

THE VOTER



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF INDIANA

SEPTEMBER 2014

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Rethinking Redistricting:

Drawing a Line for Democracy

Debbie Asberry, LWVUS Redistricting Task Force member

Nearly every political issue is connected to the way district maps are drawn. Whether it's protecting the environment, ensuring voter rights, supporting minority rights, educating the young, or protecting the innocent against gun violence, if districts have been manipulated to ensure that one political party is victorious, the effectiveness of lobbying and advocacy is minimized. Gerrymandered districts can insulate both candidates and elected officials from what the majority of their citizens desire. As candidates, they need not appear for forums or debates. Once in office, they may ignore the will of their constituents. Secure elected officials can do as they please.

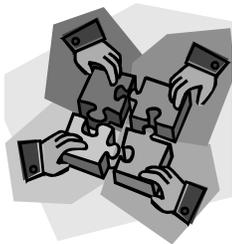
Gerrymandered political districts undermine the basic concept of "one person one vote," making it difficult to hold elected officials accountable. In districts designed to be "secure" for either party, candidates tend to run toward the ideological edges, whereas, in competitive districts, they tend to run toward the middle, where more concern for the common good is apt to rest. For the 2012 election, only two (2!) Indiana Congressional Districts actually were considered competitive. Although Indiana's partisan split is relatively even (roughly 54 percent Republican and 46 percent Democrat, depending on the year surveyed), the GOP holds 7 of the 9 congressional districts, plus a 37:13 advantage in the Indiana Senate and a 69:31 advantage in the House. This means that *just a little over a majority can win most Indiana U.S. Congressional seats and a super majority in the Statehouse*. To more accurately reflect the views of voters, reform is important.

The mission of our Rethinking Redistricting Campaign is to raise public awareness of the negative impact of gerrymandering and to emphasize the importance of creating an independent redistricting commission for Indiana. Over the summer, LWV worked with Common Cause of Indiana. Together we reached out to statewide organizations in order to assemble a coalition of allies and advocates. Thus far, we have talked with Hoosier Environmental Council, American Civil Liberties Union, NAACP, Moms Demand Action, Jobs for Justice, and the Citizens Action Coalition. We also are asking key civic leaders to align with us on this issue. Our conversations have been very encouraging. A broad-based coalition increases our capacity to raise awareness and to effectively lobby legislators for an independent commission.

There is good news for the fall: State Senate President *Pro Tem* David Long will propose a resolution in the 2015 General Assembly to establish a blue ribbon commission to study redistricting. Leaders in both parties recognize the importance of redistricting reform.

Now is the time to make sure that your legislators know that you want them to **support establishing an independent, nonpartisan redistricting commission for Indiana**. Write or call on Organization Day (Tuesday, November 18th) to say so, and stay tuned for further news.





From the President's Pen

Dear League of Women Voters of Indiana,

Welcome to the new League year everyone! Many of you had great Equality Day celebrations and are already busy organizing candidate forums. Your State League has been quite busy meeting in June and August as we are so enthusiastic about what opportunities this fall and spring present for all of us.

We are very optimistic about Indiana adopting a new oversight mechanism for decennial redistricting (which would happen again in 2021 after the official Census is certified). The State Board is currently working on a strategic plan to carry us through 2016 to include goals and outcomes that we would like to accomplish in the next 2 years. We welcome your thoughts on what goals we should examine and we also hope that you can begin thinking about state board service for next year as well as saving the date for State Convention next spring which is confirmed for April 17-19, 2015 at Abe Martin Lodge in Brown County State Park.

We invite and encourage each of you to attend the Fall Regional Workshops either in Greencastle at DePauw September 13, or South Bend at Ivy Tech on September 20. The online registration is ready at lwvin.org, or your local president can assist you, if needed, to register.

The State Board is so excited about our work and the attention and acknowledgement we are receiving from National as well as from our local elected leaders. Don't forget to share your pictures with us to post on our Facebook and Twitter accounts. We have fans from all over the US cheering us on as we protect the vote and provide valuable voter services in our communities.

Yours In League, *Amy*



SAVE THE DATE: LWVIN CONVENTION

Friday, April 17 — Sunday, April 19, 2015
Brown County State Park



LWVIN Regional Workshops: Advocacy and Action

September 13th - Greencastle

September 20th - South Bend

All League of Women Voters members are invited to attend the 2014 Regional Workshops held in Greencastle and South Bend. Our theme this year is "Advocacy and Action", preparing us for the general election and legislative session. Our speakers include Debbie Asberry (LWV of Indianapolis), who sits on the LWVUS national redistricting committee, and Barbara Anderson (LWV of South Central Indiana) who will discuss advocacy at all League levels. Workshops include topics such as Visibility through Vote 411, Medicare Fraud, Human Trafficking, and Engaging Local Candidates and Politicians. Please join us and consider bringing a NEW Leaguer to one of these events.

