



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 the informed and active participation of citizens 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:

- January 9th : League Legislative Luncheon, 11:30 in the Beehive Room @ the East Capitol Bldg. cafeteria
- February 21st : Program Making Form due
- April 1st: Consensus due on the Hate Crime Study and Redevelopment Agency Study
- LWVU Convention : April 14th in Salt Lake City

FIRST CALL TO LWVU STATE CONVENTION

Time flies! The calendar is about to turn to 2007 and in no time at all we will all be thinking about the State League convention. Please save April 13 and 14th and plan on joining your fellow leaguers to select leaders and program for the next 2 years.

The Salt Lake League is the host and the University of Utah Alumni House is the location. Plan on arriving for conversation and dinner on Friday evening and staying Saturday for the business meeting and lunch. Our speakers are a well-guarded secret but sure to be exciting and challenging for all. The Friday dinner is open to members and guests and is a wonderful time to reconnect with friends from other leagues and meet some new faces.

WATCH FOR INFORMATION IN THE MAIL SOON



Lonely at the Legislature?

"It is not the function of our Government to keep the citizen from falling into error; it is the function of the citizen to keep the Government from falling into error."

United States Supreme Court, American Communications Association v. Douds, 339 US 382 (1950)

League members who receive LWVUS e-mails will recognize this quote from the December 15 e-mail celebrating the ratification of the Bill of Rights on December 15, 1791.

Recent articles in *The Salt Lake Weekly* and *The Salt Lake Tribune* have focused on Utah Common Cause's decision to no longer lobby at the Legislature and the League's status as the only organization left to watch the Legislature's action in the area of elections, ethics and government reform. Is the League up to the task? Yes, but we need everyone who can help to do so whether it is in the form of financial support, observing at the Legislature or contacting their lawmakers. Lawmakers and policy/regulation agencies do a better job when they know citizens and the press are watching them. In the words of that famous WWII ad, *We need you!* Please make it a New Year's resolution to contact your representatives at least once during 2007.

The Board has formulated 2007 legislative priorities, which are included in this Voter. At this early date it looks as if the primary battleground will be education funding versus tax cuts. We hope that members (and their guests) will plan to attend the lobbying workshop and lunch on Tuesday, January 9 at the Capitol. Remember that Sandy Peck's daily legislative reports are heard on KCPW and can be accessed on the League web site www.lwvutah.org along with comprehensive information on legislative issues.

Election 2006: The November elections seems eons ago. Our web *Voter's Guide* was successful, receiving nearly 7000 hits. Many thanks go to Voter Service chair, Kathy Dorn, the web team of Nanette Benowitz, Pat Klentzman, Kathy Biele, Stuart Gygi and Bob Beaudoin. The biggest disappointment was that **none** of the Congressional incumbents (who were reelected) chose to answer our *Voter Guide* questions. Why? That seems to be a good question for all League members to ask these gentlemen if they have a chance to meet them personally. Other observations:

- Thanks go to all candidates who chose to take the time from their personal lives to run for office, especially those third party candidates and those running as opposing candidates in one-party districts.
- The anticipated problems with voting machines didn't materialize.
- The cost of campaigns is appalling. In some Utah legislative districts candidates spent more than \$100,000. According to news reports, Parents for Choice in Education poured more than \$360,000 into Utah political parties and candidates. Perhaps the time has come to consider public financing.
- The Salt Lake League's Democracy store at the Library was a great success.

Reapportionment: Immediately after the election, the possibility that Congress might pass a compromise bill giving District of Columbia voters the right to a voting Congressperson and at the same time give Utah a fourth Congressional seat became more real. The bill was stuck because Congress refused to act until Utah passed a reapportionment plan. Utah had passed a reapportionment plan including a fourth district in 2001, but that plan placed Congressman Matheson in Congressman Cannon's district and was so egregious that it was termed a scam by *The Wall Street Journal*. That 2001 plan was unacceptable to Congressional Democrats. A legislative

re-districting committee was appointed and worked hard to meet a December 4 deadline when Congress would reconvene. The new plan was passed by the Legislature in special session but Republican leaders in Congress declined to act before adjourning. The new Congress may take it up in the New Year.

Even though Utah doesn't have a fourth seat yet, I don't think the effort was in vain. The committee had a set of principles under which they operated. They gave consideration to the minority Democrats on the committee as well as to those who attended the hearings. The cynics among us would say that the reason that the districts were less gerrymandered was that the committee knew that they had to please Congressional Democrats or the plan would not go forward. The optimists might say that committee members were willing to receive the input of citizens and the minority party because they recognized the limitations of pervasive divisiveness in U.S. politics, which is due partly to blatant gerrymandering in the creation of "safe" (non-competitive) districts. Although the press did not report it, most of the individuals who commented to the committee supported a bipartisan redistricting commission of some sort. The League's testimony is printed on page 5.

