



The VOTER

Bulletin of the League of Women Voters of Lawrence-Douglas County, KS
PO Box 1072 • Lawrence KS 66044-1072

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influencing public policy through education and advocacy.

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Membership:
Voter Editor:
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State League:
National League

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League Calendar

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--|
| Tuesday, July 11th | 7 - 8:45 pm | LWVL-DC Board Meeting. <i>Lawrence Public Library, Room A, 707 Vermont St.</i> All League members are invited to attend. |
| Tuesday, July 11th | | Last Day to Register for the Primary Election |
| Wednesday, July 12th | 7:00 pm | Lawrence Pedestrian Coalition Meeting. <i>Lawrence Public Library, Room A, 707 Vermont St.</i> |
| Sunday, July 16 | 3:30 - 5:30 pm | Candidate Forum at City Hall. <i>6 East 6th St.</i> Meet & Greet at 3:30, forum begins at 4 pm. City Commission candidates only, no School Board primary. |
| Tuesday, July 18th | 4:30 - 6:00 pm | Meeting Transportation Position Team. <i>Lawrence Public Library, Room C, 707 Vermont St.</i> Anyone interested is welcome to attend. |
| Thursday, July 20th | 7:00 am - 7:00 pm | Voter Registration at Sidewalk Sale. Volunteers needed, please email wickma@aol.com. |
| Tuesday, August 8th | 7 - 8:45 pm | LWVL-DC Board Meeting. <i>Lawrence Public Library, Room C, 707 Vermont St.</i> All League members are invited to attend. |
| Thursday, August 17th | 11:30am - 1:00 pm | Hot Topic: Water. <i>Location TBA.</i> Coffee & conversation at 11:30, program at noon. |
| Wed., August 30th | 10:00 am - 2:00 pm | KU Volunteer Fair. <i>Kansas Memorial Union, 1301 Jayhawk Blvd., Level 4 Lobby</i> |
| Tuesday, Sept. 12th | 7 - 8:45 pm | LWVL-DC Board Meeting. <i>Lawrence Public Library, Room C, 707 Vermont St.</i> All League members are invited to attend. |
| Thursday, Sept. 21st | Time TBA | Hot Topic: Transportation. <i>Location TBA.</i> Hear an update from the Transportation Study Committee. Coffee at 11:30, program at noon. |
| Tuesday, August 1 | 7:00 am - 7:00 pm | City Commission Primary Election |

Co-President's Message

It is hard to believe June is over already. First off on June 15 I attended the Meet and Greet for the Police Chief candidates. I was pleased to see about 5 other League members in attendance. After brief introductions the four finalists separated to the four corners of the room and people rotated among them asking questions and listening. All four have had careers of 25 or more years in law enforcement. They were all well versed in community policing and working with diverse populations. They had interesting experiences in their careers and were well spoken, and I think each would be an excellent chief for Lawrence.



The Naturalization ceremony on June 21 was an uplifting morning. More than 400 people became citizens and our League registered to vote 161 new citizens and more took applications with them. It was exciting to have 25 people show up to help our League with this activity. Thank you to all who volunteered to help people register, be greeters, and who loaned us the 9 printers we had available to copy the certificates. It was an outstanding morning. A special thanks to Cille King, Janice Friedman, and Marjorie Cole who worked to organize this event.

The Land Use committee met June 25 and reviewed the agenda for the planning commission's monthly meeting. We meet at 7 pm on Sunday evening (the last Sunday of the month) at the Merc. All are welcome to attend and the committee is actively looking for new members. If you are interested in impacting the discussion on shopping malls, apartments, etc – where zoning could change, this is the place to be – next meeting is July 23 at 7 pm at Merc.

The final item I wish to share with everyone concerns health care. The legislation that Congress is discussing will affect everyone. Some items I find particularly distressing are: the potential loss of the current list of covered services which now includes maternity care and birth control, currently no cap on lifetime medical benefits, pre-existing conditions, and the "times 5" potential increase in premiums targeting the elderly. No I do not think that Medicare will be safe. Nor will people who get insurance through their employers. It is estimated that some 22 to 23 million people will lose insurance coverage. There will be a 15% reduction in premium subsidies for those that qualify. The proposed changes to Medicaid will be horrific. This program is misunderstood because it covered about 40% of our children, the disabled and physically handicapped, not just the poor and indigent. As Eugene Robinson put it "the GOP health bill is a historic heist" because it isn't about health care but about a massive redistribution of wealth. The benefits of this bill will be the 1% - the wealthy.

Please write letters send email, and call Senators Roberts and Moran and our Congressional representatives. Not just once, but repeatedly. - Marlene Merrill, Co-President

New Citizens, New Voter Registration

On June 21, 430 people were sworn in as new citizens of the United States, at the Lied Center at the University of Kansas. Lawrence League of Women Voters members and other volunteers helped 161 of them register to vote. Registering new voters is always a rewarding experience, especially when they are new citizens, motivated to participate in the democratic process. Thanks to all who helped and to Thea Perry for her excellent photography.



