



League of Women Voters of Utah

The Utah Voter

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The League of Women Voters of Utah is a nonpartisan political organization that 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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IMPORTANT DATES

State Convention: May 3, 2008 - Utah Valley State College
June 14-16: National Convention in Portland, OR

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Leaguers,

The League of Women Voters of Utah will be holding its annual state membership meeting, Council 2008, this year in Utah County on Saturday, May 3. The details of the meeting follow. But, in brief, the meeting will begin at 11:00 a.m. on the Utah Valley State College campus. Our keynote speaker is William Sederburg, the UVSC president. In addition to many years of experience in leading college communities, President Sederburg has Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate degrees in Political Science and served in the Michigan State Senate where education was one of his primary concerns. We have asked him to speak to us on attracting younger voters. He is a wonderful and interesting speaker. You should consider inviting a friend to lunch and the keynote address. Each local League has four voting delegates--the president and three designated members. But whether you attend as a delegate or as a non-voting League member, we hope to see you there.



The National League Convention will be held in Portland, Oregon from June 13th to 17th. Kathy Dorn is coordinating the attendance from Utah. National meetings are a wonderful way to learn about what the U.S. League is doing and to hear from other Leagues about their successes and lessons learned. We are entitled to one voting delegate for each 100 members in a local League but non-delegate League members can come just to listen in and learn the ropes. If you want to learn more,, including how to become a delegate, contact Kathy Dorn at kmd1965@msn.com.

I should also alert you to the rewrite of "In League," the official guide to what the League of Women Voters does and how it does it. The new publication is called "League Basics" and is available online at lwv.org. Go to the Members tab, then to the Training and Resources tab and scroll down to the link to the printable pdf file.

Thank you to our dedicated, hard-working lobby corps. I hope you were able to hear the daily reports of what the Legislature was up to on KCPW. Our members presented at committee meetings and alerted all of us when to contact our legislators by e-mail or phone. We really do make a difference on Capitol Hill. We saw bills on energy conservation in state buildings, income tax incentives for clean, fuel efficient cars, higher limits on net metering when electricity is added to the grid, increased funding for higher education, appropriations for retrofitting school buses for emissions quality, and task forces on immigration laws and health care created. Thank you to our lobby corps!

We are very proud of Sandy Peck who was given the Sunshine Award by the Headliners Chapter of the Utah Society of Professional Journalists for her work for the League and the general public in monitoring and providing citizen input to the Utah Legislature over the years, particularly regarding open government. Congratulations Sandy! Thank you for all that you do for the League of Women Voters!

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the Council meeting on May 3.

Alice Steiner Co-President

COME TO THE UTAH COUNCIL MEETING ON MAY 3

The League of Women Voters of Utah will hold its annual meeting on May 3, from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the campus of Utah Valley State College (exit #269 from I-15). The cost is \$20 per person and includes lunch, an afternoon snack, and parking. All meetings and the lunch sandwich buffet will take place in Room 213 B.

This year the annual meeting is a “council” which is defined in our bylaws as: “A meeting of the Council shall be held in the interim year between conventions, approximately 12 months after the preceding Convention. . . The Council shall be composed of the presidents of local Leagues and three delegates chosen by each local League, the president of each Unit-at-Large and one delegate chosen by each Unit-at-Large, and the board of directors of the League of Women Voters of Utah. . . The Council shall consider and authorize a program, shall elect officers and directors, shall adopt a budget for the ensuing year, and shall transact such other business as may be presented.”

The Council schedule is as follows:

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|--------------------------|---|
| 11:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m. | Workshop: “What to Expect at National Convention in Portland” |
| 12:00 noon to 12:30 p.m. | Lunch buffet |
| 12:30 p.m. to 1:20 p.m. | Keynote address by President William Sederburg |
| 1:30 p.m. to 2:20 p.m. | Workshop: “Appealing to the Next Generation of Leaguers” |
| 2:30 p.m. to 3:20 p.m. | Round Table Discussion: “Helping Each Other with Next Year’s Challenges” |
| 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. | Business meeting including reports from the Board, election of board members and approval of the 2008-09 budget |

Council will begin with a workshop on National League Convention, which will be in Portland from June 13 to 17. Convention includes a variety of presentations, workshops and meetings in which the League takes action. The workshop will help us to be active participants in Portland by learning what to expect before we arrive. If you are going to Portland, this is a must do workshop.

Our keynote speaker this year is William Sederburg, the president of Utah Valley State College. He is known as an inspirational speaker who has spent his professional life pursuing many of the same goals as the League of Women Voters—quality education, open government, and expanding understanding of our political system. We have asked him to talk about what the League can do to appeal to younger voters. His talk will be followed by a workshop on the same topic.

Our final workshop will be an opportunity for local Leagues to share the challenges they face over the next year and get feedback on available help, tools, etc. The Board of the Utah League would also like to know if there are things that the Utah League should make priorities this year. Come prepared with challenges, questions and ideas.

The business meeting will include adoption of the budget, presentation of the new Board member slate by the nominating committee, and reports from the Board on our activities during the past year. We will also have sign-up sheets for those who want to attend the National Convention and for volunteer activities over the next year with

State and Local Leagues. If your time permits you to work on the website or a study, to help prepare the Voters' Guide, or to help out in the League office, you can sign-up and we will follow-up after the Council meeting.

The Board of the League of Women Voters of Utah urges every League member to attend the Council meeting. We also ask that you consider bringing a friend to lunch (\$15 for lunch only). It is a great way to introduce your acquaintances to the League.

VOTER SERVICE

Did you attend your party caucus?

Did you know 90% of Utah's incumbent politicians get re-elected? It could be because they are doing a stellar job. It could also be because too few people participate in the political process when it matters most--at party caucuses.