Where:

Southern Workshop - Greencastle
Prindle Institute for Ethics-Depauw Campus
2961 West County Road 225 S
Greencastle, IN 46135

Northern Workshop-South Bend
Ivy Tech's South Bend Campus
220 Dean Johnson Blvd.
South Bend, IN 46601

Time: Workshops will run from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. EDT. Check-in begins at 9:30 a.m.

Meals: Lunch will be provided. If registering for the South Bend workshop, please indicate Ham and Swiss on Ciabatta, Turkey on Ciabatta, Portabella Mushroom Wrap, or Orange Strawberry Spinach Salad

Registration: Registration is required even if you pay via PayPal. Please call 317-241-VOTE or send your RSVP to csosbe@lwvin.org. Remember to indicate what lunch you want for the South Bend Workshop. The dead line to register for the Greencastle workshop is September 8th and for South Bend, September 15th.

Cost: \$20. Pay at the door with cash, check or credit card, or pay online.

Membership & Leadership

Gail Pebworth, Montgomery County

We are excited to have two more local Leagues joining the Membership and Leadership Program (MLD)! Indianapolis had initial training August 25, and LaPorte County is scheduled for September 17. They join ten other Indiana Leagues now engaged in MLD. Greencastle and Southwest Indiana have indicated interest in scheduling a training this year, and we INVITE all other Leagues to join this program which has a proven record of increasing membership and helping develop new leaders. Local Leagues who participate will receive free resources, training, monthly guidance hints, personal coaching, and great networking! For more information or to arrange a training date, contact MLD Coordinator Gail Pebworth, gpebworth@lwvin.org.

Moral Mondays

Linda Shanks, Bloomington-Monroe County

Moral Mondays has come to Indiana. This grass roots movement to build a coalition of voices that speak for the goal of accomplishing needed changes began in North Carolina, and includes the NAACP, the ACLU, and now the LWVIN as well as the LWV of North Carolina as partners. Moral Mondays began in 2006 as an effort to pressure the state's politicians to expand voting rights and support progressive legislation in North Carolina. It now includes over 150 organizations promoting a multi-issue agenda and is reaching out to citizens in Indiana.

Among its demands, the group seeks to: secure pro-labor anti-poverty policies that insure economic sustainability; provide well-funded, quality public education for all; stand up for the health of every citizen by promoting health care access and environmental justice; address continuing inequalities in the criminal justice system and ensure equality under the law; protect and expand voting rights for people of color, women, immigrants, the elderly and students to safeguard fair democratic representation.

If you want to know more about this transformational movement to reclaim a moral vision for governing Indiana, visit www.indianamoralmondays.org or access online The Nation for a July 1, 2014, article by Dani McClain entitled "How the Moral Mondays 'Fusion Coalition' Is Taking North Carolina Back." Events scheduled in Indianapolis include a meeting at 1828 North Meridian on September 6, 2014 and a weekend effort September 19-20 that includes a training workshop, issues workshops, and a march to the Statehouse. If you've been wanting to do something rather than just talk about what needs to be done, here's your opportunity to get involved. To attend, contact Erin Polley at 317-626-0868.

LWVIEF Grant Fund

LWVIEF Board of Directors

The LWVIEF Board of Directors have again approved a grant program for local Leagues. The program runs from July 1, 2014 — June 30, 2015. Final grant reports must be turned in by June 30, 2015, so the board will not approve grant requests after June 1, 2015 (allowing 30 days for the project to be completed). All local Leagues and MAL Units can apply for up to \$300 during this cycle.

To apply for funds, you need to have an education fund project and fill out and submit a project request form (see Member Resources at www.lwvin.org). If you have questions or need help filling out a form, please contact LWVIEF Treasurer Carrie Sosbe at csosbe@lwvin.org.

Meeting with Legislators

All League members are invited to attend two upcoming meetings regarding redistricting reform and the revisions of the Indiana voter registration form: September 10, at 3:30PM with Sen. Tim Lanane and September 16, at 2PM with Senator Karen Tallian. To RSVP, contact Amy Miller at amiller@lwvin.org.

