ed Fund to help the Voter Services

Committee promote the voter registration drive of 17 year olds in 2014. The grant will be used to purchase new signs and a banner to educate and attract young people to register under the new law.

Great work Susan!

Is It Time to Amend the Constitution?

In 2010, The Supreme Court overturned 90 years of precedence concerning political campaign funding in its 'Citizens United' decision. Since then Congress has often spoken of campaign finance reform, but has taken no action.

Illinois has the opportunity to become the third state to call for an Article V Convention of the States for the purpose of amending the US Constitution to reverse the effects of the Citizens United decision. This means the Constitution would be amended by the States, without Congress. Interesting idea? Scary idea? Come hear the experts to generate your own informed opinion.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford will hold a public educational forum on Illinois' Senate Joint Resolution 42. SJR 42 has passed the Illinois Senate and is scheduled to be voted on during the

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Facebook!

passed the Illinois Senate and is scheduled to be voted on during the veto session in November. Vermont and California have already passed this resolution. Should Illinois? Join us and get educated on this topic.

What: An Article V Convention: A Viable Path Towards Amending the Constitution?

When: Wednesday, Oct. 22, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Where:

Rockford Public Library East Branch Community Room

6685 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61108

Panelists: Dr. Scot Schraufnagel, Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Political Science, Northern Illinois University
Linda Chapa LaVia, Sponsor of SJR 42, State Representative (D-83)

Moderator: Marilyn Hite-Ross, Assistant State's Attorney, Winnebago County

Cost: The program is free and open to the public.

LWVGR and the RRStar

Our latest LWVGR column in the Rockford Register Star.

October Edition: Published October 5 in the Rockford Register Star.

Each year, our state legislators conduct business on our behalf. The resulting legislation responds to concerns expressed by individuals, businesses, or organizations that would be directly impacted by the requested legislation. The bills written in response to these concerns are followed avidly by the groups most affected. But for many citizens, such legislation generally flies under the radar.

SJR 42 is one of those bills. It has not yet attracted the attention of the general public. It was passed by the Illinois Senate with a bipartisan vote and is poised for a vote in the Illinois House during this year's veto session in late November. SJR 42 would approve an Article V Convention to consider amending the United States Constitution, specifically addressing the US Supreme Court decision known as Citizens United. This decision opened the door to large campaign donations from corporations, individuals, or other groups in the name of free speech.

Two states have passed a resolution calling for an Article V Convention already. Illinois could be the third. More states will also consider such action. What does an Article V Convention entail? How would it impact you as a citizen?

LEAGUE NEWS

New Members

Welcome Jo Minor, Kathy Ingrahm, Jean Frana, Tina Pumilia, Linda Miller, and Lenae Weichel! We are so excited you joined and look forward to working with you.

MEETINGS:

VOTER SERVICE
COMMITTEE: first
Thursday, 8am,
Stockholm Inn

LWVGR BOARD
MEETING: Second
Monday, @ 5:30pm all
are welcome.

HEALTH CARE
COMMITTEE: Second
Thursday @ 5:30 pm.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:
2nd Wednesday, at noon,
Katie's Cup or Sockholm
Inn @ 5:30.

EDUCATION:
3rd Tuesday @
Stockholm Inn @ 9am

ENVIRONMENTAL
ISSUES:
4th Tuesday @ 11:30am
at Katie's Cup

COMMUNICATIONS:
2nd Tuesday @ Katie's
Cup

MEMBER SERVICES:
1st Friday @ Ojedas @
11:30 am

The League of Women Voters is a strong advocate for campaign finance reform. For decades, the League has worked to ensure that citizen participation in the political process is not drowned out by special interests and big money donors. With SJR42 waiting in the wings in Illinois, the League of Women Voters of Greater Rockford will bring the discussion to the forefront so that citizens can be informed and let legislators know how they feel.

This educational forum will be October 22, 2014 at the Rockford Public Library East Branch, from 6-8 PM. Speakers are State Representative Linda Chapa La Via (D-Aurora), Chief Sponsor for SJR 42 in the House and Dr. Scot Schraufnagel, Professor of Political Science, NIU. Marilyn Hite-Ross, Assistant State's Attorney, Winnebago County, will moderate the discussion. The public will be encouraged to ask questions.