Less than 2% of voters participate in their political party caucuses. Yet, being at your political party's caucus may make a greater impact than voting in November, ensuring that candidates representing you and your values make it on the ballot in November.

Get to know the candidates in the LWV Voters Guide

What would you like to know about people who will represent you in Utah--at the Legislature, on the State School Board and in Congress? Once again, we are preparing our respected and informative Voters Guide. We ask candidates what they want to accomplish for the people of Utah, and their views on issues such as improving public education, energy and water resources, the ethical use of campaign funds, better health care, etc. What issues do you want candidates to address?

Candidate answers will be posted along with photos, background and contact information at our website lwvutah.org. Candidates appreciate the opportunity to express their views on issues people care about in their own words without editing. Voters tell us they like to be able to compare the views of all candidates, from all parties, at one time, in one accessible place

Nancy Melling, Voter Guide Chair



Of course the people don't want war. But after all, it's the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it's always a simple matter to drag the people along whether it's a democracy, a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism, and exposing the country to greater danger." -Herman Goering at the Nuremberg Trials

League Priorities at the Legislature

The League Lobby Corps was on duty on the Hill again this year, observing and advocating for League priorities and asking League members to lobby, too. Here's what happened.

Priority 1: Support Public Education

Education Funding was everyone's first priority. Education takes 57% of total state spending, but the school population keeps growing and teacher shortages continue, due in part to low salaries. A mid-session revenue correction trimmed planned increases. The WPU went up 2.5% instead of 7%, teacher raises were \$1,700 plus \$1,000 signing bonuses for new teachers instead of \$2,500. And more money (we think) can be used by school districts for increased compensation.

Special education teachers, who are in short supply, will receive stipends for additional work, and some math and science teachers will get \$5,000 raises. Such targeted raises were supported as incentives to attract scarce teachers. But they were resisted, especially by smaller districts, on the grounds that funds and incentives are needed in other curriculum areas, and because some doubted that \$5,000 is enough to draw a mathematician or scientist into the teaching profession. Compensating teachers on the basis of their students' performance continued to be an issue because performance varies widely due to socioeconomic status and parent involvement regardless of teacher competence. That issue was assigned to a Public Education Task Force and bundled with another Education Systems for the 21st Century Task Force and the Immigration Task Force into **Substitute HB 490**. That bill failed. But the Education Interim committee will hold five extra meetings in coordination with a similar State Board of Education committee to discuss differential pay and ways to evaluate and measure gains in student learning.

Education Issues: In the last two days most education bills were rolled into **SB 2**, an omnibus education policy and funding bill (\$2.5 billion). Both Senate and House tried to amend it, in part because 2 or 3 bills that had already failed were inserted into SB 2, including an at-home school readiness software program and a requirement that school districts help pay for charter schools. A reduced (\$100,000) appropriation for International Baccalaureate programs (**HB 266**) was also tucked into SB 2, after failing a Senate committee for being "socialistic" and anti-American. Some education advocates were disappointed that extra money for lowering K-3 class size did not pass. They believe it's the top priority for both parents and teachers.

A wide variety of programs were funded including some innovative ones: English Language Learner Family Literacy Centers, critical languages, USTAR centers (math and science), and a grants program to integrate arts teaching and learning into selected schools, and the extended year for special educators.

The State School Board, the UEA, the *Salt Lake Tribune* and others were concerned about SB2 shortcutting the usual legislative process – especially including bills that had previously failed and bypassing public input. They called on the Governor to veto SB 2, or use his line item veto, which is allowed for appropriations bills. But because SB 2 contains policy as well as appropriations it was signed by the Governor.

Splitting the Jordan School District into east and west portions last year led to bills that attempted to overcome discrepancies among school districts in available property tax revenue versus student population growth. The bill that passed, **5th Substitute SB 48** (Eastman), appropriates \$15 million from the Uniform School Fund for distribution to school districts for equalization. But districts in Salt Lake County (Salt Lake City, Murray, Granite and Jordan East) also must raise \$12 million in property taxes and give it to Jordan East. This has led to complaints of unfairness, particularly since all Salt Lake County taxpayers did not vote on the Jordan split.

A bill outlining how deliberations by transition teams from both East and West Jordan districts will allocate assets was modified to allow the two teams to set their own timeline (**2nd Substitute SB 71**). The League had protested closing those negotiations to the public, a provision in the original bill that was not included in the substitute.



Priority: Support Clean Air

Two excellent bills supported by the League that promote cleaner cars and school buses were approved.

Subst HB106 (McGee) provides a \$750 tax credit for purchasers of new vehicles that meet national air quality standards and EPA fuel economy guidelines. HB 106 also offers a credit of \$2,500 for converting a vehicle to run on clean fuel such as natural gas. And it levies a natural gas tax (8.5 cents/gal) to bring in revenue for highway maintenance.

2nd Subst HB 146 – School Bus Amendments (Johnson, C.) appropriates \$100,000 from the Uniform School Fund for clean school bus purchases or retrofits, money which can be used to match federal grants. The bill also establishes a process for reducing school bus idling.

Priority: Support Alternative Energy Technology

The League supported **HB 201** -Solar Energy Generation Tax Credit (Last), an innovative proposal and generally cool bill that offers non-refundable tax credits, equal to 25% of the cost of the investment up to \$2,000, to individuals who invest in utility-scale solar projects. St. George City Light & Power proposes to build such a solar project on their land. Now they and other local governments have a new funding option.

The Legislature passed **SB 202** –Energy Resource and Carbon Emission Reduction Initiative (Bramble) which makes a start on requiring power companies to supply more electricity from fuels with zero carbon emissions, including nuclear, if cost effective (20% of adjusted retail sales beginning in 2025). The bill also requires developing rules by 2011 for capturing carbon and sequestering it underground, including at enhanced oil recovery sites.

