



FORWARD

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WISCONSIN

Issues Briefing

Nearly 120 League members and friends attended Issues Briefing on October 28 at Madison College. Highlights from the day of presentations and small group sessions include:

Keynote Speaker Glorily López on Current Issues on Immigration

Immigration attorney Glorily López discussed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Signed by President Obama in 2014 in an Executive Action, DACA offers a limited legal pathway to obtaining a green card. It applies to previously unauthorized young people brought to the United States as children who have grown up here, adapted to our cultural norms and the English language, and shown character and academic preparation. Attorney General Jeff Sessions suspended DACA in September. When it lapses, an estimated 6,914 young people will lose their DACA status **every week**. The Dream Act, League-supported legislation that has been introduced ten times over the past 16 years, is a bipartisan bill that would allow conditional resident status for eight years.

Enhancing League Diversity through Strategic Alliances

An attentive group of Leaguers gathered for a breakout session presented by State Board member Consuelo López Springfield, LWV Dane County, about the importance of why and how local Leagues

might establish strategic alliances with the Latinx community. Board President Debra Cronmiller, LWV Dane County, provided context for this effort, stating that League



Issues Briefing attendees settle in for a day filled with informative presentations and small group discussions.

diversity is a key component of the current LWV US transformation initiative. In light of Wisconsin's changing demographics, López Springfield emphasized that if the League is to remain relevant, we must better serve and reflect the state's growing population of eligible Latinx voters. She showcased diversity and community alliance work by several participating local Leagues. Membership and Event Coordinator Ellen Penwell then led

2016-2017
Annual Report Page 2

attendees in brainstorming programming ideas for possible implementation in the coming months.

Update on Wisconsin Gerrymandering Lawsuit

Robert Yablon, who teaches Civil Procedure, Federal Jurisdiction and the Law of Democracy at UW-Madison, updated League members about the status of the Wisconsin redistricting case. He played clips of the oral arguments, which took place in early October, and helped the audience interpret some of the Justices' questions and the answers given by the attorneys representing the two sides. He saw reason to be cautiously optimistic that there will be a positive ruling in the case, but predicted that such a ruling would end only the most extreme forms of partisan gerrymandering. While the justices could wait until the court session ends on June 30 to rule in the case, Yablon predicted that they might do so as early as February.

Poverty and Public Policy in Wisconsin

Professor Lonnie Berger, Director of the Institute for Research and Poverty (IRP) at UW-Madison, discussed the importance

Continued on page 8

Inside:

President's Message.....	2
Thank You & Financials.....	3

Around the State	4
Sheboygan Off & Running	5
ILOs Use Broad Perspective.....	5

National Convention	6
Executive Director's Message	7
Welcome Eileen Newcomer.....	8



Annual Report

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WISCONSIN

President's Message



Debra Cronmiller

This has been a year of change for the League of Women Voters in Wisconsin and the nation. The National Board's recent announcement of a new mission, vision and value statement continues the Transformation Journey launched at last summer's

national Council in Washington, D.C.

The League's new mission statement, *Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy*, is a strong and clear affirmation of what the League's purpose has been for nearly 100 years. Likewise, the new vision statement brings clarity to our shared objective: *We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.* The Board adopted a value statement that acknowledges our history and embraces the future we are collectively shaping: *We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.*

Leagues across Wisconsin and the nation can begin to use these new statements as we continue to inform and encourage members of our communities to actively participate in open and effective government.

In Wisconsin, we learned that our Executive Director for the past 13 years will retire in mid-December. Andrea Kaminski has spearheaded the transformation of the State League to its current effective governance structure. Her strengths as a lobbyist, leader and spokesperson have elevated the stature of the League among our partners, affiliates, donors and members, and magnify the positive and significant impact this organization has on protections of our environment, women's rights, access to health care, justice, and most importantly, our Constitutional right to vote.

Andrea's retirement created an opportunity to expand Erin Grunze's responsibilities from Voter Education Coordinator to Executive Director. Promoting from within provides strategic continuity and maximizes Erin's organizational knowledge and communication strengths. With financial support from a Brookby Foundation matching grant, we were able to convert the position held by Alexandra Graff into a new Membership and Event Coordinator position. Ellen Penwell will provide local Leagues the services needed to ensure continuous membership growth, retention and efficacy. Eileen Newcomer assumes the Voter Education Coordinator position to ensure seamless provision of services to Leagues across the state as we continue to inform, register and encourage voters.