Representative Roz McGee will introduce another redistricting bill this session. Perhaps it's an opportune time to pass such a reform. Utahns would have another four years to get used to the idea before it is implemented. Citizens have the redistricting issue fresh in their minds now so that the impetus for doing it is strong.

Program making: What Utah issues do you think the League should be concerned about? A Utah 2007-2009 Program Planning Worksheet is included in this *Voter*. League members who will not attend a program-planning meeting are encouraged to fill it out and send it to the office by February 21st. The Utah Board will consider all recommendations at their March meeting and formulate recommended program for consideration at the state League convention on April 14.

Thanks goes to Nanette for a superb Fall *Voter*, Nancy Wingelaar for her efforts on the Non-Party fundraising letter, Marilyn Odell for her work on the fundraising committee, Ann O'Connell for her work on the Legislative Preview luncheon and to all of you who keep the League vital.

Gigi Brandt, President

VOTER SERVICE: Kathy Dorn Director



Utah League Electronic Voter's Guide

This year candidates who were in contested elections for Congress, the Utah Legislature, State School Board and some local county offices were invited to be part of our Voter Guide on the web. They were asked to submit bio information, answer questions about significant issues and attach a picture. We had some success, but were unable to get the incumbents for United States Senate and House to participate. This is only our second year in this format. It is dramatically different and somewhat technical, but as the public continues to look to League to provide unbiased election information we expect to have better participation.

We had approximately 8500 people checking our web site and are sure that number will continue to grow. The next time we will be on the web is for the city mayoral and council elections in November 2007. This is all preparation for the presidential election in 2008.

Concession Stands

In a way they never tell the truth until the concession speech. That's when nothing they say can hurt them anymore. They're worn to the bone and they've been in a struggle and it's over, and suddenly some basic, rock-solid, dumb knowledge of what they've been involved in -- a great nation's *life* -- comes loose and declares itself.

Rep. Harold Ford of Tennessee, who lost his Senate race, said he'd wanted to be in government since he was 4 years old, that people had taken a risk on him, that he was grateful. "I love my country," he said. "Don't lose faith in this great thing called America."

Sen. Lincoln Chafee up in Rhode Island said America is divided; "common ground is becoming scarce." He'd miss those in the Senate "who take their responsibility to govern more seriously than their personal ambitions."

From Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, a demonstration of patriotic civility. He praised his opponent as a human being -- "a fine man, he'll do a fine job for the state."

Sen. George Allen, gentleman of Virginia, said, "We are placed here on earth to do something well." He vowed to do all he could to help Jim Webb come in and serve in the U.S. Capitol.

Oh, that the new ones would carry in what the old ones have finally learned, or finally meant, or said.

It was the first real post-9/11 election, in that it was shaped not by the trauma itself but by public response to decisions taken after the trauma. Turnout was high. America is awake, alive, bristles. In the races for Senate, 25 million said "stay with the Republicans," while 31 million said "no, move on."

We have divided government. Good, and for many reasons. One: It confuses our enemies. "Who do we hate now?" they ask in their caves, "the evil woman from San Francisco or the old infidel from Texas? Which do we hate more? And if we hate them both does that...unite them?"

By PEGGY NOONAN
November 11, 2006; Page P24 Wall Street Journal

We are in a 30-year war. It is no good for it to be led by, identified with, one



David Gothard

party. It is no good for half the nation to feel estranged from its government's decisions. It's no good for us to be broken up more than a nation normally would be. And straight down the middle is a bad break, the kind that snaps.

We all have things we would say to the new Congress if we could. We are a country that makes as many speeches in the shower as it sings songs. I would say this: Focus on the age you live in. Know what it is. Know what's coming. The old way is over; the old days are over; the old facts and habits of mind do not pertain, or no longer fully pertain.

This is the age we live in: One day in the future either New York or Washington or both will be hit again, hard. It will be more deadly than 9/11. And on that day, those who experience it, who see the flash or hear the alarms, will try to help each other. They'll be good to each other. An elderly conservative congresswoman will be unable to make it down those big old Capitol steps, and a young liberal congressman will come by and pick her up in his arms and carry her. (I witnessed a moment somewhat like this during a Capitol alarm two years ago, when we were told to run for our lives.) I would say: Keep that picture in mind. Cut to the chase, be good to each other now.