The League had supported **SB 173** (McCoy) which aimed for more renewable energy sooner compared to SB 202. It included development of electrical transmission infrastructure needed to distribute the power and a task force to study renewable energy development. But it failed in committee.

SB 84 – Net Metering (Van Tassell) will raise the cap on the amount of power (from 25 kilowatts to 2 MW) that can be returned to the grid from renewable energy systems and credited to electric bills. The higher cap should encourage net metering by large facilities such as a solar panel array on the Salt Palace roof. SB 84 also allows system use of net-metered electricity to go above the current cap of 0.1% of system peak demand.

Priority: Support Energy Conservation

HB 198 State Agency Energy Efficiency (Hunsaker) will allow the savings from energy conservation by state agencies to be retained in their budgets. It funds a percentage of replacement costs for the State Building Energy Efficiency Program, and creates a revolving loan fund for state agencies to use for future efficiency projects.

A similar bill **HB 199** (Hunsaker) offered tax credits for making homes more energy efficient but did not pass due to lack of funding and opposition from homebuilders. Energy advocates say the potential for cutting energy use in residences is very substantial, so the plan should be pursued.

Priority: Restrict Power From Coal

No bills were run to restrict coal power. SB 202, as we noted above, includes studying sequestration of carbon dioxide from coal-fired plants underground, which could encourage the use of coal.

Priority: Support Mass Transit/Limit Roads

Salt Lake City's plans to fund from airport revenues part of a TRAX line to the airport was rejected. Instead the funding will be supplied at least in part by \$2 from each \$10 vehicle registration fee. (**5th Subst SB 245**)

Subst HB 298 – Transit Fare Reduction (Harper) was defeated. It would have charged half fare or no fare to public transit riders on bad air days as an incentive to take TRAX or the bus. Effectiveness and the effect on UTA's bottom line were issues.

Harper also proposed **HB 313** to let the gas tax rise with inflation every two years, which would fund highways and might also encourage less driving, but the proposal failed.

A concurrent resolution **SCR 6** (Valentine) to bond \$1.8 billion for I-15 improvements between American Fork and Spanish Fork passed.

Priority: Support Water Conservation

Water conservation for future public use was enabled by **Substitute HB 51** (Painter). A water right will be protected from forfeiture for 7 years instead of 5 years if a public water supplier is holding the water for reasonable future requirements of the public.

SB 170 (Stowell) will allow the State Board of Water Resources to give preference to a project that is for the benefit of the state or a political subdivision and consider market conditions and other factors when establishing an interest rate.

HB 170 (Winn) would have allowed Utah to sign an agreement with Nevada dividing Snake Valley ground water shared by the two states only after both the governor and Legislature approve. But HB 170 was never released by the House Rules Committee for debate.

Priority: Support Good Government

Nearly all good-government proposals supported by the League regarding elections, open government, lobbying, and campaign finance failed. Some improvements were made in disclosure of campaign finance (**HB 238** – Hughes), protection against voter fraud (**SB 193** – Knudsen), and permitting the voter information pamphlet to be mailed to each household as well as distributed through newspapers (**Subst HB 309** – Dougall).

The list of missed opportunities included: An advisory non-partisan redistricting commission (**HB 376** – Chavez-Houck), Election Day registration (**HB 317** - Hansen), an independent state ethics commission (**HB 130** - McGee), regulation of personal use of campaign contributions (**SB 195** - Bell), increasing the number of lobbyists gifts that must be connected to the name of the officials who receive them (**SB 273** - Bell), and prohibiting poll workers from wearing logos, insignias, etc. showing affiliations, support or opposition (**HB 338** - Chavez-Houck and **SB 109** – McCoy)

SB 21 – (Campaign Finance Disclosure Revisions – Knudsen) will require all candidates — not just those with opponents—to file campaign financial disclosure reports. It also moves the filing deadline for financial disclosure reports from September 15 (showing contributions as of 3 days before the report) to August 31 (showing contributions as of 5 days before the report). This increases the time contributions can be received and not disclosed until the final report, which is 7 days before the election. So it appears voters who use early voting will have to vote without the benefit of knowing what was contributed or spent since August 26. Also, political issue committees and the corporations who donate to political issue committees will no longer have to file reports on March 1 and June 1. Disclosure is especially important in Utah since there are no limits on the amount of money that can be contributed to a candidate.

State school board candidates will now have to report on May 15, and a political issue committee sponsoring a referendum petition drive will have to file reports whenever it submits verified referendum packets. Candidates will have to file financial statements before their convention as well. It will be important to inform candidates that these new reports are required, since they can be removed from the ballot if they fail to disclose.

Three bills opposed by the League fortunately failed: withholding release of the minutes of public meetings until 14 days after the meeting (**HB 166** - Brown), requiring proof of citizenship for voter registration (**SB 210** - Madsen), and doing away with absentee voting in county clerk offices on the weekend before an election (**HB 142** – Mathis).

Priority: Alternatives to Nuclear Power

No bills specific to nuclear power came up, although **SB 202**, the bill that sets goals for cost effective renewable energy, includes nuclear fuel as generating zero carbon emissions, so will be considered under that bill.

Priority: Tax Policy – Another Omnibus Bill

A measure that would have further reduced the sales tax on food (**HB 304**- Wiley) was transformed into an appropriation for food banks, with no change in tax rate, then incorporated into an omnibus tax bill **3rd Subst HB 239** (Dougall). The League supported making the sales tax exemption for pollution control facilities permanent (**SB 135** - Niederhauser), which passed and was put in HB 239. The state sales tax on all items except food was increased from 4.65 to 4.70 percent to supply \$30 million over two years for “choke point” roads and the Critical Needs Highway Fund. A five percent income tax credit of up to \$900 per family will be available to self-employed taxpayers beginning in 2009 for health insurance (cost \$18 million). An extension of the new flat income tax to trusts and estates (**SB 31**), which the League opposed, was also included in the omnibus bill. Several proposals to reduce property taxes were sent to interim study.