The changes at the both the National and State Leagues create an abundance of opportunity to increase the impact this organization can have. Each of our singular efforts to empower the voters in our communities will collectively strengthen and enrich our democracy. These exciting transformations position the League of Women Voters to ring in 2018 with renewed commitment to our shared purpose and improved opportunity to Make Democracy Work®. ❖

Find the League on Facebook!

facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Wisconsin

Follow @LWV_WI on Twitter!

Thank You

To the 504 League members and friends who supported our work in 2016-2017, a note to let you know that your financial contributions made the following possible:

- 249 trained observers in the polls in the November 2016 Election
- Gear Up to Vote minivan traveled 6,361 miles, registered and talked with voters at 31 stops, engaged 201 local volunteers, registered 507 voters
- 25 presentations by state staff about voting and redistricting in communities around the state
- LWV op eds published 20 times and 257 print and broadcast media mentions and appearances
- 4 *amicus* briefs filed in court supporting voting rights and fair voting maps
- Thousands of absentee ballots saved from being tossed because of League advocacy
- A recognized, respected advocate for good government in the State Capitol
- Voter services resources and pass-through grants for local Leagues

Thank you for your support. Together, we are Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy®!

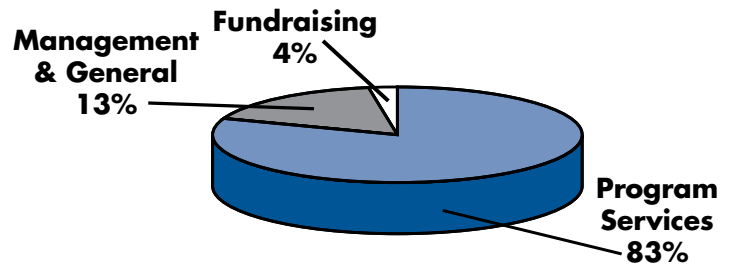
In League,

The Board and Staff of League of Women Voters of Wisconsin ❖

2016-2017 LWVWI Financials

July 2016-June 2017

Expenses \$353,396



Revenue \$194,965

Membership dues	\$29,280	19%
Contributions & Grants	\$104,760	51%
Community Shares of Wisconsin	\$16,363	8%
Program revenues	\$11,314	5%
Investments, other	\$23,248	11%
Total Unrestricted Support & Revenue	\$194,965	

Statement of Financial Condition

	6/30/15	6/30/16
Assets		
Cash	\$90,334	\$122,291
Promises to give	\$67,500	\$36,500
Investments	\$77,943	\$96,268
Security deposits	\$676	\$676
Prepaid expenses	\$475	\$1,116
Total Assets	\$236,928	\$256,851
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$6,101	\$1,142
Accrued payroll & taxes	\$2,993	\$2,865
Total Liabilities	\$9,094	\$4,007
Net Assets		
Undesignated	\$63,319	\$123,595
Board designated endowment	\$62,305	\$76,576
Total unrestricted net assets	\$125,624	\$200,171
Temporarily unrestricted	\$102,210	\$52,673
Total Net Assets	\$227,834	\$252,844
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$236,928	\$256,851

Around the State • Around the State • Around the State Around the State • Around the State • Around the State Around the State • Around the State • Around the State

Appleton: Hosted two programs, “Health Care Myths and Realities in America and the Fox Cities” and “Poverty in Our Area: Through the Lens of the Status of Women in Northeast Wisconsin,” in conjunction with the LWVWI’s program on education and advocacy on poverty.

Ashland-Bayfield Counties: Planning a January Lively Issues meeting and community event about gerrymandering.

Beloit: Held a community discussion about what homelessness is, who is affected and what the different causes and possible solutions may be as part of a two-year study on homelessness in the Beloit community.

Dane County: Sponsored two issues forums: “State Policies and Funding for K-12 Schools” and “Sustainability as a Framework of Support for Present and Future Generations”; reported on conditions and changes needed as part of a proposed remodel of the Dane County jail following a tour of the facility by members.

Door County: Partnered with the Door County Civility Project and WriteOn Door County for the “Let Your Voice Be Heard” workshop about effective advocacy.

Greater Chippewa Valley: Building a leadership team, writing bylaws and developing board and membership activities and public programs as part of formative stages for recognition as a local League.

