



THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS of the CINCINNATI AREA

# THE VOTER

103 Wm. H. Taft Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45219  
513-281-8683 Fax: 513-281-8714  
info@lwvcincinnati.org www.lwvcincinnati.org

October, 2013

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization which encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership is open to all women and men over 18. For information call 513-281-8683, or write to the LWVCA office at 103 Wm H Taft Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45219, or email at info@lwvcincinnati.org

**LWV DIVERSITY POLICY**

The League of Women Voters recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making.

The LWVCA affirms its commitment to actively seek diversity in its membership, leadership and programs.



LWVCA Education Fund is a member of Community Shares

**OCTOBER UNITS:**

**CASTING AN  
EDUCATED VOTE**

*By Sandra Mowell,  
Vice President for Voter Service*



Our October unit meetings will focus on preparing ourselves to cast our ballots as thoughtful voters --- this is what LWV is all about!

Be sure to consult your "Who & What of Elections" and SmartVoter for information on candidates and issues. At our unit meeting we will be discussing the issues on the November 5 ballot: a city charter amendment on pensions, county zoo levy, and library levy. The information provided on these issues has been thoroughly researched by our hard working committees. Kudos to **Chris Moran**, **Carolyn Miller**, City Government Committee Chair and **Janet Smith**, County Government Committee Chair and their respective committees for all of their meticulous efforts!

For over 93 years, our beloved League has been helping all voters feel confident in casting an educated vote and in knowing their rights as voters when they step into that voting arena. Unfortunately, my choice of word there, arena, is becoming the norm when it comes to voting. What should be a simple, basic right that citizens exercise proudly is twisted into a convoluted battle against apathy and forces restricting election rights. This year, in addition to learning about our city and county issues, we will be discussing current events that affect our rights as voters.

After last year's elections, a number of voting irregularities were taken up by the Hamilton County Board of Elections (BOE). Voters were referred to the Prosecutor's office for investigation and possible charges. Currently the BOE is spending a lot of time and money investigating voter anomalies; approximately 175 voter challenges have been made to the BOE since March. In November would it surprise you to find "challenged voter" by your name in the poll book? Would you know what to do? Attend your unit meeting for this timely discussion.

Please join us and bring a friend! They'll thank you later!



*"They are changing the rules, cutting polling hours and imposing requirements intended to suppress the vote. ... I've seen this before. I've lived this before. Too many people struggled, suffered and died to make it possible for every American to exercise their right to vote. We have come too far together to ever turn back. So we must not be silent. We must stand up, speak up and speak out. We must march to the polls like never before."*

-- Congressman John L. Lewis,  
September 2012

## CO-PRESIDENTS' LETTER

The League continues to be a busy place as we move into election time. **Sandra Mowell**, Voter Service Vice President, is recruiting and organizing volunteers for the various Voter Service activities and recently drew several League experts together to present a training session for the Speakers' Bureau. **Mary Kay Gardner**, Office Volunteer Coordinator, is training volunteers to work in the office, **Susan Steele** is working with Woman's City Club in launching a joint new members' recruitment program, and Treasurer **Margaret Standriff** is working with Investment Committee Chair **Fred Heyse** and his committee to update financial policies and procedures.



Two newly-created groups, the Fund Development Steering Team and the Marketing Steering Team, have met several times to create plans for fundraising and community outreach. These teams are made up of League members who are experienced in their areas of focus, and some excellent ideas have already been proposed. Your League always welcomes new volunteers. Please call the office and let us know what you would like to do. If you would like to learn to do something new, we can provide the training for you.

We hope you'll join us on the Cincinnati Dinner Train in November to celebrate our Voter Service work over the election period. You can find details elsewhere in this Voter issue.

On a sad note, we were sorry to learn of Former Governor John Gilligan's passing. He was a supporter of League activities, and his efforts to create a better Cincinnati will be missed.

**In League,**

*Helen and Don Rhoad*

**2013-14 Co-Presidents**

## ***LEAGUE MEETS DELEGATION FROM IRAQ***

*By Marty Harrington*



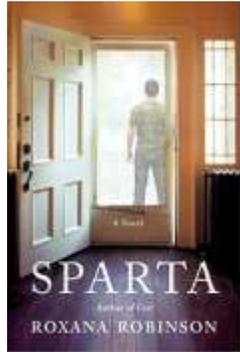
The League was privileged to host a delegation of academics from Iraq on Monday, September 16. Their primary interest was in measures to move forward the status of women. One of the most interesting conversations was about a provision in the new Iraqi constitution that requires a quota of 25% of legislators to be female. They asked our opinion on this and got a variety of responses from the League side of the table! When we compared the requirement with our own US experience with Affirmative Action, they knew exactly what we were talking about.

Representing the League were Presidents Helen Rhoad and Don Rhoad, Nancy Forbriger, Marty Harrington, Marge Davis, and Louise Stinchcomb.

## Book Review: *Sparta*, by Roxana Robinson

Review by Sara Johnson

We have all become aware of the post-traumatic stress disorder many military personnel bring home from combat. But, do we really know how it affects people? In the beautifully written novel *Sparta*, by Roxana Robinson, Conrad, a much-loved son and successful college student of the Classics, decides to serve his country in the Marines. Shortly after he enlists, war is declared in Iraq, and Conrad spends 4 exhaustive and emotional years trying to bring his squadron and himself home safely. As he returns, he cannot turn off the events of the war and re-enter his former life. He is neither here nor there. Every American will want to better understand PTSD. Our veterans are suffering. This book is written with clarity and compassion.



**GET YOUR  
LEAGUE  
GEAR  
HERE!**

By Nancy Dawley

During the election season you may want to advertise the League of Women (and men!) Voters. Remember, we now have tee shirts, sweatshirts, pins, and stickers for your comfort and enjoyment.

Take a look, and see if there is something you want for yourself or a friend. The League gets a small amount from each purchase.

[www.cafepress.com/lwvcincinnati](http://www.cafepress.com/lwvcincinnati)



## ALL ABOARD THE DINNER TRAIN!

**Saturday,  
November 23  
6:00 p.m.**

After all our work informing Cincinnati area citizens about the candidates and issues, we're planning a special League evening to celebration following the November election.

Saturday evening, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, we will enjoy dinner together as we ride downtown and back on the Cincinnati Dinner Train! We have negotiated a special price for the first 60 Leaguers (members and spouses) who indicate in writing that they wish to join the group. A wait list covering interested friends will be created to enable them to join us if space permits. We will have a 60-person dining car all to ourselves – it'll be The League Car that night! Here are some additional details:

- The Dinner Train departs at 6:00 PM from its boarding location adjacent to the BBQ Revue restaurant, 4725 Madison Road.
- Each person will enjoy a meal that includes four courses with a choice of three entrees – hickory smoked prime rib, salmon with hoisin glaze, or boneless chicken breast sautéed in a white wine sauce. Vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free meals also are available. As the Cincinnati Dinner Train literature says, "All dinners include a side of scenery."
- The three-hour trip goes south to Lunken Airport, then west along the Ohio River to the Montgomery Inn at the Boathouse, where the locomotive relocates to the other end of the train for the trip back to the starting point.
- Your special League price will be \$55.73 per person. The only additional costs will be your tip for the servers and any beverages that you purchase (coffee, tea, and water are included). The usual Dinner Train cost is \$74.50 per person.