Celebrating African Americans in Lawrence

June 30 to July 15
National African American Quilt Exhibit
Convention July 12 – 15 at Lied Center

Next Opportunity to Register Voters

At the annual Downtown Sidewalk Sale, Thursday, July 20. Volunteers needed for shifts between 7 am - 7 pm. Email wickma@aol.com to volunteer.

This is a city-wide event celebration of history and legacy of African Americans in Lawrence, quilting tradition and contemporary art. Exhibitions in the Cultural District, Public Library, Watkins Museum and Spencer Museum of Art. More information is at www.naaqc.org.

Just for Fun: Identify the July Women's History Anniversaries



Answers in your August Voter

Lawrence Pedestrian Coalition

The Coalition met on June 14. Gary Webber presided. Gary had made a presentation to the Lawrence City Commission about using a sales tax for sidewalk repair. There was no discussion by the Commission.

There will be an election for the City Commission in November. The Coalition will prepare a list of questions to be submitted to the candidates.

The Coalition plans to organize another town meeting on non-motorized transportation. No date has been set, but it will probably be in September.

The Coalition supports a Safe Routes to School program. A Champions training event will be in August.

The next meeting of the Coalition will be on July 12 at 7:00 p.m. in Meeting Room A of the Lawrence Public Library.
- Alan Black

The Amended Kansas Open Meetings Act and a New Challenge for Citizens

A revised and improved *Open Meetings Act* became law on July 1st. The previous *Open Meetings Act* included some very confusing language. The Act stated that in closing a meeting, a board or commission needed to state the (1) justification for closing the meeting, (2) the subjects to be

discussed during the closed meeting and (3) the time and place at which the open meeting was to resume.

This was sensible and reasonable. But the Act then went on to provide a list of *justifications* for closing meetings (e.g. to discuss personnel matters; to consult with an attorney, etc.) and then called them *subjects*.

By calling justifications *subjects*, the old Act led most boards and commissions to conclude that if a justification was cited, NO additional subject(s) needed to be cited. One commonly-cited court decision affirmed that conclusion.¹ A study of the practices of the governing bodies of the 10 largest cities and the 10 largest counties in Kansas showed that 95% closed meetings at times without providing meaningful information about the subjects they were going to discuss. When they did this, the boards and commissions conducted governmental business in secrecy.

The recently-amended *Open Meetings Act* eliminated the confusing wording. Additional words were added to make the Act easier to read. Great care was taken to avoid changing the interpretation of the act in other ways, except to make the distinction between subjects and justifications clear, while giving *subjects* and *justification* their ordinary common meanings.

We citizens will now need to ask our boards and commissions to follow the new requirements of the Act, particularly by asking that in closing meetings they provide *meaningful* descriptions of the subjects they are going to discuss. Examples of meaningful descriptions are "a situation in which an employee may have misused a city credit card," or "the *Armstrong Management, LC v. City of Lawrence* lawsuit." In Lawrence, we can do this during public comment time in City and County commission meetings and by sending commissioners email messages. Their email addresses are available at www.douglascountyks.org/commission/contact-us and at www.lawrenceks.org/commissioners/

For the legislative history of the amendments and recommended motions for closing meetings, see Kansas-OpenMeetings.org.
- Alan L. Cowles, M.D., Ph.D.



¹ State of Kansas vs. Board of Education of Unified School District No. 305, et al. Saline County District Court, Nov. 17, 1987. That court decision was made no longer valid by the recent amendments.

Highlights of the May Board Meeting May 23, 2017

Present: Marlene Merrill and Ann Carlin-Ozegovic (Co-Presidents), Marjorie Cole (Treasurer), Margaret Arnold, Anne Fluker, Kim Gibson, Cille King, Thea Perry, Janice Friedman **Guest:** Teresa Malarky. **Excused absences:** Sharon Brown, Tamara Cash, marci francisco, Melissa Wick

Treasurer's Report:

Income for March 2017, was \$3,002.00 (Dues \$ 1547.00, Contributions \$755.00, Annual Meeting Luncheon intake \$675)

Expenses were \$2,324.25 (Per Member Payments to state and national LWV \$1016, Meals and Hospitality \$750, State Annual Meeting registrations \$455, Voter Printing 45.80, Stucky forms printing \$32.45, Education Fund \$25) Net Inflow/Outflow was \$677.75

In-kind contributions: 4 auto roundtrips to Topeka for LWWK Annual Meeting

| Current balances as of | March 31, 2017 | April 30, 2017 |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Checking Account | \$10,390.52 | \$11,068.27 |
| Money Market Account | \$ 2,106.47 | \$ 2,106.56 |
| Stucky Account | \$ 2,633.31 | \$ 2,633.41 |
| Education Fund | \$ 1,346.39 | \$ 987.39 |

Co-Presidents' Report:

We would like to have co-chairs for most league functions to provide cover for travel and absences. We will look at non-board members to fill some of these co-chair roles in order to further involve more members in the work of the League.