State Fair Success

LWVIN Board of Directors



The 2014 State Fair LWV Booth was another success! Collectively, we registered 149 voters and gave out dozens of absentee forms and other brochures for fair attendees to give to family members. About half the people we registered were from Marion County (73), with the remainder from 31 other counties. Because we used the federal form, we were also able to register a voter from Ohio and one from Michigan. We hope that our work with members of the Elections Committee can provide a path to amend the current Indiana Voter Registration form so that the person registering a voter does not have to provide his/her personal name and address on the required receipt.

Kimber Sorenson-Brugh, our First VP from South Bend Area League has agreed to chair this important activity for 2015. We will return to the practice of assigning Local Leagues days to staff the fair and will also use a new volunteer sign up program called Volunteer Spot.. See www.lwvin.org and the September E-Voter for details.



Local League Activities Around the State

Anderson

The LWV of Anderson invited the public to a showing of "Gasland 2" at the library in March, and we plan to show more environmental films in the future. We are working on a candidates forum for October; and, along with the library and Chamber of Commerce, will host Third House sessions with our local state representatives this winter.

Cass County

The Cass County League recognized Equality Day with a program on the history of the suffragette movement with emphasis on Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

This fall our voter registration activities include registering voters at the Chamber of Commerce annual Pancake Day on Sept. 6th. We will also participate in the National Voter Registration Drive and offer registration sites at several locations around town. We are planning on Candidate Forums for the fall election plus forums school board for candidates at each respective school corporation. On Sept. 30th, we will have two local attorneys discuss the need/possibility of a Constitutional Convention.

We cordially invite everyone to attend our Nov. 18th, meeting at Ivy Tech with guest speaker Glenda Ritz.

Fort Wayne Area

The Fort Wayne Area League has been concentrating on Voter Registration this summer. We have held two trainings and have enlisted the help of Fifth Freedom, who worked with us at Taste of the Arts to register voters, and Wunderkammer Co., a non-profit gallery with a demographic for the most part of 20 and 30 year olds. We try to keep people on our email list updated via emails as well as posts to our Facebook page. We are waiting for the "con" side of the single county executive vote to provide us with information so we can post both sides of that issue. Right now, the "pros" are more organized and "out there" with information.

Greencastle

Greencastle is planning an open membership meeting on Tuesday, Sept 23 at 7 p.m. at City Hall. Trish Whitcomb-Sipes will be speaking to us about "Strong Schools, Strong Communities." Several members of the board will host her at Almost Home, a lovely local restaurant, for a 5:30 dinner before the talk. Trish is a special advisor to Glenda Ritz, and notices will go home with school children up to the 4th grade so that interested parents will be informed and invited.

On October 6, we will take part in the Reality Store where all 8th graders in the county learn how to manage money and get an imaginary preview of their life--the wheel of fortune determines who gets divorced, who wins the lottery, how many children they will have, and what accidents and/or illnesses will befall them in life. Students from six schools choose a profession before they come and are given a salary. They are

Greencastle continued

met at the door by Uncle Sam with their tax bill. At the LWV booth, students vote on "Should children fleeing violence in another country be allowed to stay in the U.S.?"

In September, we are hosting the Southern LWVIN Regional Workshop, held on the Depauw campus. Late in October we will host a political candidates' forum of local candidates in conjunction with DePauw University's Communication department. In December, we have our chocolate and wine party and invite spouses to attend.

Indianapolis

LWV-Indianapolis' focus for the next year is membership recruitment and retention, and improving voter services efforts. In the past two months we have hosted two social events for members and non-members: an Indianapolis Indians game and the Women's Equality Day Happy Hour. Both events were a great time and allowed members to bring friends along to meet the group in a fun, no-pressure setting. While we have had social events in the past, the happy hour was something new for our group to try and resulted in two new members! LWV-Indianapolis is looking forward to continue hosting social events along with our other normal League activities.

South Bend Area

At our June Annual Business Meeting, LWVSBA awarded its Maud Wood Park award for League service to Glenda Rae Hernandez, and in July we held a Member Welcome and Orientation. Recent Lunch with the League topics included the environment, feminism, local events initiatives, and a legislative update. Our School Voter Registration team had a great spring season and will be busy again this fall. Plans include celebrating National Voter Registration Day at Washington High School. In addition, LWVSBA has accepted a request by the St. Joseph County Vote Center Committee to conduct public education and to develop a post-election assessment of vote centers, should the Vote Center Plan be adopted. Although LWVSBA has not taken a position on whether or not vote centers are good for the voters of St. Joseph County, the League is committed to voter education and to ensuring that no citizen misses the opportunity to vote. That we have been asked to implement these crucial components of the vote center plan demonstrates the community's respect for LWVSBA.