Priority: Health Care

Subst HB 133 (Clark, D) a comprehensive Health System Reform bill was substituted to become mostly a task force requiring Departments of Health, Insurance, and the Governor’s Office of Economic Development to work with the Legislature to develop and implement a strategic plan for health system reform. They are to report in November of this year. HB 133 includes funds to improve the electronic exchange of clinical health information; collect, analyze and distribute cost and quality data, and fund professional and actuarial services for the Health System Reform Task Force deliberations.

HB 326 CHIP Open Enrollment (Curtis) will enable all children eligible for Children’s Health Insurance Program to sign up year round. **HB 364** Promotion of Health Care Coverage (Holdaway) asks the Departments of Health and Workforce Services and the State Board of Education to increase health insurance awareness and coverage of school children. They will facilitate signing up uninsured kids for Medicaid and CHIP.

Extra Added Attraction – Immigration Reform

When the League began its national study of immigration last year, we didn’t realize that the issue would become so prominent during the legislative session. There were at least 20 bills.

The main one was **Subst SB 81** – Illegal Immigration (Hickman), which passed. However, it was substituted and amended to remove and narrow the scope of some provisions. Verification of employee status by public employers and enlistment of local law enforcement for immigration control are still in the bill. SB 81 was amended to become effective on July 1, 2009 instead of this year. This will allow time for an Immigration Task Force to study the issue. The bill authorizing the task force failed, but a special bipartisan legislative committee appointed by the House Speaker and Senate President will meet up to 8 times until December 31st.

LWVU Legislative Corps Testimonials:

Thanks go to our Legislative Action Director Ann O’Connell and her fantastic Lobby Corps for all the hours they spent on behalf of the League and informing voters, and to the communicasters who gave daily updates on KCPW every morning. We also thank the media for their diligence, and last but not least, we thank members of the Legislature for their work on behalf of the people of Utah and for making life so very interesting.

“I highly recommend participating in the Lobby Corps! It seems intimidating at first, from the idea of actually talking to a legislator to trying to find one’s way to meeting rooms, but we new folks were not expected to talk to the legislators, and getting to know the buildings was easier than expected. I was impressed with how professionally the meetings I attended were run, and it was fun to get to see how my representatives as well as others conducted

themselves. Perhaps as interesting as actually attending meetings was learning to navigate the Legislature's web site. You can listen to committee meetings and floor sessions in real time from your own home! And you can follow bills through every step of the legislative process. More than anything, it was great to associate with the dedicated, highly informed League Lobby Corps members who met every Saturday morning to recap the past week and plan for the next." *Kathy Fitzgerald*

"My first experience as a Lobby Corps member was revelatory in many ways. Sitting in on committee meetings and general sessions can become addictive. It's amusing, amazing and sometimes even satisfying to see our legislature in action. One might think Revenue and Taxation discussions could be deadly dull, but, in spite of the complexities (which I admit I haven't begun to master), I found them frequently fascinating. It's so helpful to be able to put faces and voices with the names we see in the newspapers and to be able to recognize when the media reports may not tell the whole story. And the restored Capitol building is absolutely beautiful. The Saturday morning meetings of the Lobby Corps gave me a chance to expand my vision of what was going on and to weigh in on what Leaguers should be concerned about. In sum, I highly recommend the whole Lobby Corps experience."

Sherilyn Bennion

If you've been hesitating to join the Lobby Corps out of fear that you "wouldn't know what to do", please consider this: "If I can do it, anybody can!!" Especially because the "it" part can be as simple as attending a committee meeting or chamber session wearing your League pin. Is that worth doing? You bet!...because legislators and representatives of other groups do notice who is in attendance. A strong League presence is a constant reminder that decision-making on the Hill is being observed and reported out to constituents. As you develop more familiarity with the process, you can then help by e-mailing a simple report on what you observed to Lobby Corps leaders. It's truly an interesting, informative and entertaining (yes, entertaining!) experience. Plus, you can feel even more virtuous by leaving your car at home and riding Trax to town where you can catch the free 500 Capital shuttle (runs across 4th South and up State St. to the Capital). Now, what's your excuse for not taking half a day next session to enjoy the machinations (Ooops! Make that "deliberations") of our elected leaders?? *Patti O'Keefe*

'We believe what we want to believe, what we like to believe, what suits our prejudices and fuels our passions.' -Sydney Harris



COME TO THE 2008 CONVENTION

The news of candidates for President is in the paper every day. We are all starting to think about that election and the impact it will have on this country. Members of the League of Women Voters know that they also have impact on elections and on other national issues. Every two years members from all the states are invited to League convention. This year National Convention is in the west, Portland OR. The dates are June 13-17. Workshops on national study proposals will be on Friday the 13th. One proposal is "The advisability of using the National Popular Vote compact among states as a method for electing a President." Two others relate to healthcare and education. The opening session is on Saturday and sessions continue daily until Tuesday, with votes on program, budget, and new officers. Most exciting is meeting and talking to other League members. The energy and excitement of members from all over the US is awesome!!!! Everyone has their own slant on things and is willing to share information readily.



After looking at other hotel prices and realizing that many early and late meetings occur in these few days, we decided to stay at the Hilton. We will share rooms. My personal experience is that you are so tired after the long days you will have little trouble sleeping, and a glass of wine with friends at the end of the day is a great unwinding.

I am working with Sandy Peck to get all the voting credentials to which we are entitled. If you need help with a roommate, let me know and I'll work on that too. Please advise the office if you are planning to attend, so we can be together for meals, etc. In the sessions, we sit with the others from our state.

