



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

Co-Presidents' Notes April 2015

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Co-Presidents' Remarks

Dear LWV Leaders,

We are so excited to serve the LWV as your new co-presidents and thank you for the trust you've placed in us. In our first message to you, we thought it appropriate to let you know our leadership philosophy, what our priorities are, and what you can expect from us.

We both believe the LWVIN, the "State League," is YOU. You are served by a board of directors, but the LWVIN is nothing without its local membership. That means we want to hear from you. How can the state board serve you? What resources do you need? What skills can we help you develop?

At the same time, because YOU are the LWVIN, the board needs your support. Our organization, just like democracy itself, only thrives when there is full participation. If something is preventing you or your local League from participating in an activity when asked by the LWVIN, help us understand why! That's the only way we can make sure we're truly representing you and your desires for the "State League."

Our first priority is to build board capacity over the summer. We believe we will be best positioned to tackle our second priority — thoughtfully engaging and serving you! — if we do this first. By strengthening ourselves, we can help strengthen your work. Then, we can ALL work towards becoming the most effective advocates possible at the statewide level.

Part of this conversation will involve if/how/when the LWVIN should hire staff. We understand we cannot merely talk about this issue, but need to act. However, this action must be thoughtful, fiscally responsible, and transparent.

Which leads us to our last item: The primary thing you can expect from us is transparency. Within a week of every board meeting, you will receive a "Co-Presidents' Notes" update like this one. It will be sent to local LWV presidents and vice-presidents with the hope that, as local LWV leaders, you will take responsibility in sharing the information with your own boards. *The Voter* will still come out three times a year, but as local LWV leaders, you should be tuned into "Co-Presidents' Notes" to stay on top of what the LWVIN is doing.

Thank you again for this honor and we look forward to working with all of you!

Erin Kelley & Lisa Plencner

P.S. Please make sure you read about the upcoming LWVIN/Common Cause ["Redistricting Reform Starts Here"](#) workshop on June 6! It's in the *Advocacy & Action* section at the bottom.

Convention Highlights

The LWV's of Brown County and Bloomington did an outstanding job serving as co-hosts for this year's Convention. The accommodations, food, and rock star job on organizing this year's Silent Auction was amazing! THANK YOU LEAGUERS!

During Convention, delegates elected a new co-presidents and 2015-17 LWVIN board members, passed the 2015-16 budget, and adopted bylaw revisions.

Delegates also adopted the Program for 2015-17:

- Retention of LWVIN positions not listed below
- Restudy of the Juvenile Justice position (led by the LWV of Montgomery County)*
- Continuation of General Assistance restudy (led by current group of volunteers)*
- The Tax Study position shall be dropped
- Each local and state LWV is to appoint a board member whose responsibility it is to be knowledgeable of LWV positions and review them biannually and as situations arise that might impact these positions and their language.
- Statewide study related to public education (led by the LWV of Indianapolis; 2 phases)*
 - Concurrence Phase: The following statement will be studied, "LWVIN supports a free, publicly-funded, non-sectarian system of schools serving all the state's children from pre-school through 12th grade." The timeline for this work is: Studied by a committee during the summer of 2015, materials sent to local LWV's during the fall of 2015, and Concurrence statement returned by January 2016
 - Study & Consensus Phase: During 2016 (and/or earlier) local Leagues should form their own study committees, plan programs, host discussions, etc. around the following topic: "Should Indiana public school administration and regulation (i.e., authority, control, responsibility) be governed, managed, and guided by an elected or an appointed Superintendent of Public Instruction?" Local LWV's will return consensus questions in January of 2017, the state study committee will review and then make recommendations to the LWVIN board that winter. If appropriate, the LWVIN board will announce new language in the spring of 2017.

***Members for all these studies are needed! Please contact Erin & Lisa if you can serve.**

LWVIN Board Updates

The board met immediately following the close of Convention. Items of note included:

- Co-President Lisa Plencner and Katie Utley (intern) will attend LWVUS Council this summer in Washington D.C. (Erin Kelley cannot attend.)
- Katie Utley's contract has been extended through August. (In future "Co-Presidents' Notes," we will try to include brief updates from Katie — and all future interns/contract staff — so that you can follow their work along too.)
- A letter urging Senators Donnelly and Coats to prompt Mary Jo White, Chairwoman of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, to direct her agency to produce final rules related transparency in the oil, gas, and mining industries (Section 1504 of the Dodd-Frank Act) was approved.
- The LWVIN WILL NOT host regional workshops this fall nor will it coordinate voter registration activities at the State Fair. Rather, the board will work towards strengthening its capacity this summer so that it can engage in long-term strategic planning at a retreat this fall.

Advocacy & Action

Public Notice of Budgets

Last session the Indiana General Assembly passed a law that eliminated the requirement that local government units publish a notice of budget hearing that tells the public what the estimated tax rate will be, the unit's proposed tax levy, its budget for the upcoming year, and when and where the public hearing will occur. Rather, this information can be placed online — where data suggests far fewer Hoosiers seek out and receive information about their government as compared to newspapers.

Please urge your legislators to have language requiring local governments to publish the notice of budget hearings in their local newspapers added to the SB 369 conference committee report so that Hoosiers can once have access to this important information.

The Road to Redistricting Reform Starts [HERE!](#)

Saturday, June 6

10a.m. to 3p.m.

Indiana Historical Society, 450 W. Ohio Street, Indpls.

Sponsored by LWVIN and Common Cause

The 2015 General Redistricting passed legislation to create a study committee of legislators and citizens to examine redistricting commissions in other states and propose reform for Indiana. Done correctly, this process could be the impetus for legislation to create a diverse and independent group to oversee the redistricting process for Indiana in 2021 and beyond.

This great opportunity can be effective only if *citizens are committed and insistent every step of the way*. Join fellow Hoosiers to learn everything you will need to know about redistricting reform and how to affect the process. Click [here](#) to register or contact LWVIN Redistricting Reform Liaison Debbie Asberry at dasberry@indy.rr.com to learn more.

LWV of Indiana

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Find us at www.lwvin.org or on Facebook and Twitter!