This is a celebration that you won't want to miss! You'll enjoy good friends, excellent food, attentive service, and beautiful scenery. To reserve your place on the Dinner Train, simply send your email request, with the number of people in your party, to Don Rhoad. We'll ask for your check and entrée choice soon, but not yet. A waiting list will be established for those who express an interest after the 60-person capacity is filled, in the event of cancellations.

Don't delay! Send your reservation email now!

## AN ADVENTURE RIDING THE BUS

By Chris Moran, Transportation Liaison

Metro\*Plus is here. On a warm August morning, **Helen Rhoad, Don Rhoad, Carolyn Miller** and **Chris Moran** took a free bus ride during the first week of Metro\*Plus service. We boarded the bus about 9 A.M. at Vine and McMillan, a block from the League office. About 10 minutes later we got off at Third Street, walked a half block and picked up the Metro\*Plus bus going to Kenwood.

The blue and white buses with the destination identified in bright white letters above the windshield are readily distinguished from Metro's regular fleet. Even boarding the bus is different. The entrance is even with the sidewalk and passengers walk right on - no steps!



Service is about every 10-15 minutes at stops with the Metro\*Plus sign. We enjoyed the ride and seeing sights we don't see when we drive. Mothers with children, Reds fans going to the game, a rider who put his bike on the front rack, and students joined along the route. The fare is the same as the regular routes but the service is faster with fewer stops. The route supplements the Rte. 4 Montgomery Road Service but uses Vine and Walnut Streets in the Uptown/Downtown area.

Try it; you'll like it! And why not purchase the new option to pay the fare, a Stored-Value Card. For more information visit [www.go-metro.com/](http://www.go-metro.com/).



## SAVE THE DATE: 10/19/13 Riverfront Transit Center Open House

Saturday  
October 19, 2013  
10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Second Street at Race Street

On October 19th, Metro will showcase its Riverfront Transit Center at an open house. There will be music, giveaways, and guided tours.

The Transit Center, under Second Street from Central to Broadway, is used for buses for Bengals and Reds games and other special events. It is expected to be used for staging of bus rapid transit, Eastern Corridor Rail, Streetcar and other systems. The building features mosaic art panels and an artwork commemorating African-American Olympian William DeHart Hubbard.

# Education and Desegregation: LWVCA position update

*By Burt Roehr, Education Committee*

At the LWVCA's 2012 Annual Meeting, members voted to update our local position on Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS). In our November 2013 unit discussions, members must decide how to respond: Should we retain the position as it is stated? Should we drop it? Is a new study of Cincinnati Public Schools needed? If so, what should its scope be?

## **League Positions:**

The portion of the LWVCA position under review reads as follows:

### **“Support of Policies and Programs Leading to Improved Educational Opportunity.**

**Position:** The LWVCA supports different approaches to achieve high quality integrated education for every child. Methods of desegregation that the LWVCA supports include: alternative schools, open enrollment, pairing of schools, redistricting. The LWVCA supports a program of educating the public for school desegregation. We support the League's participation in the desegregation plan. The LWVCA supports open enrollment in all Hamilton County area schools if there is no financial burden to the receiving district.”

*The portion of our position pertaining to CPS levies and bond issues is not included in this update.*

Our new official LWVUS position, **“Federal Role in Public Education”** states that: “The League of Women Voters believes that an equitable, quality public education is critical for students.” It then describes how that should be attained. Our LWV Ohio education positions deal with standards and financing education.

## **Cincinnati Background:**

In Cincinnati, desegregation by court action began in 1964 when the NAACP sued the Cincinnati Board of Education on behalf of Tina Deal and 44 other black students. U.S. District Judge John Peck ruled that the Board did not intentionally segregate the schools. In 1971 the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case. Many Leaguers recall the filing of the Bronson suit against the CPS Board of Directors in May 1974. It sought desegregation, a halt to school construction, and racial balance in staff assignments. The case settled in 1984; appeals, re filings, and further requests to the courts lasted until 2008, when the case file was closed without explanation.

In response to the order to desegregate, Cincinnati Public Schools initiated a system of “magnet” schools that would be racially balanced. Each school was organized around a way of teaching (for example, Montessori), language instruction (for example, Fairview's German Language), arts (for example, SCPA). However, since the agreement did not involve suburban schools, area schools remain overwhelmingly segregated. Starting with the 2013-2014 school year, Cincinnati Public Schools has open enrollment, meaning that while Cincinnati residents receive priority, students from outside the city may also attend Cincinnati magnet schools without paying tuition.

## **Discussion questions:**

More information will be forthcoming in the November Study Guide and in the units, but there are some questions we would like League members to consider prior to those meetings. They may help you to decide what direction you want our League to take on future education issues.

- In your opinion, is desegregation still an important issue that needs League advocacy?
- Is it possible to define “equity” in a way that is measurable?
- What are your thoughts about the present admission policies for the magnet schools? What other methods could CPS use to assure that every student is treated fairly? Current academic capability? First come-first in? Race? Gender?
- Should we remain focused on Cincinnati Public Schools, or should we direct our attention to other districts in the area? Should our local position concerning levies and bond issues for CPS expanded to include all school districts in Hamilton County?
- Do our State and National positions on public education provide sufficient information for action on CPS issues?

Please call or email LWVCA Education Committee Chair Burton Roehr with your thoughts on the above questions. Those responses will help us determine the direction of the unit discussions.

# ELECTION 2013: CANDIDATE DEBATES/FORUMS



This fall we have received many requests to partner on candidate events. Our LWVCA presence has been sought heavily for one reason – our solid reputation as a trusted source for election information. Some of the events we will be sponsoring this election season include:

Monday, September 23, 2013: 6:30 pm Reception; 7-9 pm Program

## **Finding Common Ground:**

### **An Innovative Candidate-Citizen Conversation**

*Come share your perspectives on Neighborhood Development with Cincinnati City Council Candidates. This forum will engage candidates to hear citizen voices, create new possibilities for consensus and demonstrate collaboration with other candidates.*

St. John's Unitarian, 320 Resor Avenue, Clifton

Parking available at Fairview School (off Clifton Avenue)

Cosponsors: League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area, Cincinnati Association, Woman's City Club, Urban League, AIR Inc., Citizens for Civic Renewal

Saturday, October 5, 2013: 6 pm social hour; 7 pm program

## **Cincinnati City Candidate Forum at the Greenwich**

*Join us at 6:00 pm for a social hour with light hors d'oeuvres and stay for questions and answer sessions with candidates for Cincinnati Council. Meet candidates before and after their sessions. An opportunity to submit questions for the forum will be available through the CityBeat Facebook page.*

The Greenwich, 2442 Gilbert Avenue

Moderator: Kathy Wilson, CityBeat

Media Panel: Kevin Osborne, politics and government reporter for WCPO Digital and

German Lopez, staff writer, CityBeat.