The Hotel information:

HILTON Portland & Executive Tower

921 SW Sixth Avenue Portland, OR 97204-1296

PH: 503-226-1611 or 1-800-445-8667 FAX: 503-220-228

Use Group Code: LWV

Room Cost: \$ 145

Room rate is subject to applicable taxes, currently 12.5%. Rate for additional person is \$20.00.

Room Preferences: Single or Double, Smoking or Nonsmoking*, King Bed or Two Double Beds

Please if you decide to go, let the League office know so that we can be in touch with each other about flights and meals and sharing the information about caucus and other information. As of the end of March the list includes: Sandy Peck, Alice Steiner, Nancy Melling, Anne Ziegler, Mary Fogg, Joyce Barnes, Tina Hose, Ann O'Connell, Nanette Benowitz.

Hope you will consider joining this group on this educational adventure!!

Kathy Dorn, Voter Service Director



LWVUS Calls Upon Presidential Candidates from Both Parties to Commit to Public Financing

Presidential public financing, as part of campaign finance reform, one of the League's priority issues, is of immeasurable importance. The League is advocating for legislation that would reinvigorate the public financing system to provide for more equitable competition, as well as helping to insulate the candidates -- and our political and governmental systems -- from corruption and the appearance of corruption.

The League has sent letters to each of the Presidential candidates to urge them to participate in the public financing in the general election.

In a letter to [Senator Hillary Clinton](#) the League and other reform groups urged the Senator to accept public financing if she is the Democratic nominee and if the Republican nominee also accepts public financing. In this letter the League also points out that Senator Clinton has cosponsored the legislation that would improve the system.

In a letter to [Senator John McCain](#) the League and other reform groups encouraged Senator McCain to reconsider his decision not to cosponsor legislation that would improve the public financing system.

In letters to [Governor Mike Huckabee](#) and [Representative Ron Paul](#) the League and other reform groups urged each candidate to accept public financing if he is the Republican nominee and if the Democratic nominee also accepts public financing.

The League sent a letter to [Senator Barack Obama](#) calling on him to make clear to citizens that he remains committed to using the public financing system in the presidential general election if he is the Democratic nominee and if the Republican nominee also agrees to using public financing.

The presidential public financing system worked well for decades. The League supports both the use of the system and changes to that system which will enable it to once again to provide for equitable competition and to protect against undue influence.

2008 On Par to Historic Election

LWVUS League Sees Voter Turnout, Financing & Party Nominees Making History in 2008

Washington, DC – The League of Women Voters today provided its first in a series of comments on the 2008 presidential campaign, and noted that this election is on pace to make history in several areas.

“From what we have seen so far, the 2008 presidential election will be in the history books for several compelling reasons,” said national League president Mary G. Wilson. “Americans are energized about this campaign and we are seeing that reflected in the high voter turnout and record amount of funds being raised from millions of voters.”

“We’ve been watching closely, along with the rest of the country and see trends developing both good trends and bad trends,” Wilson stated. “There have been lots of candidates, with lots of views and perspectives in the campaign. A healthy exchange of ideas is democracy at its best.”

“Many have worked for years to counter embarrassingly-low rates of civic participation in America. This year, it seems we are on track to make significant improvements in that arena,” added Wilson. “Participation is on the upswing – and that is evident in the high turnout rates this primary season and the many Americans who have signed up to help as poll workers.”

“This is the first election since 1928 where neither an incumbent president nor vice president is seeking nomination for the highest elected office in the U.S. This diverse field of candidates from all parties has led to an elevated sense of excitement and a newness that is drawing more people into the system,” Wilson said.

“The League has been educating voters throughout the 2008 primaries and caucuses and is prepared to do the same this fall. Our members are working in communities across this country to be sure the elections systems work as well as they can for voters, the candidates and elections officials. Our online election resource, www.VOTE411.org, educates millions of voters about the election and helps them locate their polling place through the only nationwide online polling place locator,” noted Wilson.

“Leagues are also working throughout the country to help election officials and others prepare for what could be record turnout in November, and make sure all election workers have the resources they need to ensure things run smoothly at the polls.”

“We are less enthusiastic about the trends we see developing on the financing of this election,” Wilson noted. “While it is inspiring to see so many new individuals giving small contributions to these campaigns, we continue to call on all the Presidential candidates to commit to use the public financing system for the general election if they become their party’s nominee. Recent comments by the candidates suggest that they will not stand behind their commitment to use public funds this fall. This is disappointing.”

“While pundits will dissect the ups and downs of individual candidates for months to come, the League hopes that voters will continue to stay engaged throughout the campaign. We will be working throughout the year to ensure the election system works for all voters, and want to urge all Americans to get registered and vote this fall! While you’re at it, make sure your friends and loved ones are registered by sending them to www.VOTE411.org to get started.

LWVUT PROGRAM ISSUES

“Just the facts, ma’am”, so Sergeant Joe Friday of the LAPD, used to say on *Dragnet*.

(Does that date me?) Citizens want the facts, too, when they listen to national political leaders, watch debates and hear political advertising. And since 2004, citizens have a source to learn the facts behind the statements, in FactCheck.Org, a “consumer advocate” for the voter. Fact Check is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania. The Center accepts no funding from political parties, business corporations, lobbying organizations including labor unions, or individuals.



Fact Check has been operating since 2004. One can sign up for their e-mails or if you don't like receiving e-mails, you can visit the web site, www.FactCheck.org. I have been receiving their emails since the 2004 Presidential campaign. A new feature is a weekly question and answer session with viewers asking the questions. A recent question was “Is the economic stimulus payment taxable?” (The answer is no.) So, if you want a reputation as being one in the know and one who promotes good government by knowing the facts, Fact Check is a good place to begin.

And for more “in the know” information about Utah’s elected national leaders...