What does one need to know about campaign finance reform? Through a series of Supreme Court decisions: Buckley vs. Valeo (1976), Citizens United vs. FEC (2010), and McCutcheon vs. FEC (2014), the Supreme Court has changed the ability of Congress to regulate funding of political campaigns. The Court has essentially declared that the free speech rights outlined in the first amendment apply not only to the actual speech of natural persons, but also to the expenditures of corporate persons to influence elections without corruption. The Court defined corruption narrowly to include votes-for-money quid pro quo but generally excluded the other distorting effects that big money has on politics and government.

In contrast, a recently released study, Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens by Drs. Martin Gilens (Princeton) and Benjamin Page (Northwestern) clearly shows that legislators respond more to the desires of the donor class than to their constituent base at large. According to Gilens, "If democracy means that all citizens should have a say in shaping government policy, our findings cast doubt upon just how democratic U.S. policy making actually is." Additionally, a recent poll by Mfour/Tulchin Research found that 92% of Americans believe money buys results in Congress. A similar poll by Democracy Corps reports that there is strong bipartisan support for reducing campaign spending and overturning Citizens United.

LWV believes we must improve methods of financing political campaigns to ensure the public's right to know, to combat corruption and undue influence, to enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and to promote citizen participation in the political process.

How could an Article V Convention impact campaign finance reform? Find out October 22. It's sure to be a discussion you don't want to miss.

If you are interested in participating, please contact
Claire McIntyre at lwvgr22@gmail.com

CAMPAIGN FINANCE
REFORM:
3rd Tuesday @ 6 @
Meg's.

Letter from the President:

Our committees are hard at work. The Communications Committee will be overseeing the monthly publication of a column by the League of Women Voters in the Rockford Register Star. Please look for the columns and feel free to provide your feedback. Thank you to our members who are working to communicate our mission and events to the public in this format. Also, if there is a topic that you would like to see in the monthly column, please contact Claire McIntyre.

Our Campaign Finance Reform Committee has new life under the Leadership of Elizabeth Lindquist. Her committee will be providing League members and the public with more opportunities to learn about this important topic: money in politics.

We are receiving support from the LWVIL under the Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) program. Our MLD team includes myself, Diane Cushing and Chris Hiltrop. In a monthly conference call with the LWVIL coach we learn more about what other Leagues are doing successfully.

We have organized a Special Events Committee to work on our Spring event. So far, the members include myself, Paula Lind, Diane Cushing and Jo Minor. I invite any other League members (or non-members) interested to join this committee. Please just send an email if you are interested.

Ann

RVC: A Community Conversation

RVC held a community forum on October 16th. LWVGR was invited to attend. There were several league members present for this informative conversation. There were small group sessions to gather feedback from our community regarding the positive and negative influence of Rock Valley College and how to impact the area better. Keep an eye out for more events from RVC and written responses from the Forum on the 16th. Information will be on the RVC website:
<http://www.rockvalleycollege.edu>.

Gubernatorial Debate (Pat Quinn and Bruce Rauner)

Monday, October 20 from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. ABC7 Chicago, 190 North State Street, Chicago
Co-Sponsors: LWVIL, ABC7 and WGBO/Univision Chicago

The debate will be streamed live at 8:00 PM on abc7chicago.com and

will be featured live on the station's digital channel 7.2 and will air on ABC 7's main channel on Monday, October 20 at 10:35 PM. The hour-long debate will be presented commercial free. ABC 7 Eyewitness News Political Reporter, Charles Thomas; ABC 7 Political Analyst, Laura Washington and Univision Reporter Erika Maldonado will serve on the panel questioning the candidates.

Website / Paypal:

Have you checked out our website? You can now join/renew the League of Women Voter's of Greater Rockford on our website, including using Paypal! You can also make donations using Paypal.

Member Highlight

Teresa Hill, Voter Editor

I have been a member of LWVGR for about 3 years and am the editor of the voter. I joined the league thanks to Jean Claeys.