Make believe it's already happened. That's the only attitude that will help us get through it when it does. I do not mean think like Rodney King. We can't all get along, not on this earth. But we can know what time it is. We can be serious, and humane. We can realize that we're all in this together and owe each other an assumption of good faith.

There are rogue states and rogue actors, there are forces and nations aligned against us, and they have

nuke and other weapons of mass destruction, and some of them are mad. Know this. Walk to work each day knowing it, not in a pointlessly fearful way but in a spirit of "What can I do to make it better?"

What can you do in two years? The common wisdom says not much. But here's a governing attitude: First things first.

Do all you can to keep America as safe as possible as long as possible. Make sure she's able to take a bad blow, a bad series of them. Much flows from this first thing, many subsets. Here is only one: Strengthen and modernize our electrical grid. When the bad thing comes we will need to be able to make contact with each other to survive together. Congress has ignored this for years.

Make America in the world as safe as possible by tending to and building our friendships in the world, by causing no unnecessary friction, by adding whatever possible and necessary emollients. In your approach to foreign affairs, rewrite Teddy Roosevelt: Speak softly, walk softly, and carry a big stick.

Much flows from this, including Iraq. This involves a huge and so far unanswered question: How to leave and not make it all infinitely worse. America will never accept a long war whose successful end even its

most passionate proponents cannot convincingly envision or articulate. And America will never allow a repeat of the pictures of 1975, with desperate people who'd thrown their lot with us clinging to the skids of helicopters fleeing the U.S. Embassy. We will never get over Vietnam. And it's to our credit that we won't.

Those to me are the two big things. Much follows them, and flows from them. But to make some progress on these two things in the next two years would be breathtaking.

So that is my shower speech.

At the end of the day, or the end of this day, I look at the new Congress and wish them so well, such luck. Don't you? I want to say: Go, Nancy Pelosi. Be the speaker of whom historians will write, in 2032, "This was her moment, here was the summit, here she found greatness." Go, Democrats, be great and serious. Go, minority Republicans, refind yourselves. Go, conservatives.

To the freshmen: Walk in as if you're walking out. Put your heart on your sleeve and go forward. Take responsibility, and love America. No one will think less of you. They will in fact think more, as they do of politicians after the concession speech.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS – Ann O'Connell Co-Director

Testimony before the Redistricting Committee - November 28, 2006

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the redistricting committee today. The League commends you for your efforts to hear public input in a very short time frame. We commend you also for making the proposed maps available on the Legislature's website and allowing public comment by email on the site. We also commend you for including the minority parties plans.

The League is especially interested in this hearing for two reasons. Our national organization has long supported giving the citizens of the District of Columbia an electoral, voting voice in Congress. Our members feel it is unconscionable to ask citizens to pay taxes, serve in the military and at the same time deny them a vote in the body that makes those decisions. Our Utah organization is pleased to see a situation where it is possible to give DC citizens a right to vote for a Congressional member and to give the state of Utah another voice in Congress. We hope that the Legislature will approve reapportionment for a fourth Congressional district quickly to take advantage of this opportunity.

The Utah League of Women Voters studied the issue of reapportionment over 25 years ago and reached consensus on the following principles: Our principles are:

The League supports meeting strict anti-gerrymandering standards including:

- ◇ prompt judicial review
- ◇ basic equality among districts
- ◇ district lines that honor local political boundaries
- ◇ district lines that are compact
- ◇ district lines that are not drawn for the purpose of advantage or disadvantage of any political party, incumbent, or any person or group
- ◇ lines that do not dilute voting strength of any minority.
- ◇ Addresses of incumbents, political affiliation of registered voters, previous election returns, or demographic information other than population should not be used in redistricting.

Using those principles, our organization cannot support any of the plans that have been presented without qualification. We would support a plan that divides Salt Lake County into two rather than three Congressional districts. We have problems with Plan A because district lines were drawn to disadvantage an incumbent. We have problems with Plan G because it does not honor the political boundary of West Jordan. Similarly Plan J seemingly divides Kearns. We hope that the committee will compromise and respect political boundaries as best they can.

I wish to draw your attention to the second part of the position on redistricting that the League has supported for these 25 years:

The League supports establishing a bipartisan commission that would serve in an **advisory** capacity to the Legislature. The Legislature would approve a final plan that would set up guidelines supporting the one-person one-vote principle and be subject to approval by the courts.