Greater Green Bay Area: Co-sponsored with the AAUW, YMCA and the Women Service Center a 45th anniversary celebration of Title IX that included a program about the history of the 1972 Education Amendment in the Green Bay School System.

Janesville: Hosted several discussions about author Diane Guerrero’s book, *In the Country We Love: My Family Divided*, which details the plight of undocumented immigrants in America; sponsored a fair maps community forum that featured former state Senators Tim Cullen and Dale Schultz.

La Crosse Area: Held a “Women in Elected Offices” event, where women discussed and answered questions about their journeys to election; hosted a Lunch and Learn Program on water quality with the La Crosse Mayor.

Manitowoc County: Hosted a viewing of *Before the Flood*, a National Geographic film about global warming and climate change; sponsored a public program called “The Science of Substance Abuse and Treatment Options” that was made possible with contributions from the West Foundation and Pathways to a Better Life.

Milwaukee County: Worked with Milwaukee Public Schools planning assistants to establish permanent voter registration corners in college and career centers in 21 high schools.

Northwoods: Encouraged citizens to run for county board supervisor during a panel of county board supervisors who discussed why they decided to run for office, what the job entails, what they have learned about public service and issues facing the board.

Ozaukee County: Author Katherine Cramer, Professor of Political Science at UW-Madison, discussed her book, *Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker*.

Ripon Area: Launched Phase 2 of its local poverty study with a program featuring Green Lake and Waushara County Health Officers who presented information from a 2016 Community Health Assessment.

Sheboygan County: Received official recognition as a local chapter from the LWVUS!

Stevens Point Area: Presented annual holiday social that featured a presentation by the executive director of Farmshed.org, a network of people, businesses, organizations and productive lands that create a local food economy.

Upper St. Croix Valley: Celebrated its recent founding at its December holiday party.

Whitewater Area: Sponsored “Challenges to Healthcare Accessibility,” a public program about the Rock River Free Clinic, which offers exceptional services to uninsured people in Jefferson County.

Winnebago County: Co-sponsored with the Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce the third biennial LWV Candidate Workshop, where Spring non-partisan election candidates learned legal requirements for candidacy and current office holders discussed the opportunities and challenges of elected office.

Wisconsin Rapids Area: Collaborating with the McMillan Memorial Library and United Way to create a poverty simulation focused on hunger; assisting with the Neighborhood Table, which provides weekly meals at an area church as part of the Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools’ poverty class. ❖

LWV Sheboygan County Off and Running

LWV Sheboygan County is off to a great start with members busy holding voter registration drives, public forums and participating in the Lake Michigan Region Inter-League Organization. The new League is also participating in the LWV WI initiative to build diversity through community alliances.

“The League of Women Voters of Sheboygan County is proud to be the latest Wisconsin affiliate,” said LWV Sheboygan County President Lauren Hoffland. “Our goal is to build an organization that looks like our community, and—in the process—to build community.”

Enthusiasm for voter service runs deep for these new League members. When the customary polling place in a low-income neighborhood was shut down, members of the Sheboygan County League asked the municipal clerk to set up a polling place at a local school. All told, 54 volunteers signed up to be trained as poll workers.

Welcome, LWV Sheboygan County! We’re happy to have you as part of the League team in Wisconsin. ❖

ILOs Use Broad Perspective on League Issues

Some League issues are best understood and dealt with on a regional level that transcends political boundaries. In these matters, inter-League organizations are formed to share ideas and resources. LWV WI and our local Leagues are members of two ILOs.

What goes into the Upper Mississippi River is determined by decisions, actions and choices made by governmental units in a very large geographical area. The LWV Upper Mississippi River Region, formed in 2015 to protect the watershed, comprises 58 local Leagues and four state Leagues that represent an area that stretches from the headwaters in Itasca State Park, MN, to Cairo, IL, where the Ohio River enters the Mississippi. The group held its December board meeting at the Dubuque Carnegie-Stout Public Library with an educational program featuring Jarod McGovern from the National Mississippi River Museum. More information about this ILO can be found online at lwvumrr.org.