Land Use Committee had a meeting this past week with 6 members attending. Alan and Marlene drafted a letter to the planning commission regarding the removal of houses to create additional parking for the hospital. The letter expressed concern that the project would remove affordable housing and asked that other options be considered.

Transportation Study Committee has 4 members who have expressed interest. Next step is to appoint a chair and create some focus questions for the study. Much information is already available for evaluation from the city studies on bikes and public transportation issues.

State President's Report:

A tentative League Day is scheduled for Saturday, October 21 in Leavenworth.

The state study on Water is seeking a co-chair. If someone wishes to join marci, please let Cille know.

Web/Social Media:

We agreed to embark on a six-month effort to increase our Facebook presence by both increasing content and increasing board and member interaction with LWV/LDC Facebook page. Kim will write an item to introduce this effort for next month's VOTER. - Sharon Brown, Secretary

National LWV Opposes Kobach Request for Voter Records



WASHINGTON, DC- The request for voter records confirms fears of Kris Kobach continuing his tactics of voter suppression and the genesis of the Elections Integrity Commission in general. The League of Women Voters president, Chris Carson, released this statement on the issue:

"There is no justification for this giant fishing expedition. The Commission itself is a distraction from the real issue of voter suppression, and that efforts to 'investigate voter fraud' threaten our most fundamental voting rights.

"This most recent move by Mr. Kobach is an indicator that the so-called Election 'Integrity' Commission is not interested in facts, but false accusations and dangerous policy recommendations.

"State laws govern the release of voter registration information, and, at a minimum, election officials must follow those laws before releasing data. The League stands with those state leaders who have already come out to support their voters and refuse these requests from Mr. Kobach and the EIC." <http://tinyurl.com/ya96dmjg>





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF LAWRENCE / DOUGLAS COUNTY

Make a Difference – Join/Support the League!

Return this form with a check made out to LWV L/DC, and mail to LWV L/DC, PO Box 1072, Lawrence, KS 66044.

*(Membership is open to any man or woman who is sixteen years of age or older.
New or renewed memberships received now will expire March 31, 2018.)*

Date _____ Renewing member
_____ New Member. I heard about the League via (Facebook, Web Site, Friend, Other): _____

Suggested voluntary membership assessment:*

| Approximate Household Income | Individual membership | Household membership |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Student** | _____ \$17 | _____ \$29 |
| Under \$25,000 | _____ \$20 | _____ \$35 |
| \$25,000 to \$50,000 | _____ \$35 | _____ \$55 |
| Over \$50,000 | _____ \$55 | _____ \$85 |
| Sustaining member | _____ \$100 | _____ \$150 |
| Life member (of 50 years) | _____ \$0 | |

* Our membership assessment supports the National and State Leagues at \$50/member (\$32 National and \$18 State).
** High school or postsecondary student enrolled at least part time in an accredited institution.

_____ I am not a member, but would like to support the League with my contribution as indicated below.

I have enclosed a contribution of \$ _____ for the League General Fund.
I have enclosed a contribution of \$ _____ for the League Education Fund***

*** This contribution is tax-deductible. Write check to "LWV Education Fund."

PLEASE PRINT

Name(s) _____
Address _____
Telephone _____ Email _____

As a League member or supporter, I would like to help support League activities by participating as follows:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>General Membership Meetings:</p> <p>___ Set up and/or tear down</p> <p>___ Hospitality (provide coffee/tea/dessert)</p> <p>___ Taking notes/writing up report of meeting</p> <p>Membership:</p> <p>___ Recruitment</p> <p>___ Mentor/follow-up with new members</p> <p>___ Provide a ride to a fellow member</p> <p>___ Phone members without internet access about special updates</p> <p>Voter Services:</p> <p>___ Register voters</p> <p>___ Help with voter education</p> | <p>Promotion of League to our Community:</p> <p>___ Public speaking</p> <p>___ Represent League at community events</p> <p>___ Observer corps (attend/report on government meetings)</p> <p>___ Help with research for League studies on issues</p> <p>___ Serve on the Board of Directors</p> <p>I have the following skills:</p> <p>___ Editing articles/reports</p> <p>___ Database management</p> <p>___ Microsoft Word / Excel / Quickbooks</p> <p>___ Website/Social Media design/management</p> <p>My interests include:</p> <p>_____</p> |
|---|--|

PO BOX 1072 • LAWRENCE KS 66044-1072

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July 2017

| | |
|---|---|
| Calendar | 1 |
| Co-President's Message | 1 |
| New Citizens, New Voters | 2 |
| Next Voter Registration Opportunity | 2 |
| Celebrating African Americans in Lawrence | 2 |
| Just for Fun: Women's History Anniversaries | 3 |
| Lawrence Pedestrian Coalition | 3 |
| Amended Kansas Open Meetings Act | 3 |
| Highlights of the May Board Meeting | 4 |
| League Opposes Voter Record Request | 4 |



July 2 - A Women's History Anniversary