We hope that you as members of the Legislature will consider establishing such a bipartisan commission in 2007. A commission could weigh citizen input on such issues as whether three or four members of Utah's Congressional delegation should represent a small number of constituents with rural interests among the urban interests in public land issues, or instead one member should represent mostly rural interests and sit on a Congressional committee representing them. Those deliberations might be better handled with an advisory commission that deliberates separately from the business of the annual session. Although the commission would still be political, it would be more balanced than the current committee makeup of 8 Republicans and 3 Democrats and provide more opportunities for voter education and input.

Lastly, the League believes in the informed participation of citizens in government. We are concerned about civic education and the participation of citizens in that most basic of civic functions, voting. I would like to relate the story of the young man who visited the League's Democracy Store at the Salt Lake City Library the Saturday before this past election. When I looked up his voting place I was taken aback by the fact that because he lived west of 7th South he was voting in the First Congressional district. He was cynical about his ability to relate to his Congressman and to the Utah Legislature, which had gerrymandered Salt Lake into three Congressional districts. Cynical people have difficulty in participating in government and we are all poorer for it. I urge you to think about that young man as you devise your Congressional districts.

Thank you.

Gigi Brandt, President
League of Women Voters of Utah

LWVUT 2007 Legislative Priorities

First Tier Legislative Issues

- ◇ Budget allocations
 - Support increases for education
 - Support funding for Medicaid supplements - dental, etc.
- ◇ Good Government
 - Support redistricting commission
 - Oppose restrictions to GRAMA
 - Support efforts in lobby reform, measures related to transparency in government, campaign finance reform, and citizen access.
- ◇ Taxation
 - Support a progressive tax structure and indexing
 - Oppose a tax refund



Second Tier Legislative Issues

- ◇ Minimum wage
- ◇ Environmental Issues
 - Water
 - Support in-stream flow
 - Support funding for a Snake Valley aquifer study and litigation
 - Support water conservation measures
 - Energy Conservation
 - Support alternative energy
 - Support energy conservation
 - Nuclear Waste - Follow nuclear waste issues with special attention to permanence of the Perpetual Care Fund
- ◇ Transportation
 - Protect sales tax allocation for transit
 - Limit road building allocations
- ◇ Redevelopment Agencies - Follow possible changes to the redevelopment statutes.

Above is the State Board's best judgment based on lobby corps reports, our collective experiences, and Sandy Peck's observations. This list is neither definitive nor permanent. Every year issues take us by surprise, especially the ones that threaten citizen participation or the environment. And often a bill will be brought to our attention that is so clearly of interest and supported by our positions we can immediately take action. For example, there have been rumors that a senator will try to have the Utah legislature join the growing number of states who have approved the state compact procedure to achieve direct election of the president. You might say that will never happen in Utah. And I was going to reply that stranger states than ours have passed this proposal but then I thought that perhaps there are no stranger states. It's a matter of opinion. The proposal is, however one with which we would have a lot of fun if it should appear.

Neither the order nor the tier assignment is based entirely on the importance of the issue. They are all important. We limited the first tier to issues like education and Medicaid-related funding and taxes, where we will spend a great deal of our time and energy, plus good government issues because we seem to be the only non-partisan group working on them.

Be prepared to help us lobby. Expect email and calls from the League. Follow our issues in the media. Go to our website at <http://www.lwvutah.org/> and click on Legislative News.

Know who your legislators are. You can find out on the League's Legislative News web page or by contacting your county clerk. In Salt Lake County, go to the Salt Lake County Clerk web site, www.clerk.slco.org. Click on Find Your Elected Officials and follow the directions on the next page that appears. It's not hard.

To email a legislator, go to the legislative web site <http://le.utah.gov/>. At the very top left click on Legislators and expose a list of choices which includes Senate Roster and House Roster. Click on one and you will get a list of members with all their contact information. Click on the email address under your legislator's name and go from there. It would not hurt to do a trial run so you will be prepared when you receive an email alert from the League.

And before things get hectic during the session, send your legislators an email or a letter to introduce yourself and make your wishes known. You can send letters to their homes or to the Utah Legislature, State Government Complex, SLC UT 84114. During the session, contact them at the legislature by phone or fax as well:

Phone numbers for the legislature

House: Phone: (801)538.1029

fax: (801) 326-1544

Minority fax: (801) 326-1539

Senate: Phone: (801)538.1035

Fax: (801)326.1475

Minority fax: (801)326-1476

Remember that legislators especially want to hear from their own constituents, and no legislator can respond to an unspoken need.