Formed in 1966 to act on selected governmental issues affecting the Lake Michigan watershed, LWV Lake Michigan Region is made up of 63 local Leagues, along with the state Leagues in Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan. LWV LMR has been active in public education about watershed issues, commenting this year on proposed Asian Carp control measures and supporting the Chippewa Bad River Band’s denial of easement renewal for Enbridge’s Line 5. Visit their website for events, recommended reading and more at lwvlmr.org. ❖

2017-18 OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE

OFFICERS

Debra Cronmiller, President
Dane County, 2017-19

Ethel Himmel, Vice President
Janesville, 2016-18

Lindsay Spencer, Treasurer
Member-at-Large, 2016-18

Andrea Kaminski, Secretary
Dane County, 2017-19

DIRECTORS

Sara Companik
Appleton, 2017-18

Pat Finder-Stone
Greater Green Bay, 2017-19

Consuelo Lopez Springfield
Dane County, 2016-18

Joyce McCollum
Greater Green Bay, 2016-18

Louise Petering
Milwaukee County, 2016-18

Melanie Ramey
Dane County, 2017-19

T. Ruth Shank
Milwaukee County, 2017-19

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Julie Arneith
Greater Green Bay

Jaci Collins
Manitowoc County

Andrea Kaminski
State Board

SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE!

2018 National LWV Convention, Chicago Illinois

Thursday, June 28–Sunday, July 1, 2018

Hilton Chicago

720 S. Michigan Ave.

Will you and members from your League join us in Chicago for Convention in June? Here are some key Convention-related dates to help you plan. All links cited below can be accessed on the LWV WI website, wwwi.org. Reminders and notices of these and other Convention events will also be posted in future League Updates:

November

- Online [room reservations](#) for LWV attendees—now open!
- Check out the preliminary [Schedule At a Glance](#), which will be updated as plans firm up.
- The [Program Planning Leaders Guide](#) is published.

December/January

- Ticket sales begin for the “Second City” comedy troupe performance, the LWV IL fundraiser at Convention.
- Leagues submit their membership numbers, which determine how many voting delegates they may have at Convention. Consult the [LWVUS bylaws](#) for the formula to determine delegates based on membership.

February

- Convention registration opens.
- Applications for awards and workshop/caucus facilitation posted with due dates.

March

- Deadline for submitting Bylaws Amendments, Program Report forms.
- Awards and workshop/caucus applications reviewed and Leagues contacted.

April/May

- Two Webinars to help attendees prepare for Convention.
- Proposed program, budget, bylaws amendments and Report of Nominating Committee posted.
- Hotel reservations and Convention registration close on May 28. Please don't wait! Reserve and register well before then to ensure you get the LWV group rate and the early bird registration fee—and to make sure we have an accurate attendee count.

June

- See you in Chicago on June 28! When you arrive, stop by the Welcome Reception and jump right in to greet hundreds of League members from around the country to experience the great League spirit and energy! ❖

The LWV has reserved a block of rooms starting at \$209 per night for June 27–July 1. This rate also extends to League members for three days before and three days after Convention, depending upon room availability. Since hotel blocks can fill up before the reservation deadline (May 28), make yours well before that date to ensure your stay at the Hilton Chicago.

Executive Director's Message



Andrea Kaminski

Thank you, LWV WI members and supporters, for the privilege of serving the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin as your Executive Director since 2004. Although I came to the organization with experience in nonprofit management, I had never worked professionally in politics or advocacy.

Guidance from our Board of Directors, the mentorship of our wise Legislative Committee members and the support of our local Leagues, members and friends all aided my steep learning curve. It has been an amazing experience, which I will always treasure.

I am thrilled that the very capable Erin Grunze will be stepping into the Executive Director position when I retire in mid-December. Since joining our state staff as Voter Education Coordinator in February 2016, Erin has led the Gear Up to Vote tour and upgraded our election observation program. She has provided valuable guidance to our local Leagues on voter services, technology and social media so they can enhance the impact of their service in their communities. With Eileen Newcomer and Ellen Penwell in the State Office, Erin has built a highly talented team who will continue to move the League's work forward.

I'm not leaving the League completely. I will continue to serve as Secretary on the League's State Board until the end of my term in June 2019. I also will be doing the League's lobbying

through the end of the legislative session in March 2018. And of course I'll remain a member of the Dane County League for as long as I can.

I've said many times over the years that "we need the League now more than ever"—and, once again, this is truer than ever before. In our current, acrimonious political environment, it's easy to be distracted by the antics of partisan interest. In contrast, the League of Women Voters focuses on the root causes of the problems facing our nation. Thoughtful policy makers know the League's positions are not capricious, but instead are the product of study and consensus involving League members from across the political spectrum over many years. The League shares its knowledge by educating voters so they will be informed about the issues before going to the polls to vote.