Cosponsors: LWVCA, The Greenwich, CityBeat

October 8, 2013: 7-8 pm

## **Cincinnati Mayoral Debate**

*Broadcast LIVE without commercial interruption on WKRC-TV Channel 12 as well as streamed live on local12.com.*

Freedom Center, 50 E Freedom Way

OR VIEW ON Channel 12 or local12.com

Moderator: Dan Hurley

Media Panel: Jeff Hirsh of WKRC-TV, Lincoln Ware, Buzz Radio

Cosponsors: LWVCA, WKRC-TV, Cincinnati Enquirer

October 15, 2013: 7-8 pm

## **Cincinnati Mayoral Debate**

*This debate is **not** open to the public but a limited number of tickets will be available to our members. Please visit our website at [www.lwvcincinnati.org](http://www.lwvcincinnati.org) or call the office at 281-8683 for details. The debate will be televised live on WCPO-TV Channel 9*

School for the Creative & Performing Arts 108 Central Parkway, Downtown

OR VIEW ON WCPO Channel 9

Cosponsors: LWVCA, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, Cincinnati Association, and WCPO-TV.

October 23, 2013: 6-8 pm

## **Cincinnati Board of Education Candidates Forum**

*Open to the Public. Eight Candidates (one incumbent, seven non-incumbents) are running for four open seats.*

Mayerson Academy, 2650 Highland Ave

Moderator: Dan Hurley

Cosponsors: LWVCA, Parents for Public Schools, Women's City Club, Cincinnati Association, American Jewish Committee.



## ACT ONE: Program brings together partners for civic engagement and growth

Last month, LWVCA and Woman's City Club jointly announced [Act One](#): a unique opportunity for adults under 35 to become civically active in Cincinnati. The program will feature memberships in both organizations, mentoring, opportunities for civic engagement and tailored networking events during the year of the program which will run for approximately 12 months starting October 2013.

“We are excited to be doing **Act One** together because our organizations collectively have nearly 200 years of experience in civic engagement in Cincinnati,” said Susan Noonan, president of Woman’s City Club. “We welcome the ideas and energy of younger members, and we want the opportunity to invest in them.”

“The strength of both of our both organizations is the coming together of citizens to make a positive change in our community,” said Helen Rhoad, LWVCA co-president. “We want citizens of all ages to feel their voices can be heard. Those who are selected for this program will be given a great education in the civic engagement with opportunities to learn and network.”



## ELECTRONICS RECYCLING HAMILTON COUNTY

October is the final month for free recycling of electronics in 2013 including televisions, computers, batteries, phones and more. This is free for Hamilton County residents with proof of identification. It is not for businesses or organizations. There are 2 new sites in Hamilton County you can go to on Saturdays from 8am until noon. One location is 4538 Kellogg Avenue near Lunken Airport; the other is 5038 Beech Street, Norwood.

For more info, visit [hamiltoncountyclecycling.org](http://hamiltoncountyclecycling.org) or call 946-7766.

## EASTERN DAY UNIT — SAME DAY, NEW WEEK

It still starts at noon on Thursday; and it’s still located at the Marjorie P. Lee Dining Hall. But the Eastern Day Unit will henceforth meet on

## THE FIRST THURSDAY

of every month!

. Contact Unit Leader Dottie Cowan with any questions.

Thanks!

## WEBSITE COACHING AVAILABLE!

One-on-one help is available to anyone interested in learning how to help maintain the new LWVCA website. Volunteers are still needed to aid in keeping our site up-to-date by adding text, photos and links to specific pages. For Unit Chairs, Committee Chairs, and others who might like to have information about their respective activities available on the website, this is a great opportunity to see how easy (or challenging) the website would be for you to work with.

If interested, please call the office to set an appointment for one of these sessions - first call, first served! *(Coaches available at the LWVCA office by appointment only during the times shown below. "Drop-ins" cannot be accommodated. Thank you for your understanding!)*

Thursday, Oct. 10: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm  
Wednesday, Oct. 16: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm  
Saturday, Oct. 19: 10:30 am - Noon  
Tuesday, Oct. 29: 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

# NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE NEWS

## Innovation in Agriculture

Changing CO<sub>2</sub>course Series  
**Sunday, October 27 at  
 7:00 pm**  
 St John's UU Church, 320  
 Resor, Clifton

**Speaker:** Kathleen Smythe, Professor  
 Environmental Sustainability, Xavier  
 University

**Cosponsors:** Woman's City Club,  
 LWVCA and St. John's Unitarian  
 Universalist Church



Agriculture may be the single most important and most ecologically disruptive development in human history. This session will focus on ways that people are creating new agricultural systems.

- **Wes Jackson** at the Land Institute is a sustainability visionary who has been working on perennial polyculture agriculture that mimics the Kansas prairie. [www.landinstitute.org](http://www.landinstitute.org)
- The **Media Working Group's** *Coming to Ground* documentary reviews Kentucky agriculture and its responses to regulatory change, climate change and globalization. [comingtground.org/coming-to-ground-the-film/](http://comingtground.org/coming-to-ground-the-film/)
- **Dr. Kathleen Smythe** is Professor of African History and Environmental Sustainability at Xavier University, working directly with the University Provost on sustainability initiatives. She is particularly interested in what individual and collective responses can and should be to the warming climate.

Join a thoughtful discussion about important new ideas in agriculture. This lecture helps us prepare for the LWV agriculture position update in March.

## Agriculture, Food, and Safety

The 2010 Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) was the first upgrade in federal food safety laws since 1938. The Food and Drug Administration has now released its proposed (draft) Produce Rule and Preventive Controls Rule under FSMA and is seeking public comments. The deadline for comments is November 15; comments may be made online or by mail. To read some background about the FSMA see:

- [www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA](http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA)
- [sustainableagriculture.net/fsma/](http://sustainableagriculture.net/fsma/)

"I'm really interested in how you create a whole new economy of recycling. It's literally the 'underground economy.' All this stuff that on the surface creates growth and profit, ends up with waste, junk, and CO<sub>2</sub>. So how do you make it economic to bring new players into the ball game?" ~ Peter Senge

"We live in a disposable society. It's easier to throw things out than to fix them. We even give it a name - we call it 'recycling.'" ~ Neil LaBute

## CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE

*By John Hunter, Natural Resources Committee*

Our fossil fuel-driven civilization is profoundly changing the climate of our planet. Heat-raising gases such as carbon dioxide and methane have warmed the earth by more than a degree in the past century and irreversibly committed future generations to a hotter world with unknown but potentially catastrophic consequences. The choices made by individuals and nations today will impact the timing and nature of those changes.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will issue a new report this fall with a higher (95%) probability estimate that addresses many of the criticisms and uncertainties of its previous report. The IPCC's earlier concerns for greater climate instability caused by the higher energy level associated with increased heat have been supported by record setting drought, flooding, wildfires, tornados and hurricanes.

The September 2013 issue of *National Geographic* addresses the dramatic impacts on global coastlines from the rising sea levels caused by climate change and is an excellent, if sobering, discussion of the changes we will likely encounter as we move through the next century. I highly recommend the article, especially if you're considering moving to south Florida.