League of Women Voters of Utah
Legislative Preview Luncheon
Tuesday, January 9
The Beehive Room* - The State Room Café
East Building, State Office Building Complex
11:30 - 1:00 PM

- The speakers and the discussion will focus on the possibility that the legislature will find it difficult to fully fund essential programs in a time of budget surplus - with a special emphasis on education.
- Come early enough to buy lunch in the cafeteria.
- Parking can be difficult. Plan to car pool, ride transit, park and walk.
- RSVP to occonnell@xmission.com, 801.277.9046 if you plan to come.
- ***south end of cafeteria**

This is our second annual Legislative Preview Luncheon. We have two purposes. One is to learn more about the upcoming session from some real experts. The other is to introduce the uninitiated to the new legislative office buildings, the committee hearing rooms, the House and Senate chambers, and other useful places. If you want a tour either before or after the luncheon you might say so when you *RSVP*.

Take the warning about parking very seriously. During last year's session it was possible to park in the Delta Center parking lot for free and take bus #23 on South Temple up to the legislature. This choice may or may not be available the week before the session begins. If you ride TRAX you can catch #23 on Main Street north of 4th

South to get to the Capitol. It returns on State Street but you could ride it around via 4th South to a Main Street TRAX station if you wish.

Join the Utah LWV Lobby Corps

Members of the League lobby corps pretty much do what they like. They do all or some of the following: attend legislative interim committee meetings during the off time of the year, observe committees and House and Senate debates during the 45-day session in January and February, and/or follow an issue of particular interest. Did you note in the list of legislative priorities that we will work to defeat Las Vegas's attempt to drain water from a West Desert aquifer? That dispute is of special interest to me and I made my voice heard when the State League chose its priorities for the upcoming session. You do not need to be a member of the lobby corps to make your voice heard. We listen to all our members. However, if you do not feel we are speaking up for you there could be several reasons. The first is that we do not have enough active members to do everything we would like to. Second, we do need some kind of League position to work from and the one you want may be missing. But we are quite creative about finding a statement of position to fit an issue and we do work hard, so the most frequent reason we are not working on your issue is that no one on the state board or in the lobby corps was aware that you thought it should be a League priority. Consider being a lobby corps member.

Our current lobby corps is first rate and will do a magnificent job at the 2007 legislature. We will observe committees, House and Senate sessions and caucuses with our League buttons on and work with legislators. Our president, Gigi Brandt, will speak for us literally and with letters and emails under her name. However, we could do more if there were more of us.

Besides lobbying the legislature as an organization, the League of Women Voters tries to educate our members and the public about what is going on at the session. We send lobbying action calls to our members with email and broadcast each morning during the legislature on KCPW information about current meetings, maneuvering, and action. Sandy Peck makes these broadcasts "fair and balanced," but she still has to make choices about what is most important. Lobby corps reports help her do that. Need I point out that our interests--which include many government, natural resources, education, health care, social policy and international relations issues--must have some influence on program content.

I should also mention that we need volunteers to read Sandy's written material on the radio. If you would like to learn more about lobbying or broadcasting, email me or stay after the legislative preview luncheon.

Ann O'Connell, Legislative Co-Chair oconnell@xmission.com (801)277.9046

Salute to Utah Common Cause

By Sandy Peck

Ever since I began going to the legislature to lobby, perhaps 25 years ago, I have depended on Common Cause to alert the League to good government issues on which we had positions in common. Thanks to their efforts Utah has more open government. They helped open meetings of legislative Rules committees and House-Senate Conference committees to the public. We have better limits on gifts from lobbyists and more disclosure of which legislators receive them. More government documents are available to scrutiny. Common Cause advocates like Nelda Bishop, Betsy Wolf, Cassie Dippo, Chris Meecham and Tony Musci led the struggle on these issues and regulation of campaign contributions and spending. Our own Pat Brim was President of Utah Common Cause. We salute them.



The bad news is that all of these issues still need work, but Common Cause as an organization can no longer be a presence at the legislature due to lack of funds and volunteer time. The good news is that every one of those Common Cause advocates is also a League member and that several responsible legislators will sponsor bills this year that could make elected officials more accessible to all voters, not just paid lobbyists and wealthy campaign contributors.

The League's goals are to avoid corruption and the appearance of corruption of public officials and to protect the citizen's right to know what its government is up to. Our task is to convince more legislators that they should set higher standards for themselves when it comes to accepting money and gifts that create a sense of obligation towards the donors. As a child I was intrigued when my grandfather acknowledged a favor not with "thank you" but with "much obliged." His phrase is often a better description of the reality.