Through our transition at the State Office, it has been a joy for me to serve as a mentor. It's a way to carry on a League tradition from which I have greatly benefited. But mentoring alone won't keep the doors open or the lights on in the State Office. Our new team also needs financial support from all of us to maintain the League's nonpartisan voter education and increase the impact of our advocacy. As you can see in our Annual Report, support from member dues, individual contributions and grants made it possible last year for LWV WI to file *amicus* briefs in court, place observers in polling locations and act quickly to save thousands of absentee ballots from being tossed. Additionally, the League's Gear Up to Vote minivan traveled thousands of miles to register and educate voters.

With each passing day, the League's work takes on deeper importance. We need your help to get that work done! Please join me in extending a warm welcome to our new staff members here in the State Office and supporting them with our time, talent and treasure. ❖

Save Trees—and the League Money!

Money doesn't grow on trees, but we can save both by using email for League communications! Send an email to: lwwisconsin@lwwwi.org to sign up for any of the following (be sure to tell us which items you wish to receive by email):

• *Forward*

• *League Updates*

• *Action Alerts*

Continued from page 1

of measuring poverty and the challenges inherent in doing so. He stressed that we need a way to measure poverty in order to know the extent of the problem and the progress that we are making to address it. It also is important to have consistent standards for determining eligibility to qualify for social programs. That said, there are different approaches to measuring poverty. The IRP has set a rigorous standard that is recognized widely in the field.

League Transformation: Preparing the League for its Second Century

LWV WI Board President Debra Cronmiller led a packed room in a breakout session about the League's organizational "transformation." The national League began this initiative in 2016 to analyze its role with championing good government and voter rights. Cronmiller asked attendees to consider what impact League can have at all levels of

government and what that looks like. She challenged them to find opportunities for improvement in areas of election reform, membership diversity and leadership development for our next generation of Leaguers. Cronmiller stated that the power of League work comes from the grassroots and that League needs to find strength from a shared vision and voice.

Voter Services: Projects for the 2018 Elections

Approximately 30 energized people attended a voter services breakout session in which members with experience in voter services and those new to voter registration and voter education outreach participated in robust discussions. Outgoing LWV WI Voter Education Coordinator Erin Grunze facilitated the session. Eileen Newcomer, incoming Voter Education Coordinator, also attended and joined the small group discussions. Attendees were asked to catalog and discuss challenges citizens face with the Wisconsin voting process and list ways in which local Leagues are addressing these challenges. Participants exchanged

many innovative ideas, clarified some misconceptions with current voting laws and inspired each other to try new activities and events.

Q & A for New Members and New Leagues

After introductions and a warm welcome, Executive Director Andrea Kaminski and Membership and Events Coordinator Ellen Penwell responded to questions posed by those new to League. How to fit in as an individual member where there is no local League? How to focus local activities for a new League, even when everyone agrees there are many issues needing resolution? What resources are available to assure we accomplish our goals? As the session closed, the group left knowing League's mission, the difference between decisions based on consensus v. majority vote and what it means to be grassroots and non-partisan. Attendees understood that LWV WI is poised to facilitate their local and statewide issues in a non-partisan, civil manner. ❖

LWV WI Welcomes Eileen Newcomer

In mid-November Eileen Newcomer joined the LWV WI staff as the Voter Education Coordinator. Eileen comes with a strong background in nonprofit work and a keen commitment to free, fair and accessible elections in Wisconsin. She will be leading our VOTE411.org voter guide and election observation programs.

Eileen says, "I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to join the amazing team at the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin and be a part of moving the League's work forward. Voting is such a powerful form of civic engagement. It's how we the people share our voice and make real, lasting change happen. I'm excited to be able to contribute to the League and our state and do my part to encourage informed participation in our electoral system."

We are excited to welcome Eileen to the LWV WI team. ❖

2018 CALENDAR

LWVWI Board Meeting

January 20, by teleconference

Spring Primary Election

February 20, statewide

LWVWI Board Meeting

March 17, Madison

Spring Nonpartisan Election

April 3, statewide

LWVWI Board Meeting

June 8, Oshkosh

State Annual Meeting

Premier Best Western Waterfront Hotel & Convention Center
June 8-9, Oshkosh

LWVUS Convention

June 28-July 1, Chicago Hilton



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN



612 W. Main Street, Suite 200, Madison, WI 53703
(608) 256-0827, lwwwisconsin@lwwwi.org
www.lwwwi.org