The National League has made available a Federal Vote Scorecard for the 110th Congress, first Session. The League chose six items: the House vote to override the President’s veto of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which provides health care coverage to millions of low-income children. (10/18/2007, Roll Call No. 982); House vote on final passage of the Protect America Act, which gave sweeping new surveillance powers to the Executive Branch. (08/04/2007, Roll Call No. 836); House vote on Udall Amendment to set Renewable Performance Standards (RPS) for electric utilities. (08/04/2007, Roll Call No. 827); House vote on Pence Amendment to prohibit Justice Department expenditures to enforce the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act. (07/26/2007, Roll Call No. 737); House vote on legislation requiring disclosure of campaign contributions to members of Congress “bundled” by registered lobbyists. (05/24/2007, Roll Call No. 420); and the vote on final passage of the DC Voting Rights Act. (04/19/2007, Roll Call No. 231) Representative Bishop voted the League way on one issue, Representative Matheson voted the League way on three issues and Representative Cannon on two issues. All of them voted for the legislation requiring disclosure of campaign contributions to members of Congress “bundled” by lobbyists.

The Senate Scorecard listed 9 votes, including some which were votes on cloture of bills on SCHIP, the Specter Amendment to restore habeas corpus to US detainees, the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act, the House comprehensive energy bill and the DC Voting Act. Senator Hatch voted with the League position 3 out of 9 times and Senator Bennett once.

Go to the LWVUS website, www.lwv.org and click on the "Take Action" bar for more information.

Wanted –Leaguers Interested in Health Care, Education, Ethics Reform, International Relations

Are you interested in education issues? In health care reform? In ethics issues? In international relations? Under the current LWV Utah board, these program issues are dealt with in an informal structure. We have a pretty good system of keeping members current on natural resource, energy and environmental issues because of some wonderful members. The board uses these members in the lobby corps and informally to keep informed.

The Internet offers league members from all over the state a way to talk to one another about all of our program issues. I am proposing some "informal committees" in all of these areas. Interest groups could be set up under some kind arrangement such as an email list that would give people access to information in a program area. For instance, if an education committee were established, one might refer to the January 2008 article in *The Atlantic Monthly* which proposes doing away with school boards as the first step in education reform, or discuss a recent *New York Times Magazine* article which discusses the pros and cons of same sex education. If you would be interested in joining an Internet group on one of these issues, please drop me an email at gigibrandt@att.net.

With all the attention to health care at the state level and national level, I am particularly interested in finding some people to discuss health care.

Program Making.

At every level—local, state, national--the League is a grass roots organization. Every two years (annually at the local level) members are asked for their opinions on the direction that the League should go. The Board of Directors takes member input, and proposes a program which is voted on at the general meeting. The National League's "annual meeting" is the biennial convention scheduled for June.

According to the LWVUS, "Program, a three-part process that is a core component of the League's mission, is composed of program planning, study and consensus, and advocacy." This process is important because in identifying issues for study, members and League boards examine the viability of that issue. March 1 was the deadline for League Boards to send their determination about national issues to the LWVUS board. The LWVUS Board meets in the first part of April and makes recommendations to the convention. Unfortunately, most of the ideas, particularly a new study, are limited by financial concerns. But the LWVUS Board will look at ways to finance a new study.

Since some of the League's positions were formulated many years ago, the LWVUS determined that, in lieu of a study, it might be desirable for a League committee to look at one of our existing positions, edit it in light of current events, ask for member input and vote on the updated position at convention. We did that with the positions Foreign Trade and the United Nations in 2002-2004. This year the LWVUS Board has suggested that if a review of position were to be adopted, it should be the Health Care position which was adopted in 1993. The Health Care position is included on the next page.

Gigi Brandt, Vice President/Program

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families, meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States, and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status

The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S.

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.;
- Education and training needs of the U.S.;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

Administration and Enforcement

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and
- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the U.S. to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

Health Care

The LWVUS League's Position:

Statement of Position on Health Care, as Announced by National Board, April 1993:

GOALS: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care.

BASIC LEVEL OF QUALITY CARE: Every U.S. resident should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care and mental health care. Dental, vision and hearing care also are important but lower in priority. The League believes that under any system of health care reform, consumers/patients should be permitted to purchase services or insurance coverage beyond the basic level.

FINANCING AND ADMINISTRATION: The League favors a national health insurance plan financed through general taxes in place of individual insurance premiums. As the United States moves toward a national health insurance plan, an employer-based system of health care reform that provides universal access is acceptable to the League. The League supports administration of the U.S. health care system either by a combination of the private and public sectors or by a combination of federal, state and/or regional government agencies.

The League is opposed to a strictly private market-based model of financing the health care system. The League also is opposed to the administration of the health care system solely by the private sector or the states.

TAXES: The League supports increased taxes to finance a basic level of health care for all U.S. residents, provided health care reforms contain effective cost control strategies.

COST CONTROL: The League believes that efficient and economical delivery of care can be enhanced by such cost control methods as:

- the reduction of administrative costs,
- regional planning for the allocation of personnel, facilities and equipment,
- the establishment of maximum levels of public reimbursement to providers,
- malpractice reform,
- the use of managed care,
- utilization review of treatment,
- mandatory second opinions before surgery or extensive treatment,
- consumer accountability through deductibles and co-payments.

EQUITY ISSUES: The League believes that health care services could be more equitably distributed by

- allocating medical resources to underserved areas,
- providing for training health care professionals in needed fields of care,

- standardizing basic levels of service for publicly funded health care programs,
- requiring insurance plans to use community rating instead of experience rating,
- establishing insurance pools for small businesses and organizations.

ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO INDIVIDUALS: The League believes that the ability of a patient to pay for services should not be a consideration in the allocation of health care resources. Limited resources should be allocated based on the following criteria considered together: the urgency of the medical condition, the life expectancy of the patient, the expected outcome of the treatment, the cost of the procedure, the duration of care, the quality of life of the patient after treatment, and the wishes of the patient and the family.