## STATE NEWS

### JUDICIAL REFORM IN OHIO: LWVO's Eight-Point Plan for an Independent Judiciary

In March, 2008, the state board approved an eight-point plan to clarify a statement in its judicial positions that "LWVO supports policies that promote the independence of the judiciary" (passed at the 2003 State Convention). This statement proved too vague for advocacy purposes, and so a committee was appointed to identify and recommend specific policies that promote a more independent judiciary, including a reexamination of our support for merit selection. The eight points for judicial independence are:

- 1) **LWVO supports the public financing of judicial campaigns**, consistent with the LWVUS position on campaign finance.
- 2) **LWVO supports increased transparency and timely reporting of corporate and individual campaign contributions to judicial candidates**, consistent with the LWVUS position on campaign finance.
- 3) **LWVO supports stricter standards for recusal**. Under Ohio's current Code of Judicial Conduct, judges are expected to disqualify themselves from cases in which their impartiality might be questioned. In practice, judges frequently do not recuse themselves even when they have received significant campaign contributions from a party or attorney appearing before them.
- 4) **LWVO supports an appointments process for judicial vacancies** wherein a bipartisan commission composed of attorneys and non-attorneys makes recommendations to the governor about candidates. Such a system has been established by executive order but should be codified through legislation.
- 5) **LWVO supports the use of a fair, impartial and non-or bi-partisan process for Judicial Performance Evaluations (JPEs)**. Similar to a routine performance evaluation encountered in most jobs, JPEs should be based on politically neutral expectations.
- 6) **LWVO supports policies that maintain the system of checks and balances/separation of powers among the three branches of government**, consistent with the LWVUS position on citizen's right to know. There is an inherent danger when the legislative or executive branch attempts to limit the powers of the judiciary in the face of unpopular decisions. Still, curbing one branch's ability to check another infringes on the constitutional separation of powers. Instead, the League should educate and motivate voters to take action if judicial independence is threatened by another branch.
- 7) **LWVO supports efforts to educate the electorate about the judicial system in general and about judicial candidates prior to elections** so that voters can make an educated evaluation of those candidates, whether they are sitting judges or not, consistent with the LWVUS position on citizen's right to know.
- 8) **LWVO supports the merit selection of supreme court and appellate court judges**. While all selection processes involve some degree of politicization, merit selection continues to be the League's ultimate goal.

### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2<sup>ND</sup>

#### "We Won't Go Back" Rally for Women's Reproductive Health Rights in Columbus



LWVO has signed on as a cosponsor of the October 2<sup>nd</sup> "We Won't Go Back" rally at the Statehouse in Columbus. The purpose of the event is to bring together women's rights supporters across Ohio to protest efforts by the Ohio General Assembly to restrict access to women's reproductive health care. The rally will begin at 11.30am.

You can read more about the event and list of cosponsors at the Facebook event page here: [www.facebook.com/events/169114606612957/](http://www.facebook.com/events/169114606612957/) (Note: This is a public page, and you do not need to be a member of Facebook to view the event listing.)

League members are welcome to attend the rally in conjunction with their local League or on their own. We will be there with the LWV Ohio banner, and it would be wonderful to have a big group of League members join us!

## LWVCA Study Pages – October 2013 Ballot Issues on Hamilton County Ballot

### CITY OF CINCINNATI ISSUES (1)

#### Issue 4: PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT (BY PETITION)

A majority affirmative vote is necessary for passage.

##### **An Amendment to the Charter of the City of Cincinnati to Add Provisions Relative to Pension and Retirement Plans for City Employees.**

Shall the Charter of the City of Cincinnati be amended to add Article XVII that would:

1. Require the City of Cincinnati to pay forecasted pension obligation shortfalls by creating sufficient new revenues, which may include new or additional taxes and fees, and/or other revenue sources, and/or by implementing sufficient cost savings, which may include cuts to city programs or services, to fund any projected shortfall of the Cincinnati Retirement System which, as determined by an independent financial audit, would result in insufficient funds being available to pay forecasted future obligations of the Cincinnati Retirement System within ten years from the date of the audit's completion;
2. Require current City employees to choose to continue to participate in a defined benefit plan with maximum allowable percentages of salary provided pursuant to retirement benefits of individual employees or enroll in a defined contribution plan under which the aggregate retirement benefits paid by the Cincinnati Retirement System may not exceed the aggregate of an employee's individual contributions, which can be made at any level, and the City of Cincinnati's contributions, which shall not exceed the employee's individual contributions, and shall not exceed nine percent;
3. Provide future City employees with only the defined contribution plan described herein;
4. Provide that no past or present City employee shall be entitled to collect retirement benefits while simultaneously earning income from the City or any other political subdivision or government agency or entity;
5. Provide for a potential cost of living adjustment for beneficiaries of the Cincinnati Retirement System not to exceed the increase in the consumer price index, but which shall not exceed a simple rate of 3% per annum, which cost of living adjustment may be temporarily suspended when necessary at the discretion of the City of Cincinnati;
6. Provide for enforcement of this amendment to the extent permitted by law and further provide that any Cincinnati resident, whether injured or not, shall have the right to bring a civil or equitable action to enforce this amendment, and be entitled to have their attorney's fees and expenses paid by the City if they prevail?

SHALL THE PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT BE ADOPTED?

YES

NO

**EXPLANATION:** This issue would add a new Article XVII to the Charter of the City of Cincinnati, requiring the City to pay, within 10 years, forecasted future pension obligations, as determined by an independent audit. The issue would also make major changes in retirement benefits for City employees. The City's retirement plan for future employees would change from a defined benefit plan (traditional fixed pension) to a defined contribution plan (similar to a 401(k) plan). Current employees in the defined benefit plan would see their maximum allowable retirement benefit reduced. Cost of living adjustments for beneficiaries of the Cincinnati Retirement System (CRS) would be capped at a simple rate linked to the consumer price index (CPI). (For details of the Charter Amendment see *"What the Amendment Would Do"* below)

This amendment would place certain provisions regarding retirement benefits into the City Charter. Currently, rules and regulations about City employees' retirement benefits and their administration are contained in the Municipal and Administrative Codes of the City.

This proposed Charter amendment was placed on the ballot by City Council as required by law in response to the collection by Cincinnati for Pension Reform Committee of a sufficient number of valid signatures on an initiative petition.

**BACKGROUND:** Cincinnati City Council established a Retirement System for its employees in 1931, four years before the introduction of Social Security. The City of Cincinnati was one of the first in the nation to offer a defined benefit pension plan to its employees. This plan provides retirement benefits, including survivor benefits, based on age, years of service and wages.

**The Cincinnati Retirement System (CRS)** is overseen by a **Board of Trustees** which operates with a mix of appointed financial professionals, and elected City workers and retirees. The Board reports to City Council annually and makes recommendations for changes to the pension plan to City Council, which must approve the changes.

**CRS** is a qualified benefit plan under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, allowing the City to opt out of Social Security. CRS currently includes 4,500 retirees and their survivors and is the main retirement benefit for 3,000 of the city's current employees. These employees do not pay into or receive Social Security and do not have an employer-sponsored 401(k) plan. CRS does not include

**LWVCA STUDY PAGES—October 2013: Ballot Issues on Hamilton County Ballot**

police and firefighters who participate in Ohio's Police and Fire Pension Fund. Retiree health care benefits are paid from a Health Care trust which is now separate from pension funds but under the overall defined benefit plan of the City.

**System Finances**

**Incoming Funds:** City workers contribute 9% of their pay to the CRS pension fund through payroll deduction. In calendar year 2013 the City is contributing 20% of its \$160 million payroll of which 1.88% is paid on behalf of current employees and the remainder goes towards the unfunded liability in the pension fund. This \$32 million City payment into the pension fund is one of the largest line items in the City's annual \$350 million operating budget.