Legislators, especially part-time legislators, are accustomed to operating in the business world where money is so much a part of relationships, information is proprietary, and lobbyists may be friends, business associates and campaign contributors. But for democratic government, in which every voter should have an equal voice, we need to reduce the role of money in order to ensure access for all.

Voters, who often don't realize how much access they already have, need to use it. We urge that they, and especially you as League members, let their legislators know that they expect higher standards regarding lobbyist and campaign gifts, redistricting, and open government. That's our obligation as citizens.

PROGRAM

Local leagues are encouraged to dedicate unit time to the discussion of LWVU program ideas for the 2007-2009 biennium. For the league member who is unable to attend a local unit meeting, we have incorporated the form on our web site. Members can go to the home page, click on program form, fill out their information and submit it to the league office. To see the 2005-2007 program, click on Current Issues, then on View State League Program. All responses will be considered by the board, and be included for consideration at state convention. <http://www.lwvutah.org/LWVU%20Program%2005-07.htm> (Bylaws require that non-board recommended program be presented for consideration on the floor of the convention. But to be available for consideration, the issue must be submitted on the program worksheet.) The deadline for submitting responses is February 21, 2007. <http://www.lwvutah.org/2007%20program%20form.htm>



Higher Education

By Janice Gygi

A recent article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* (August 6, 2006) was titled "Fewer Utahns Earn Degrees." Shinika Sykes reported that ". . . in the past 10 years, the percentage of Utahns age 25 to 34 with bachelor's degrees has slipped from 41 percent to 26 percent." President Michael Young of the University of Utah was reported as calling the decline "serious." For individuals, the lack of a degree means a lower salary. Sykes reported the following salaries: high school graduate - \$21,992 per year; bachelor's degree - \$48,719 per year; and graduate degree - \$60,000.

However, the cost to the state is also a problem. Richard Kendell, Utah Higher Education Commissioner, reported that two businesses, Crate and Barrel and the Cheesecake Factory, chose not to come to Utah because "they prefer to operate in markets where at least 35 percent of residents have college degrees." Sykes quoted Kendell as saying, "Losing a cheesecake eatery isn't the end of the world, but a declining number of college graduates could hurt Utah's economy in the long run if the trend cannot be reversed."

In addition to the lack of graduates, there is a growing concern that those who do graduate are not adequately prepared. Susan McLester and Todd McIntire wrote an article titled "The Workforce Readiness Crisis," for *techLEARNING*. (<http://www.techlearning.com/shared/printableArticle.jhtml?articleID=193700630>). This article presented the results of "The Workforce Readiness Report Card," a national study that came from the

Partnership for 21st Century Skills, The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, and the Society for Human Resources Management. The study discussed the lack of specific skills needed in the workforce including “professionalism/work ethic, teamwork/collaboration, and oral communication . . . knowledge of a foreign language . . . and creativity/innovation.” All of these were felt to be more important than discipline-specific skills, and one conclusion was, “We’re not turning out employable graduates nor maintaining our position as a global competitor.”

McLester and McIntire indicated that a good college education is critical. “The majority of employers responding to the “Workforce Readiness” survey suggest a growing disparity between workers with the most advanced degrees from the best schools and all other employees. This broadening gap also applies to the high school educated students who can be seen as set apart from all other groups because of their deficiency in virtually every crucial skill required for today’s workplace.”

This fall the Spelling Report was issued by the U.S. Department of Education. It is titled *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education* – A Report of the Commission Appointed by Secretary of Education Margaret Spelling. The report is available at <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/index.html>. The following, from the preamble, indicates some of the critical problems currently caused by lack of adequate education in the U.S.

We may still have more than our share of the world’s best universities. But a lot of other countries have followed our lead, and **they are now educating more of their citizens to more advanced levels than we are**. Worse, they are passing us by at a time when education is more important to our collective prosperity than ever.

. . . We have seen ample evidence that some form of postsecondary instruction is increasingly vital to an individual’s economic security. Yet too many Americans just aren’t getting the education that they need – and that they deserve.

- High schools . . . do not yet see preparing all pupils for postsecondary education and training as their responsibility.
- [Some] don’t enter college because of inadequate information, rising costs, and a confusing financial aid system. . .
- [Many college students] waste time – and taxpayer dollars – mastering English and math skills that they should have learned in high school. . . [Most] colleges and universities don’t accept responsibility for making sure that those they admit actually succeed.
- . . . Many students who do earn degrees have not actually mastered the reading, writing, and thinking skills we expect of college graduates. . .
- The consequences of these problems are most severe for students from low-income families and for racial and ethnic minorities. But they affect us all.
- Compounding all of these difficulties is a lack of clear, reliable information about the cost and quality of postsecondary institutions. . .