Southwestern Indiana

Southwestern was one of 6 lead sponsors of the 12th annual Women's Equality Day Luncheon in Evansville. The event, which drew close to 400 women and men, featured keynote speaker Dr. Idalene Kesner, the first female Dean of the IU School of Business. We are partnering with WNIN (our local PBS station) and the Evansville Courier & Press to do live debates in several local races. We also worked with the Knox County League on a possible 8th Congressional District debate. Fall activities include a voting information pamphlet and Lunches with the League.

LWV Lake Michigan Region Annual Meeting “Climate Change and Biodiversity”

The League of Women Voters Lake Michigan Region is holding their annual meeting October 3 -5, 2014, in Traverse City Michigan. The LWVIN is a member of the Lake Michigan League and all members are invited to attend this annual meeting. The topic is Climate Change and Biodiversity and speakers include:

- Dr. Jeff Andresen, State Climatologist
- Dr. David Bunnell, Research Fishery Biologist
- Kevin Skerl, Chief of Natural Resources, NPS
- Helen Taylor, State Director, The Nature Conservatory
- Dr. Hans VanSumeren, Director, Great Lakes Water Studies Institute
- Dr. Grenatta Thomassey, Program Director, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

In addition to the wonderful speakers, there are exciting tours offered included a guided kayaking/canoeing trip on the Boardman River, a driving tour in the Sleeping Bear Dune National Lakeshore, and a visit to the Inland Seas Education Center.

Cost of the annual meeting is \$98 with meals (including banquet) or \$26 without meals. Registration information can be found on the LWVIN’s website, www.lwvin.org.

Annual Fund Drive

LWVIN Development Committee

The LWVIN Board of Directors has set some lofty goals for our annual fund drive. Please help us reach our goals and donate today! Fill out the form below and send your check or money order to League of Women Voters of Indiana, 1500 N. Delaware Street, Indianapolis, IN, 46202.



- Contributions made to **LWVIN** are non-deductible and will go to our General Fund. These funds support projects such as development of local Leagues, leadership development, as well as advocacy.
- Contributions made to **LWV/IEF** are 501(c)(3) tax deductible to the extent allowed by IRS regulation. These funds support voter service, election reform efforts, educational projects, and political forums.
- Contributions made to the **Barbara E. Zimmer Memorial Fund** are tax deductible to the extent allowed by IRS regulation. These funds support the preservation and publication of the history of LWV of Indiana.

1. I designate my gift to the following fund(s):

_____ A non-tax deductible gift made out to **LWV of Indiana** in the amount of
_____ \$30 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ Other

_____ A 501(c)(3) tax deductible gift made out to **LWV Indiana Education Fund** in the amount of
_____ \$30 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ Other

_____ A 501(c)(3) tax deductible gift to support the Barbara E. Zimmer Memorial Fund, made out to the **LWV Indiana Education Fund** (please write “**Zimmer Fund**” on the memo line) in the amount of

_____ \$30 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ \$200 _____ Other

IF YOU WISH TO CONTRIBUTE TO TWO OR MORE FUNDS, PLEASE WRITE SEPARATE CHECKS

2. Please write your name and address: _____

3. We would like to recognize your gift by listing your name in the member newsletter. If you do not wish to be listed, please indicate here:

_____ Please do **not** list my(our) name(s).



IN THIS ISSUE

Rethinking Redistricting

President's Pen

LWVIN Regional Workshops

Membership and Leadership

Moral Mondays

LWVIEF Grant Fund

State Fair Success

Local League Activities

LWV Lake Michigan
Annual Meeting

Annual Fund Drive

League of Women Voters of Indiana

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

Membership is open to all women and men who are ages 18 years or older and are U.S. citizens. All others who join the League shall be associate members.

Activities are funded through membership dues and donations. If you would like to help fund this important work, please send a donation to: LWVIN, 1500 N. Delaware Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202. Checks should be made out to LWVIN. Donations to our Education Fund are tax exempt. Checks for the Education Fund should be made out to LWVIEF.

For additional information, visit www.lwvin.org.

Submissions to *The Voter* can be sent to
Carrie Sosbe (csosbe@lwvin.org)
Deadline for Next Submission: January 12, 2015

Editor: Carrie Sosbe

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