**Expense: CRS Retirement Benefits:** Under a **Defined Benefit Plan**, retired employees receive a set monthly amount guaranteed for life. An employee's normal retirement benefit is based on his/her Final Average Salary (average of their highest five consecutive years of compensation), qualified years of service, and a Benefit Multiplier ranging from 2.2-2.5%. For an employee with 30 years of service the expected retirement benefit would be 66% of final average salary; the maximum allowed is 90% of final average salary.

**Pension Fund Shortfall**

Using complex predictions and calculations which take into account investment returns, the number of retirees, and their life expectancy, actuaries project that CRS pension fund is underfunded by about \$862 million as of the end of 2012. The fund has about 61 cents of assets for every dollar of expected liability. This unfunded pension liability was a factor in the City's bond rating recent downgrade by Moody's Investors Service.

Issues contributing to the shortfall include:

- Two recessions leading to significant investment losses;
- A growing retiree population with increased life expectancies;
- Decreasing City workforce (employee to retiree ratio is 1:1.4);
- Persistent increases in health care costs; Underfunding by the City as Employer.

For a number of years, the City's annual contribution has been less than the amount recommended by the CRS Trustees.

**Recent Changes to the Cincinnati Retirement System (CRS)**

City Council and the CRS Trustees have known about this pension shortfall for years, and have appointed Task Forces to review the situation and suggest steps to address the liability. Following the recommendations of recent Task Force reports, City Council, in 2009 and 2011, made significant changes in benefits to reduce the projected underfunding in the CRS Pension Fund including:

- Raised employee pension contribution rates from 7% to 9% over four years.
- Increased retirement age and years of service requirements.
- Reduced cost of living adjustments (COLAs) for future retirees.
- Reduced or dropped pre-retirement survivor benefits and death benefits.
- Reduced health care benefits for many retirees and required higher health cost-sharing.
- Increased the independence and professional skills of the CRS Board of Trustees.

**WHAT THE AMENDMENT WOULD DO:**

The proposed amendment **would require the City to pay off its projected \$862 million pension fund liability in 10 years**. If an independent annual audit required by the amendment demonstrates that insufficient funds will be available to pay forecasted future obligations within ten years, the City would be required to create new revenue or cut spending to fund the shortfall.

**Current retirees** would keep their pensions but the amendment would lower cost of living adjustments (COLAs).

Under the amendment, **current employees** would have the option to participate in the new defined **contribution** plan described below or to remain in the City's defined **benefit** plan with reduced benefits. In the defined benefit plan, the benefits multiplier would be reduced to 2% and capped at 1.5% for years of service after June 1, 2014. The maximum benefit would be capped at 60% of final average salary (a reduction for many employees).

**Future employees** would be eligible only for a **defined contribution plan**. This plan would allow employees to contribute a portion of their salary (no limit) to a pre-tax account. The employee would be provided a variety of investment options and be responsible for choosing how the funds in his employee account are invested. The plan would vest immediately, so the employee would be entitled to the retirement funds he or she contributed, along with the investment return earned by those funds. The City could contribute up to 9% of the employee's annual base pay. However, the amendment would not require employees to contribute to the defined contribution retirement plan, and would not require any contribution by the City to employees' retirement plans. City Council and voters would maintain the right to reduce future benefits.

**Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs)** would be revised. Currently, retirees and their beneficiaries receive COLA's of 3% per year compounded annually, while future retirees are promised a COLA of no more than 2%. Under this proposed amendment, COLA's for current and future retirees would be based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and capped at a simple non-compounding rate of 3% per year. In the proposed amendment, the City may not raise taxes or reduce services to fund COLA's and may suspend COLA's when necessary.

**Other Provisions**

The proposed amendment does not include any means for providing for disability retirement benefits and makes no reference to retiree health care benefits or survivor benefits, both of which are offered in the current CRS.

Under the proposed amendment, no past or present City employee would be entitled to collect retirement benefits while simultaneously earning income from the City or any other political subdivision or government agency or entity.

The proposed amendment would allow a City resident, whether injured or not, to bring legal action against the City to enforce the Amendment, with the burden of proof being placed on the City, and would require the City to pay "reasonable attorney fees" to successful litigants.

**PROPONENTS SAY (ARGUMENTS FOR PASSAGE):**

Cincinnati's pension fund is the City's largest long term liability and needs to be addressed. The proposal provides for a fiscally responsible way to address this liability.

City employees are entitled to a sustainable City retirement system that presents an opportunity for promised benefits to be paid.

Retirement benefits for City employees must be adjusted to protect the City's viability, public safety and the household incomes and savings of Cincinnati families.

The City has been facing a crisis in its retirement system for a long time but has not done enough to solve the problem; this plan forces the City to catch up on its funding of the pension system.

Defined contribution plans allow individuals to make their own choices about how much, they choose to invest in their retirement account and how they wish to invest their retirement savings. New younger employees may prefer to have more flexibility in how much they save for retirement.

This plan more closely resembles the private market and makes public employees' benefits more similar to their private workforce counterparts. Many businesses moved to defined contribution plans a long time ago in order to reduce company risk. It is time for the City to do the same.

**OPPONENTS SAY (ARGUMENTS AGAINST PASSAGE):**

The Cincinnati Retirement System Board has been seeking ways to provide more solid backing for the pension plan and has made considerable progress. With reforms to the system in 2011, the City has already addressed the issue of future pension costs and is making plans to pay off the accrued liability over the coming 30 years. Changes made several years ago should be given time to work.

The mandate to fund forecasted pension obligations within ten years will cause increased financial stress to the City budget. The City would be required to make significant cuts in City services, sell assets, or raise taxes in order to meet the required payments set out in the amendment.

CRS has counted on the funds paid into the defined benefit plan by current and future employees to meet its obligations to retirees. If current employees opt out and future employees are not allowed to participate, the City would have to take even more money out of general fund to meet existing retiree obligations.

Limiting the defined benefit plan final benefit to 60% of base compensation would decrease retirement pensions for a majority of employees; this is income these workers have been counting on.

Employees in the defined contribution plan may retire with nothing if their investments fail.

The proposed plan would have to be submitted to the IRS for approval. If the plan does not meet IRS requirements for the City to remain exempt from Social Security, employees and the City would both have to pay 6.2% of the employees' wages into Social Security. This would be significant added cost to the City beyond what is currently being contributed to the Retirement System on behalf of current employees.

Adding a 401(k)-style plan to City retirement options would raise administrative costs for the City.

The language of the amendment is vague, confusing, contradictory, and full of uncertainties which would lead to difficulties in implementation and would probably invite litigation.

By placing retirement plan details in the Charter, another Charter Amendment would be required to make any changes.

**COUNTY ISSUES (2)**

Hamilton County - Tax Levy - Ren-1ml 10yr-Public Library

Hamilton County - Tax Levy - Ren-0.46ml 5yr-Zoo

**Issue 1 – PROPOSED TAX LEVY PUBLIC LIBRARY OF CINCINNATI AND HAMILTON COUNTY (RENEWAL)**

A majority affirmative vote is necessary for passage.

A renewal of a tax for the benefit of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County for the purpose of **PROVIDING FUNDS FOR OPERATING EXPENSES AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS** at a rate not exceeding one (1) mill for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to ten cents (\$0.10) for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for ten (10) years, commencing in 2014, first due in calendar year 2015.

FOR THE TAX LEVY

AGAINST THE TAX LEVY

**EXPLANATION:** This tax levy renewal continues a tax of 1 mill on residential and commercial property in Hamilton County for a ten year term. The purpose of the levy is to provide funding for the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, including staffing, operating costs, and facilities maintenance.