She asked me to become a Voter Registrar at church(I believe more than once). I am so glad she did! I am inspired every meeting with the accomplishments of fellow league members and the drive to get people to vote and other league interests. I have a daughter who is 23 and attending NIU. I moved to the downtown area of Rockford 4 years ago, to try to make a difference in Rockford. I am the secretary for the Signal Hill Neighborhood, serve on the Neighborhood Infrastructure committee for Jeremiah Development and am about to become more involved in the Transform Rockford team.

I am an avid sports fan, Cubs, Bears, Blackhawks and like to play sports too. I love to garden and crafts. You never know when I might whip something up for some of the members. Being involved in the League has been a great joy for the past 3 years and am looking forward to many more.

STANDING COMMITTEES

VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE

Jeanne Claeys, Voter Service Chair

The LWVGR registered 44 residents at the 4 Schnucks stores during the last days of registration. The league also registered 48 new US citizens last month.

MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

Diane Cushing, chair

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Voter: Editor Teresa Hill would like to put the Voter out by the second week of every month. Please, if you are responsible for a committee report or would like to contribute an article, it must be in by her by the end of the second week. Remember, the Voter is how we communicate to our members and informed members are involved members.

LWVGR website and Facebook page: Webmaster Janie Wilson-Cook has been updating the website and our Facebook page now has over 100 likes! Those 'likes' mean that we have a lot more visits to our page which could potentially lead to new members. Please check out the website and like us on Facebook!

LWVGR in the RRStar! To date, two articles have been published in the Rockford Register Star under the League logo. Our column will appear monthly and address various League concerns such as voting information and voting rights, campaign finance reform, mental health, as well as legislation affecting League positions. We are looking for writers and researchers as well as people who would like to suggest topics for the coming year. It's a group effort meaning it's not too onerous on anyone.

Our first article was on voting registration and the importance of voting. Thank you to Jeanne Claeys and Susan Janson for their input, which was very valuable. League members contacted us to say how much they enjoyed seeing the article in the paper.

The October column addressed campaign finance reform and our upcoming public forum on SJR 42, a bill to support an Article V Convention to amend the US Constitution. Campaign Finance Committee chair Elizabeth Linnquist and committee member Claire McIntyre researched and wrote the article while June Jacob did an outstanding job of editing it.

ISSUES AND ACTIONS COMMITTEES

HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE

Elaine Pfluger, Chair

Good News for the LWV of Greater Rockford Health Care Committee. The Winnebago County Mental Health Advisory Committee, formed in 2011, has announced that they are ready to raise community support to fund more local mental health services. Talks have ramped up this year after the county's Public Safety Committee heard from the county Crime

and Public Safety Commission on ways to reduce the jail population. The LWV Health Care Committee will renew their commitment to support local mental health care funding.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Diane Cushing, Chair

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Claire McIntyre, Chair

The education committee hosted the first of the charter school re-study meetings on Sept. 15th. We had a very good turn-out and a lot of discussion. At that time we focused on two of the three sections we will need to address during the consensus. Those two sections were Transparency and Funding. If anyone missed the meeting, you can contact committee chair Claire McIntyre for the information covered. Questions were raised that will be answered and sent out. Thanks to Jean Frana for taking notes.

We urge you to attend the November 17th meeting where Joel Cowen and Karen Weedman will cover the Accountability section. The meeting will be at the Stockholm Inn at 5:30 PM.

The last meeting will be in December with the date to be determined. At that time, we will watch a brief video of charter experts discussing charters in Illinois and complete the consensus. Please join us for both these evenings.

The next meeting of the education committee will be our regularly scheduled day- the third Tuesday of October, October 21, at 9 am at the Stockholm Inn. All are welcome.
Submitted by Claire McIntyre, Chair

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Paula Lind, chair

The first candidates' forum was held on Oct.8, featuring the candidates for Winnebago Sheriff. 6 PM at Maddox Theater, Rockford University. A job well done by Paula and her committee. The local media coverage was good and was well attended.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Elizabeth Lindquist, chair

Please join us on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6pm at [Meg's Daily Grindon](#) Perryville The address is 3885 N Perryville Road, Rockford 61114.

New Voter Deadline: 2nd Wednesday of the month.

LWVGR CONTACTS

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VOTER Editor: Teresa Hill - trusstech@live.com

The purpose of the LWVGR shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government and to act on selected governmental issues.