The Army Corps of Engineers Review of the Great Salt Lake Expansion Proposal

The history of this project so far:

Great Salt Lake Minerals extracts phosphate from the Great Salt Lake first by concentration of salts through evaporation and then some chemical recombinations. Their current evaporation ponds have an enormous footprint in Bear River Bay and Cyclamen Bay (west side of the lake, north of the causeway). These were constructed before the passage of the Environmental Protection Act.

The company wants more ponds, a huge expansion. They applied for a permit to the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, which oversees the lake, and quickly were granted one. The LWVUT and LWVSL have joined a coalition of environmental and hunting groups that are questioning the Division's decision in contradiction of its public trust responsibilities, its haste, and the lack of public participation.



Now it is the Army Corps of Engineers' turn to permit or not to permit this project.

The League is participating in the Army Corps of Engineers review of the consequences to the environment of these new ponds. The ACOE is responsible for issuing permits for dumping anything in any navigable waters of the U.S, of which the GSL is one, and must agree to issue GSL Minerals a permit to build their impoundments in the lake if the company is to go ahead with the project. Our "participation" means attending meetings where we can perhaps shape the Corps' NEPA review by asking questions and presenting facts about the lake and the birds that use it. In other words we need to keep the pressure on.

It's a lot of meetings but a great learning experience I would be willing to share. If the Great Salt Lake or birds are of importance to you, please join me.

Ann O'Connell 801.363.9046 oconnell@xmission.com

Water Study

If you look at the LWVUT's positions on water you will see that they are both old and heavily biased toward human consumption. In fact we often need to rely on out-dated National League positions when we want to act.

I think it is fair to say that currently most League members are concerned about water in the non-human habitats of the state. But if we are going to work on local environmental issues such as the protection of the Great Salt Lake, we would be on much firmer ground if we had Utah positions that talked about how we respect water's role in nature as well as how we should consume it.

Therefore we need to know;

- how much water do we have now?
- where does it come from?
- how much will we have in the future?
- how much do we consume?
- how do we share with others?
- what are our future "needs"?
- what has been the effect of water diversions?

Our sources will be state and federal agencies, academic institutions and water districts, and even books. Much of this information is on line although the sites can be a bit daunting I admit. But it should be very stimulating and informative and no one is asking us to hurry.

I can see several levels of involvement: research and/or writing, deciding content, interviewing, editing. This last is more important than you might think as I hope an editor might tell the authors what might be needed for more clarity and, perhaps more important, what could be left out. And I hope editing might be done all through the process rather than left to the very end.

Obviously I could use help and if you volunteer, I won't have to start hounding you.

Ann O'Connell

801.363.9046 occonnell@xmission.com

Follow up to last month's article on Utah Election Systems by Kathy Dopp

Voter fraud is defined as ineligible people voting, not simply as ineligible persons being listed on the voter registration rolls. Due to the lack of any requirement to remove yourself from voting rolls when you move or die, etc. virtually all voting rolls have lots of extra people on them. However, the academic research shows overwhelmingly that there is virtually no voter fraud occurring in the U.S. with the exception of the Washington DC area where approximately 300 voters were found to have crossed into Maryland to be able to vote in the Presidential election in one study.

Unlike vote fraud, which is undetectable, voter fraud is simple enough to detect by looking at the poll books and official register of voters. In fact, an exhaustive search for illegal voters in the 8 month-long contest by both Democrats and Republicans in the 2004 Washington State Gubernatorial race found only 7 illegal voters in the entire state and all were ex-felons who had neglected to go through the process to re-establish their right to vote after serving their time. That is a pretty typical rate of and reason for illegal voting in any state that has been investigated.

On the other hand, requirements for specific forms of ID are known to disenfranchise thousands of voters per state.

Here are some articles on the subject that people sent me yesterday in response to my inquiries. Tova Wang and

her co-author are considered the top U.S. experts on the subject.

"The Politics of Voter Fraud", Lorraine Minnite
<http://www.bradblogger.com/Docs/PoliticsofVoterFraudFinal.pdf>

NYTIMES: "In 5-Year DOJ Effort, Scant Evidence of Voter Fraud"
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/12/washington/12fraud.html?ei=5088&en=277fecfa099c7d0&ex=1334030400&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1197490509-kQxLoEru+cH9aetsLB6CnA>
or <http://tinyurl.com/2gg26j>

Original, Unaltered EAC "Voter Fraud" Report <http://www.bradblogger.com/?p=4391>

Where's the Voter Fraud? Tova Andrea Wang, The Century Foundation, 12/4/2006 <http://www.tcf.org/list.asp?type=NC&pubid=1452>

ID and Voting Rights Tova Andrea Wang, The Century Foundation, 8/29/2005 Laws requiring all voters to present very specific forms of identification before exercising their right to vote are rapidly becoming the voting rights barrier of the 21st Century. <http://www.tcf.org/list.asp?type=NC&pubid=1084>

Voter ID and Fraud: Prove It Tova Andrea Wang, The Century Foundation, 7/28/2005 the report flatly states that there is no reason for states to go beyond HAVA's narrow provisions regarding the presentation of identification in order to vote. <http://www.tcf.org/list.asp?type=NC&pubid=1067>

Fraud, Reform, and Political Power: Controlling the Vote, From Nineteenth-Century America to Present-Day Georgia Tova Andrea Wang, The Century Foundation, 10/30/2006 In this issue brief, The Century Foundation's Tova Andrea Wang looks back at how accusations of voter fraud have been used to justify actions that made it more difficult for less advantaged citizens in particular to cast ballots. <http://www.tcf.org/list.asp?type=PB&pubid=590>

Kathy Dopp

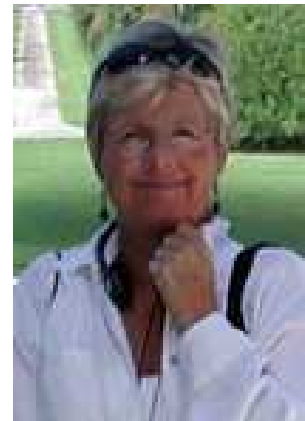


League of Women Voters of Utah

LWVUT WEB SITE

The LWVU Communication Committee, chaired by Jessica Mathewson, and the Web team have designed a new and robust 'Support Us' section for our web site. We worked with Suzy Manwaring to give us a new image and Bandcon for technical support and database servicing. Click on www.lwvutah.org and go to 'Support Us' in the upper navigation bar, or on the left navigation bar for 'join' or 'donate'.