The levy would produce \$181 million over ten years beginning in fiscal year 2015 or approximately \$18.1 million per year. The owner of a house with a market value of \$100,000 would pay approximately \$30 a year, the same as currently paid.

Under Ohio law, the Hamilton County Commissioners were required to place this issue on the ballot after the governing board of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County voted to place this ten-year levy before voters in November 2013.

**WHAT THE LEVY WILL DO:**

If the levy passes, the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (PLCHC) will use the levy funds to help fund basic operating expenses and maintenance of the Library facilities and to replace some of the lost state revenues.

**BACKGROUND:** The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, organized in 1853, was the nation’s first metropolitan, county-wide library. It is governed by a 7-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and the Common Pleas judges. The Library Board is responsible for all budgetary and operational decisions, overseeing establishment of all library branches and disposing of special funds such as endowments and grants. The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County consists of the Main Library in downtown Cincinnati and 40 branch libraries.

The library serves over half a million cardholders. The Library provides online computers to help people find jobs, access data and do schoolwork. It also maintains library services for seniors.

The Library’s primary source of funding for its annual budget is state taxes from the State Public Library Fund, making up 62% and another 31% comes from the Hamilton County property tax levy, 1st passed in 2009. Other sources of revenue to the Library include contributions, fines & fees, restricted grants and investment return from endowments.

Ohio public libraries are funded by the Public Library Fund (PLF) which receives 1.67% of the State’s General Revenue Fund tax collections. The decline in this source of funding necessitated the 1-mill levy passed in 2009 and the need to renew that 1-mill levy in 2013. In 2000, the Library received \$53.1 million in state funding. In 2013, that amount is estimated to be \$36.1 million. The 10 year PLCHC levy will enable the Library to better long term plan and continue operating costs below the state average.

**Issue 2 - 2013 CINCINNATI ZOO AND BOTANICAL GARDEN TAX LEVY**

A renewal of a tax for the benefit of Hamilton County, Ohio, for the purpose of

**PROVIDING OR MAINTAINING ZOOLOGICAL PARK SERVICES AND FACILITIES** at a rate not exceeding forty-six hundredths (0.46) mill for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to four and six -tenths cents (\$0.046) for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for five (5) years, commencing in 2013, first due in calendar year 2014.

FOR THE TAX LEVY

AGAINST THE TAX LEVY

**EXPLANATION:** This is a proposed property tax levy not to exceed forty-six one hundredths (.46 mills) of one mill, to supplement the General Fund of Hamilton County for the purpose of providing and maintaining Zoological Park Service and Facilities for five years.

This proposed 5-year levy is a renewal of an existing 5-year levy that expires at the end of 2013. The levy will generate about \$6.8 million annually. The owner of a house with a market value of \$100,000 would pay approximately \$10.60 annually, the same as currently paid. The levy was placed on the ballot by the Hamilton County Commissioners at the request of the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden (the “Zoo”) following a review by the Tax Levy Review Committee (TLRC).

**WHAT THE LEVY WOULD DO:** The Zoo levy now accounts for about 23% of the operating expenses. The Zoo projects a continued steady decrease to less than 20% by 2018. Proceeds can only be used for direct costs of operating the Zoo in one or more of the following categories: animal care, botanical gardens, and maintenance and utilities.

**BACKGROUND:** The Cincinnati Zoological Garden opened in 1875, was purchased by the City of Cincinnati in 1932 and the present day non-profit Zoological Society of Cincinnati, changed in 1987 to the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, came into being. Under contracts with the City of Cincinnati, the Society operates and maintains the real and personal property of the Zoo under a Director responsible to a Board of Trustees.

The Zoo has been receiving tax levy support since the early 1980's. The current levy provides about 23% of the Zoo's operating expenses down from 40% in 1993. The Zoo projects continued steady decrease to less than 20% by 2018. According to the Consultant review, other major zoos in the area receive higher levels of public support. Zoos provide economic benefits in addition to education, conservation and entertainment missions.

The Zoo had record daily attendance and increases in membership over the past five years. The 2007 attendance was 950,000; in 2012 attendance was 1,439,000. Probable factors contributing to the increase include: competitive admission rates during the recession, major changes to the entrance and parking facilities, new exhibits, and use of social media and traditional news outlets in effective ways. The increases in attendance and membership resulted in a \$4 million increase in annual direct operating revenues between 2007 and 2011. Annual operating expenses have increased by \$5.1 million in the same period. These are fixed expenses and have grown at a pace greater than inflation.

According to a 2012 study by the University of Cincinnati Economics Center, the Zoo contributed \$143 million to the local economy. Visitors from outside the area accounted for 46.5% of the Zoo's total economic impact due to spending at locations apart from the Zoo. The Zoo generates 1,700 jobs, \$51.7 million in household wages and benefits, and \$1.74 million in hotel, sales and income taxes tax revenue for Hamilton County, Cincinnati and other tax entities.

The Zoo hosts a four-year preparatory program – Zoo Academy and serves as the leading non-formal science educator in Southwest Ohio. Over 300,000 students participate in the Zoo's educational programs annually. The solar panels and energy efficient additions have reduced utility costs by over \$1 million per year. The Zoo has received an award from the Alliance to Save Energy for its investment in green buildings and commitment to educating visitors about energy efficient technologies and practices.

**Tax Levy Review Committee Findings** [www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hc/bocc\\_tlrc.asp?content=reports](http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hc/bocc_tlrc.asp?content=reports)

The Tax Levy Review Committee (TLRC) reviewed the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden (the "Zoo") tax levy request for the November 2013 ballot. The review included engaging consultants of Howard, Wershba and Co. to conduct a performance review of the Zoo, site visits, presentations from Zoo Board members and executive leadership, and a public hearing regarding the proposed levy.

The TLRC believes the Zoo contributes significantly to the economy and vibrancy of the entire Greater Cincinnati region. The increased attendance and revenue associated with the new offerings at the Zoo are outcomes representing a substantial return on the taxpayer investment of levy funds. There is concern about funding maintenance of the new exhibits and the historic structures and infrastructure that currently exists. From this concern, the TLRC recommends requiring the Zoo to increase payment of its qualified area expenditures, i.e. the categories noted above.

The TLRC major findings include: recommending renewal of the levy at its current millage and encouraging the Zoo to continue the trends of reducing reliance on levy funds and bolstering its financial condition.

*--Information on County Issues prepared by the LWVCA County Government Committee--*

**CITY ISSUES (4)**

City of Cheviot - Referendum on Ordinance 12-38 - Trash Collection Fee

City of Mt. Healthy - Proposed Gas Aggregation

City of Mt. Healthy - Proposed Electric Aggregation

City of North College Hill - Tax Levy - Add 4.9ml 5yr - Police

**VILLAGE / TOWNSHIP ISSUES (11)**

Vill of Golf Manor - Tax Levy - Renewal 2ml 5yr - COE

Vill of Greenhills - Proposed Charter Revision

Vill of Mariemont - Tax Levy - Renewal-3.08ml 5yr-COE

Vill of Mariemont - Tax Levy - Renewal-1ml 5yr-Recreational Purposes of The Marielders, Inc.