Taxes and Spending Priorities

By Peggy Christenson

Looks like we’re in for another legislative session dominated by debates on flat tax and tax cuts. We will need to be clear on the appropriate criteria for analyzing proposals as they come forward.

LWV lists the most important criteria for evaluating taxes are adequacy and equity. Other important criteria are benefits received, stability, responsiveness and simplicity. Issues that the League places high value on include education and public transit.



The Governor's budget calls for an increase of 7% for education to raise the per-pupil spending adding \$453.5 in new money, including funds for growing number of students, class-size reduction, and optional all-day kindergarten.

Again this year it seems there will be a surplus...possibly \$150 million according to the Tax Commission's recently retired Chief Economist, Doug MacDonald. Will the legislature understand the value of education or will priority be given to tax cuts and more roads?

LWVU Nuclear Waste Position

Written by Marilyn Zipser August 2006

Background:

The LWVU did a background information report on the state of hazardous waste in Utah in January 2005. It looked at how we got where we are and what if anything we can do about it. The committee has prepared some discussion questions for local unit time and also some consensus questions.

An update on Nuclear Waste issues as a result of the 2005 Legislative Session was also completed.

POSITION: The following position was approved by the membership on August 5, 2006:

The LWV supports the 1990 law that created a process for approving commercial landfill waste sites for garbage, hazardous and radioactive waste. The law requires approval by all of the following: local officials, the state Division of Radiation Control, the Legislature and the Governor. Further, the League supports prohibiting storage of higher levels of low-level radioactive waste in landfills without approval of both the Legislature and the Governor. Public input must be part of the decision-making process.

The League supports:

- *Frequent review and adjustment of nuclear waste taxes and regulatory fees.*
- *Utah legislation to increase the interval between service on regulating bodies and employment by regulated industries to 2 to 5 years to decrease conflicts of interest.*
- *Adequate, dedicated, perpetual care funds for all radioactive waste storage facilities that are vital to assure public safety for at least a century beyond site closure.*
- *Regulation and supervision by the state of Utah of any new mill tailings sites created when dormant or new uranium mines are brought into production.*

The League has safety concerns about transportation of high-level nuclear waste into and through the State of Utah.

Please note the section about "perpetual care" because that is what is going to be attacked in the Legislature this year.

LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS

By Janice Gygi

Barbara Prestwich, President of the **Cedar City** LWV, reported that there has recently been considerable community interest in the League. She is hopeful that their League will double in size within the next month.

Nelda Bishop, Co-president of the **Davis** LWV, discussed the "Meet the Candidates" meetings held in their county. The League partnered with the PTA and AAUW to hold meetings in three separate sections of the county.



They invited candidates for both the School Board and the Legislature and had a very good response from candidates.

Cynthia Smith, President of the **Grand County** LWV, reported that they had a very successful silent auction recently. Prior to the election, they also held a candidates forum. It was recorded and has been used several times. This is a great idea for providing information to a large audience.

Joyce Barnes, Co-president of the **Salt Lake** LWV, was pleased with the success of the Democracy Store. Cosponsored by AAUW, the store was open at the Salt Lake Library. Voters were able to obtain information and try the new voting machines prior to the election. Joyce reported that this was particularly helpful to citizens in wheelchairs who were reassured that they would be able to vote independently.

On November 15, the Salt Lake League sponsored an Immigration Forum with the following presenters: Vicki Wallers of the Department of Homeland Security, Yvette Diaz, an attorney with Jones Waldo, George Neckel of Jobs with Justice, and Mike Richardson from the Utah Department of Workforce Services. Approximately 50 people attended, including many members of the community.

The Salt Lake holiday party on December 7 featured Salt Lake County Clerk Sherrie Swensen, who discussed election issues including the use of election machines. This fall, Salt Lake League units have discussed the Hate Crimes study, the RDA study and an information piece on charter schools.

WEBER COUNTY

Scott Hogenson, Election Administrator for Weber County, met with the Weber League on November 21 to answer our questions about voting machines, absentee ballots and all those things we've been wondering about.

About 6% of voters took advantage of early voting. A total of 44% of registered voters voted in this election. The county had just completed a recount of the results on seven machines randomly selected by the Election Commission. The paper trail agreed with the numbers recorded by the computer. We felt confident about the results of the Weber County election as recorded on the new machines but there is still a question in some Leaguers minds about these machines nation wide, especially those that do not have a paper trail.