Our first goal was to provide an easy and convenient way to become a member of the league or to renew your league membership. Taking our cue from the national web site, we now have a clear and concise explanation of what the league does and what members can expect at different levels of the league. A membership registration form can now be completed on-line with the option of paying with a credit card. It has wonderful possibilities for all the local leagues of Utah. How these services can benefit local boards will be clarified at LWVU State Council workshop on May 3rd.



GIVE A LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP!

The gift of membership to the League of Women Voters is an excellent way to introduce friends and family to issues that matter to everyone living in the Salt Lake area. Since the beginning, the League of Women Voters has believed that active and informed citizens are vital to the health of democracy. Help support the League's mission by giving an annual membership to someone you care about.

Simply fill out the coupon below (or go on-line) and return it to the League office (3804 Highland Drive, 8-D, SLC UT 84106) with dues payment of \$50. We will send a welcome letter to the new member(s).

Recipient Name _____

Recipient Address: _____

City: _____ State _____

Your Name: _____

Your phone: _____ email: _____

Our second goal was to expand members' and non-members' ability to contribute to the league.

The League depends on the generosity of individual supporters and members, foundations and corporations to fund its citizen education and advocacy activities.

Donations to the [League of Women Voters of Utah Education Fund](#) provide direct support for our citizen education, public engagement and research activities around the state. Please note that only contributions to the LWVUEF are tax deductible. The Education Fund pays for all League studies, public forums, educational activities, and provides grants to all local Leagues.

Donations to the [League of Women Voters of Utah Memorial \(Celebration\) Fund](#) may be made "In Memory Of", to remember someone special by giving a gift in their memory, or "In Honor Of" someone close to you for a birthday, anniversary, wedding or other special occasion.

Donations to the [League of Women Voters of Utah](#) provide direct support for the League's work mobilizing citizens and influencing public policy through advocacy on the **state level**. This is not a tax deductible donation. The League's Legislative and Congressional Lobbying activities are not deductible nor are our administrative costs for those activities.

Donations to the local [Leagues of Women Voters in Utah](#) provide direct support for the League's work mobilizing citizens and influencing public policy through advocacy on the **local level**. This is not a tax deductible donation. The League's Legislative and Congressional Lobbying activities are not deductible nor are our administrative costs for those activities.

Our third goal, and maybe the most exciting, was to develop an on-line payment system that would make the whole process easier for everyone. The Salt Lake League this year is using the on-line payment for their 'Community Lunch'. Corporate Sponsors can register and pay on-line. Another great option is the Memorial fund where family and friends of the deceased league member can be directed to donate on-line.

We are excited about the possibilities. Take a look!

Nanette Benowitz, web master

THE 'IN CELEBRATION OF' FUND

The traditional 'Memorial Fund' has changed its name to 'In Celebration of' Fund. This fund has always been available for contributions from members or non-members in memory of League members who have passed away. It is also appropriate to donate to this fund in acknowledgment of a celebration of such events as birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, etc.

The fund is a joint savings account for both the State and the Salt Lake Leagues. Stuart Gygi, the Salt Lake League Treasurer, chairs the Memorial Fund Committee. In addition both Salt Lake and State have two representatives. The committee meets whenever the office has a need for equipment. For example, the fund recently purchased a copy/fax/scan/printer and a new DSL modem.

We would like to thank the following for their generous contributions to the league:

Susan Aldous
Alma Anderson
Barry and Nanette Benowitz
Ralph and Reggie Benowitz
Steve and Tink Benowitz
Scott and Heidi Benowitz
Joe Benowitz
Tyler Benowitz
Marshall Benowitz
Lou Ann Christensen MAL
Joyce Barnes
Mary Belle Royer (Cedar)
Jean Binyon
Georgene Bond
Catherine Bowen
Ray Brim
Barbara Browning
Phyllis Coley

Cathy Crawford
Beverly Dalley (Weber)
Lula Devalve
Joyce Dolcourt
Irene Fisher
Mary Fogg
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Roberta Glidden (Weber)
Doris Gras
Joyce Green
Maxine Haggerty
Kathleen Hall
Emily Hall
Mary House
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Bonnie Miller
Carolyn Nelson
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Support the League of Women Voters to strengthen our democracy

Join the League of Women Voters of Utah, a respected, national grassroots organization that acts on important issues that affect you, your community and our nation. You can make a difference on the issues! Membership forms are available on line at <http://www.lwvutah.org/form.html>

We are –

- *Empowering millions of voters to protect their right to vote*
- *Working to ensure that ALL votes are counted and all voices are heard*
- *Preserving our constitutional rights by safeguarding civil liberties*
- *Acting as a force for positive change in our communities and in our democracy*

We believe that sensible, responsible civil discourse and action, based on substance rather than partisan battles, is essential if we are to avoid polarization and get something done. We believe that American democracy is at risk and that now is the time to act.

Donate to the League. Your tax-deductible contribution to our LWVU Education Fund will provide important support for advancing our critical work to safeguard the vote. Contribute today!