Vill of North Bend - Proposed Gas Aggregation

Vill of North Bend – Tax Levy – Add 2.29ml 5yr – Fire, Life Squad & EMS

Vill of Terrace Park - Tax Levy - Add 2.5ml 5yr - COE

Columbia Twp - Resolution 13-10 and Contract - Columbia Twp Jt. Economic Development Zone

Green Twp - Tax Levy - Renewal 1.9ml CPT- Fire, Police and Emergency Medical Services

Sycamore Twp - Resolution 2013-133 and Contract – Sycamore Twp JEDZ Kenwood-Northwest Jt Economic Development Zone

Symmes Twp - Tax Levy - Renewal .9ml 7yr - Roads & Bridges

**SCHOOL ISSUES (3)**

Deer Park City Sch - Tax Levy - Add 7.9ml CPT - COE and Permanent Improvements  
 Oak Hills Local Sch - Tax Levy - Additional 4.82ml 5yr - Avoiding an Operating Deficit  
 Three Rivers Local Sch - Tax Levy - Renewal 4.95ml CPT – COE

**Ballot abbreviations:**

CE = Current Expenses  
 COE = Current Operating Expenses  
 CPT = Continuing Period of Time  
 JEDZ = Joint Economic Development Zone

**Brief explanations of city/village/township issues who responded to our request for information:**

**City of Cheviot** needs an increase in revenue for Trash Collection Fee.

**City of Mt. Healthy** voters to decide if city can negotiate natural gas and electric aggregation as whole unit for best price instead of individually.

**City of North College Hill** asks voters to approve a Police Levy that will relieve a shortfall and provide training and maintain services.

**Village of Mariemont** has two levy issues – the first concerns a renewal of Current Operating Expenses, the second concerns renewal of recreational purposes of the Marielders program.

**Village of Terrace Park** asks voters to approve an increase of a 5-year levy because of substantial revenue reduction in Current Operating Expenses.

**Village of Golf Manor** is a renewal of a 5-year Tax Levy for Current Operating Expenses.

**Village of Greenhills** asks voters to approve a Proposed Charter Revision. Changes include clarification of descriptive language, making Village website the official posting place and a change in the composition of the Planning Commission.

*--Information on city/village/township issues compiled by LWVCA volunteers.--*

Complete ballot language on local issues is available at [boe.hamilton-co.org/files/files/2013 Gen Candidate List.pdf](http://boe.hamilton-co.org/files/files/2013%20Gen%20Candidate%20List.pdf)

**DEFINITIONS OF BALLOT TERMS**

**Mill** - The property tax is measured in mills; a mill is one tenth of a penny. A mill produces \$1 in tax revenue for every \$1,000 of taxable value of the property. The taxable value is 35% of the fair market value, which is determined by the County Auditor's Office. By state law, counties must revalue all real property every three years. A reappraisal was done in 2011.

**Renewal Levy** - A renewal levy is the CONTINUANCE OF AN EXISTING LEVY with the collection rate at the same dollar amount as when the levy was originally approved.

**Electric/Gas Aggregation** - Aggregation is the process in which energy is sold to consumers who have joined together as a group to buy a product, electric or natural gas. Local governments may aggregate the energy used by their residents and arrange for the purchase of electricity or natural gas as "governmental aggregators." Ohio law gives local governments the option to choose either an opt-in or opt-out form of aggregation. The "Opt-in" form requires that each consumer agrees to participate in the program before being included in the aggregation pool. It does not require voter approval at an election. The "Opt-out" form automatically includes each consumer in the aggregated pool unless the individual affirmatively decides not to participate. It requires approval by a majority of the voters at an election.

Gas aggregation issues typically read: "Shall the (name of local government) have the authority to aggregate the retail natural gas loads located in the (name of local government), and enter into service agreements to facilitate for those loads the sale and purchase of natural gas, such aggregation to occur automatically except where any person elects to opt out?"

**HAMILTON COUNTY TAX LEVY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The County appointed, 9-member, Tax Levy Review Committee (TLRC) serves in an advisory capacity to the Hamilton County Commissioners. Prior to the placement of each levy on the ballot, the TLRC hears agency requests for funding, engages a consultant to review agency financial and spending practices and considers the mid-term review of agency budget targets and contractual requirements. After studying all the information gathered, the Committee works to balance the public need for services with the ability of Hamilton County citizens to bear the tax burden to fund these services. At the completion of their review, the TLRC sends a written report of findings and recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. The Commissioners make the final decision regarding the levy that is placed before the voters.

## The State of Voting Rights in Ohio

### *What is the balance between encouraging voting and ensuring election security?*

*Many questions were raised after last fall's election, election audit and subsequent challenges, and Hamilton Board of Elections (BOE) actions. Following are questions and information for consideration and discussion:*

- 1) **Partisanship:** The League of Women Voters has a long history of encouraging voting with the goal of maximizing the proportion of citizens who vote. These efforts have always been viewed by the League as nonpartisan. *In today's political environment, are campaigns to encourage voter registration and maximize voter turnout nonpartisan? Why or Why not?*
- 2) **Provisional Ballots:** In November 2012, some voters cast absentee ballots and then also cast provisional ballots at the polls. These voters were referred to the prosecutor to be investigated for voter fraud based on staff recommendations and a vote of the Board of Elections. The system is designed to count either an absentee or a provisional ballot, but not both. This system worked; only one vote per person was counted. Nothing in the law prohibits a voter from casting both an absentee and a provisional ballot. *Should these voters be charged with voter fraud? Do you think the prosecutor bringing criminal charges of voter fraud will affect voter turnout? What part can LWVCA play in helping voters understand when they are acting within the law as they vote?*
- 3) **Privacy:** Approximately 175 voter challenges have been brought before the Hamilton County Board of Elections since March 2013. Many are challenges of addresses and names the challenger has found suspicious, including non-residential addresses. Some of these voters turned out to be law enforcement personnel concerned for their safety. Other voters who also wish to keep their residential addresses private due to safety concerns include victims of domestic violence or stalking issues. *Should legislation be considered to allow these voters to keep their residential addresses private?*
- 4) **Competency of poll workers:** The Hamilton County BOE has asked some poll workers not to return and has sent others a test to be completed, in addition to the in-person training, before assignment to work the polls. *Based on your voting experiences, do you think most poll workers are competent to enforce election law? What suggestions would you offer to make poll workers more effective?*
- 5) **Identification:** Many states are newly requiring very specific forms of government-issued photo identification in order to vote. Ohio currently allows an Ohio Driver License or State ID Card as well as utility bills, bank statements, government checks and payroll checks as long as these items include name and address that match the poll book and have been issued within 12 months of casting of the ballot. Driver licenses are commonly used as ID, but in Cincinnati about 25% of households do not have a car. *Are there sufficient grounds for changing the current standard of identification in Ohio? Do you think photo ID requirements are a reasonable precaution or an unfair barrier? What is the best way for LWV to educate on this issue?*

## YOUR 2013-2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### *Officers*

- Co-President Don Rhoad (2013-15)
- Co-President Helen Rhoad (2013-15)
- VP Organization/Members Services Pinky Kocoshis (2012-14)
- VP Program Carolyn Miller (2013-14)
- VP Voter Service Sandra Maddux Mowell (2013-15)
- Secretary Burton Roehr (2013-15)
- Treasurer Margaret Standriff (2013-14)

### *Directors*

- Nancy Dawley, Action (2012-14)
- Susan Steele, Membership (2012-14)
- Marty Harrington (2013-15)
- Marlene Muse (2013-15)



# VOTING RIGHTS ACT IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Election administration and voting rights have been contentious issues in the past twelve years, with changing information technology, demographic shifts and redistricting, and changing standards for personal identification. In Ohio we have seen legislation, lawsuits changing interpretations between different Secretaries of State and Boards of Elections. Then, in June 2013 the Supreme Court struck down Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, allowing nine states and several additional counties and municipalities to change their election laws without “pre-clearance” oversight by the Federal government. Within days of the Supreme Court ruling, several states passed significant changes to their voting laws.

