



No

2013-14

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JANUARY E-VOTER

Drawing A Line For Democracy: Rethinking Redistricting

by Debbie Asberry, LWV-Indianapolis Task Force Chair

For the past several months, LWV-Indianapolis, in collaboration with the LWVIN and Common Cause of Indiana, has been engaged in a public awareness campaign concerning the negative effects of gerrymandering. Meanwhile, we've all experienced the U.S. Government shut-down crisis. Statewide, much work has been done to inform citizens about this issue and to encourage everyone to contact their legislators prior to the 2014 General Assembly.

We are thrilled that on the second day of the General Assembly (following a late start due to the impact of the polar vortex and the city of Indianapolis being in a state of emergency) Rep. Smith, chair of the House Election Committee, scheduled a hearing of House Bill 1032, co-authored by Speaker Bosma and Rep. Jerry Torr. *This bill calls for an appointed five member bi-partisan legislative commission.* Although there was less than a 24-hour notice concerning the bill's hearing Debbie

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 31

Last Day to Update
LWVUS Database

-

February 14

LWV Birthday

-

March 15 10AM-
 3PM

LWVIN Board
Meeting
Indianapolis, IN

-

March 16-22

Sunshine Week

May 3-4

LWVIN Council
Location TBA

June 6-11



Asberry of LWV-Indy and Julia Vaughn of Common Cause slogged through the nearly impassible streets of the city to provide testimony to the House Elections Committee.

The committee was receptive to Rep. Torr's presentation and asked questions primarily concerning the process for appointing the commission members and its chair. Julia and Debbie provided testimony that emphasized the need to move beyond legislatively drawn maps. They pointed out that when legislators draw the maps, the districts are very partisan, often resulting in non-competitive elections and ensuring safe districts for those already in office. Both suggested that an alternative model would be to create an *independent* commission, similar to what California has done in its assembly. They both expressed gratitude to the chair and the committee for hearing the bill.

HB1032 passed committee and, with minor amendments, will move forward to the full House. *It is important to note that similar bills have been introduced since 2004 but never considered because they got no hearing!* As written, HB1032 would work with or without a constitutional amendment. (Senator Delph is sponsoring another redistricting commission bill, SJR 2, which would amend the constitution to allow for a Redistricting Commission.) A constitutional amendment protracts the process and necessitates a voter referendum. Other states have taken this issue to the voters, finding that the process is costly and the results are uncertain. This legislative session, it is important that all interested Leaguers remain vigilant about rethinking redistricting! The General Assembly may be poised to act, and they need to hear from us. No legislatively-appointed commission will be neutral, but we must persistently advocate for a commission whose work is neutral, transparent, and equitable.

LWVIN Board Update: Please check out this [article](#) on the Indiana Business Journal for an update on HB1032.

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**ABOUT THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF INDIANA**

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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Changes to State Voter Form

by Karen Kay Leonard, LWV of Indianapolis

Monroe County

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Angie Nussmeyer, Director of Elections at the Marion County Election Board, spoke to lunch with LWV of Indianapolis at Scottish Rite on 15 November. She warned us, as voter registrars and also as potential absentee voters, that official state forms will be different after January 1, 2014. These changes were embedded in SB621, the same legislation that removed the 4 at-large councillors from Marion County's City-County Council.

The VRG-7 form that we know as the "Application for Voter Registration" has undergone one informational change important to every registrar: the person collecting the form must give his/her name and personal address in two places. A second change is page size: the 8.5 x 11" page now will be cut or torn so that the registrar keeps the bottom section, and the registrant keeps the top as a receipt bearing the custodian's information. A third change affects LWV and all other groups that provide registration assistance: application forms must be submitted to the appropriate county office within ten days of collection. (There previously has not been a deadline, except for the close of voter registration.)

In the flurry of questions that followed the above announcements, we established that *no*, Leaguers cannot use the League's address instead of our personal addresses. However, Ms Nussmeyer soothed us with two possible acceptable solutions. If we can register people electronically on the spot (using www.indianavoters.com), the information will immediately be submitted, obviating the need for both personal addresses and 10-day deadlines. Also, there is a federal form that Indiana accepts for voter registration, which lacks the "collector receipt." We can use the federal form instead of the VRG-7 if a paper application is needed.

For absentee voting, there are now three separate forms

and a change in the counting procedure. When one applies for an absentee ballot, one must request the proper kind, either to vote by mail or to vote using the services of a traveling board. One can still vote "absentee in person" at the clerk's office, and the form for that ballot will differ from the other two. For the first time, the clerk will be required to count absentee ballots at a central location; so bi-party teams will not be delivering voted ballots to the various precincts. Instead, the county clerk will operate from a temporary headquarters at the Gale St. service center in Indianapolis, and teams will have to check poll book signatures there when the computer is properly programmed to count votes from a particular precinct. This change will require Marion County to hire at least 150 more election workers than if the count were conducted at the precinct.

Finally, a note of good news: If you don't see a sample ballot online or in the paper, call the Election Board at 317-327-5100. They will mail you a sample!

Remember to Update Your Membership Rolls by February 1st

The deadline for updating membership rolls in the national LWV database is fast approaching. National and state will use this number to determine PMP owed for the year, so it is crucial your League's database is current and accurate. LWVUS has created an online guide to help navigate the national website and it can be found [here](#).

Agriculture Study Update

LWVUS has released the [consensus questions](#) for the Agricultural Study as well as a [discussion guide](#) for leaders. The committee is asking for responses by Friday, April 4, 2014. This date may change in the future and we will let you know if it does.

Presidents Day

Presidents Day is our annual statewide event, provided at no fee, on February 15, 2014, in Indiana. We invite the president of each League and two others whom s/he invites. If there are more than three people from your local League that would like to attend, we welcome them, and ask that they pay \$15.00.

Opportunities to learn and to share will be available. Ongoing coffee and water and a lunch are included. Our keynote speaker, Larry DeBoer, will discuss elimination of the business personal property tax in Indiana.

Paulette Vandegriff will be speaking on "Your Great Debate: Tips for Success", new League member Donya Lester will be speaking on agriculture, and Barb Schilling and Mary Jo Gorman will be speaking about interns for your League.

When? Saturday, February 15, 2014, 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., followed by a reception at the new League office

Where? Indianapolis Propylaeum, 1410 N. Delaware Street, #2, Indianapolis, Indiana

We Need Your RSVP by February 10, 2013

• Please visit the following website to register:


<http://www.eventbrite.com/e/presidents-day-celebration-registration-10303757817>. You can register with your Facebook account or by providing your name and email address. You do not need to print a ticket for admission on the 15th. If you are paying for an additional registration, please bring a check or cash to the event.


ICHS Legislative Update

Check out the [legislative update](#) from our coalition partner, Indiana Coalition for Human Services.



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