The Weber League is planning to have a joint "Meet Your Candidate" event in cooperation with the Women's Legislative Council on the evening of January 8. We're inviting all state legislators in Weber County.

The Weber League contacted all county commission and school board candidates and got contact information and answers to our questions. This information was posted on our web site to complement the information on the state League web site. We had about 500 hits on the site during the campaign season.

Marilyn Odell

Here is an overview of the League's Home page. www.lwvutah.org

Take a moment and familiarize yourself with what is available to you. At a glance you can learn a great deal about the league.

- **WHO WE ARE:** gives basic information such as our officers, policy, program, bylaws, and how to join.
- **LEGISLATIVE NEWS:** tracks the activities of the legislature during the general session and interim committees. You can find our 'KCPW' Daily Legislative Updates, Action Alerts, League Legislative Priorities including background on bills and testimony the league has given on the hill.
- **CURRENT ISSUES:** reviews important dates, state program and new studies.

- **VOTER GUIDE:** Includes all federal candidates, state legislature, state school board, and judges running in the November General election. Under local links both Salt Lake and Weber Leagues have local races.
- **LEAGUE POSITIONS:** Includes our newest position statements (Nuclear Waste, Juvenile Justice and Water Taxation), and the LWVUS and LWVU "Impact on Issues" (all position statements).
- **PUBLICATIONS:** Includes our VOTER and new studies. (Redevelopment Agency and Hate Crimes)
- **HELPFUL LINKS:** Includes National and Local League links, The President and Congress, Utah State Government, Utah Cities & Counties and Elections



Who We Are

- [Our principles & Mission](#)
- [Objectives](#)
- [How the League Works](#)
- [Officers](#)
- [Policies](#)
- [Bylaws](#)
- [The Voter](#)
- [How to Join](#)
- [Donations](#)
- [Contact us](#)

WELCOME

We're so glad you found us. Take time to explore "Who We Are" so you know all about us. Of particular interest at this time of year is the Election. Don't hesitate, try all the buttons!! There is so much information to explore.



Legislative News

Current Issues

Voter Guide

WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WINTER

League Positions

- [Important Dates](#)
- [The 2007 General Session of the Legislature](#)

Publications

- [Call to LWVU Convention](#)
- [Program Making Form](#): Members can click her to fill out their own program recommendations to be considered at State Convention
- New LWVU Studies on ['Redevelopment Agencies'](#) and ['Hate Crimes'](#)

Helpful Links

Local Leagues

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

MEMORIAL FUND

The Memorial Fund, a joint savings account for both the State and the Salt Lake Leagues, has a current principal of \$5000.00, which is used for office supplies and/or equipment. Stuart Gygi, the Salt Lake League Treasurer, is the chair. In addition both Salt Lake and State have two representatives. The Memorial Fund 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.

This fund is available for contributions from members or non-members in memory of League members who have passed away.

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

Susan Aldous	Stephanie Harpst	Sarah Rule
Alma Anderson	Anne Hatch	Mary Sanderson
Lois Arnow	Polly Hough	Science Fiction Writers of America
Joyce Barnes	Mary House	Smith's Food and Drug Stores
Beehive Credit Union	Intermountain Commercial Record	Carolyn Somer
Nanette Benowitz	Boyer Jarvis	Alice Steiner
Dot Bolieau	Barbara Kitchens	Tina Hose Sumner
Georgene Bond	Theresa Lane	Sharon Walkington
Pat Brim	Sue Lind	United Way of Northern Utah
LouAnn Christensen	Mary Lou Huffmon	Sandra Wilkins
Peggy Christensen	Natalie Mallinckrodt	Luellyn Withrow
Catherine Cooper	Jessica Mathewson	Corinne Wunderli
Credit Union Service Corporation	Merrilee McCall	Earl and Corinne Wunderli Family Foundation
Beverly Dalley	Nancy Melling	Betty Yanowitz
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Kathy Dorn	Patti O'Keefe	Anne Zeigler
Pat Eager	Marilyn Odell	Patricia Ziegler
Kathy Fitzgerald	Wilma Odell	Marelynn Zipser
Phyllis Frankel	Mary Olsen	
Irene Fryer	Kay Papulak	
Janice Gygi	Tom Proffitt	
Emily Hall	Evelyn Richards	

The League of Women Voters of Utah would like to thank:
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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 will provide important support for advancing our critical work to safeguard the vote. Contribute today!