LWVUS President **Elizabeth MacNamara** called the Court decision a mistake. “We need the VRA to combat these ‘second-generation barriers’ and the pernicious discrimination that is less visible than

what occurred decades ago but no less harmful to the right to vote,” she wrote. “The fact that the Department of Justice blocked over 700 voting changes they found to be discriminatory from 1982 through the VRA’s 2006 reauthorization speaks for itself.

The impact of this decision on voters will be significant and far-reaching. This decision will only embolden those who seek to create barriers to voters’ rights. Without a strong VRA, our ability to fight off anti-voter legislation and keep our elections free, fair and accessible is significantly weakened.”

“So long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote I do not possess myself. I cannot make up my mind — it is made up for me. I cannot live as a democratic citizen, observing the laws I have helped to enact — I can only submit to the edict of others.

So our most urgent request to the president of the United States and every member of Congress is to give us the right to vote. Give us the ballot and we will no longer have to worry the federal government about our basic rights. Give us the ballot and we will no



longer plead to the federal government for passage of an anti-lynching law; we will by the power of our vote write the law on the statute books of the southern states and bring an end to the dastardly acts of the hooded perpetrators of violence. Give us the ballot and we will transform the salient misdeeds of blood-thirsty mobs into calculated good deeds of orderly citizens. Give us the ballot and we will fill our legislative halls with men of good will, ...Give us the ballot and we will place judges on the benches of the South who will “do justly and love mercy,” and we will place at the head of the southern states governors who have felt not only the tang of the human, but the glow of the divine. Give us the ballot and we will quietly and nonviolently, without rancor or bitterness, implement the Supreme Court’s decision.”

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., May 17, 1957.*

“To those who seek to avoid action by their National Government in their own communities;

who want to and who seek to maintain purely local control over elections, the answer is simple: Open your polling places to all your people. Allow men and women to register and vote whatever the color of their skin. Extend the rights of citizenship to every citizen of this land.

There is no constitutional issue here. The command of the Constitution is plain. There is no moral issue. It is wrong—deadly wrong—to deny any of your fellow Americans the right to vote in this country. There is no issue of States rights or national rights. There is only the struggle for human rights. I have not the slightest doubt what will be your answer.”

*President Lyndon Baines Johnson, March 15, 1965*

## HEALTH CARE COVERAGE AVAILABLE FOR INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

*By Nancy Dawley, Action Director*

The Ohio Health Insurance Marketplace will help you get coverage that meets your needs and fits your budget. **Open enrollment begins October 1, 2013.**

This coverage is for people who do not have insurance through an employer or want to compare if they can get better coverage than their employer offers. **If you currently have Medicare, you do not need to make any changes.**

If you do not use the Internet, or have other questions, use the **CALL CENTER** at **800.706.7893**, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

**The Healthcare website will lead you through the process, or provide you with a live chat option. Use this link first** to get a list of preparatory steps: [www.healthcare.gov/how-can-i-get-ready-to-enroll-in-the-marketplace](http://www.healthcare.gov/how-can-i-get-ready-to-enroll-in-the-marketplace)

The full website for the Healthcare Marketplace is [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov). Please share this with family and friends, so they can take advantage of making informed health care choices.

**HealthCare.gov**

## LEAGUE LINGO

(a continuing series)

Otherwise known as

"Do you understand what I'm saying?"

One of the things that gives the League special credibility is its long and rich history of dealing with issues. All those years of working out procedures and terms can sometimes leave newer members at a loss, however. Here is a snippet from our glossary to help everyone get up to speed!

**CONCURRENCE:** Agreement of League members with position reached by a small group or another League.

**CONSENSUS:** Collective opinion of League members on a particular subject. Also, process used to arrive at positions on issues.

**TAX STATUS 501(c)(3):** Not-for-profit organization that is exempt from federal taxes. In addition, corporate and individual contributions are tax deductible. The LWVCA Education Fund is a 501(c)(3).

**TAX STATUS 501(c)(4):** Not-for-profit organization that is exempt from federal taxes. Contributions are not tax deductible. The LWVCA is a 501(c)(4).

### *IN MEMORIAM...*

It is with regret we note the recent passing of the following League Members:

- **Clare Weinshenker**, who joined the League in 1959, passed June 10, 2013.
- **Barbara "Bobby" MacLeod**, who joined the League in 1958, passed September 2, 2013.

Both Clare and Barbara were Life Members of the LWVCA.

## *The Voter* Collating Schedule\* 2013 – 2014

August 22  
September *Voter*  
**LWVCA Board**

September 19  
October *Voter*  
**Warren/Butler**

October 24  
November/December *Voter*  
**Central Evening**

December 19  
January *Voter*  
**Anderson**

January 23, 2014  
February *Voter*  
**Eastern Day and Office Volunteers**

February 20  
March *Voter*  
**Central North/Hilltop**

March 20  
April *Voter*  
**Metro Day**

April 17  
May/June *Voter*  
**Northeast Evening**

June 19  
July/August *Voter*  
**Central North/Hilltop**

*\*All dates are subject to change. Call Pinky Kocoshis  
233-0972 when your Unit's time is coming up!*

## Join the League of Women Voters

***Because democracy is not a spectator sport!***

All citizens, male and female, 18 years and older, are welcome. Take the opportunity now to support our work promoting democracy and civic engagement.

Dues include Cincinnati, Ohio, and National membership, including newsletters from LWVCA and LWVO.

- Individual - \$60.00
- Household - \$80.00
- Student - \$25.00
- Dues pose a hardship. I can pay \_\_\_\_\_
- Optional additional deductible contribution: \_\_\_\_\_

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone:

\_\_\_\_\_

Email:

\_\_\_\_\_

Mail to LWVCA, 103 Wm. H. Taft, Cincinnati, OH 45219

*The Voter* is the official monthly newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area (LWVCA).

Editors:

Rina Saperstein and Marty Harrington

Layout/Design:

Marty Harrington and Phyllis Nesselroad

***Please submit articles to:***

[newsletter@lwcincinnati.org](mailto:newsletter@lwcincinnati.org)

**Next deadline: Friday 10/11/13**  
for the ***November/December*** issue



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of the CINCINNATI AREA**

103 Wm. H. Taft Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45219  
 513-281-8683 Fax: 513-281-8714  
 info@lwvcincinnati.org www.lwvcincinnati.org

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**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



**OCTOBER 2013 - LEAGUE ACTIVITIES** - All meetings are open to the public and are held at the League Office, 103 Wm. Howard Taft, *unless otherwise noted*. Bring a friend! (All meeting dates/times subject to change. Please be sure to check the calendar on our website [www.lwvcincinnati.org](http://www.lwvcincinnati.org) for the most up-to-date meeting and activity information)

Tuesday	Oct 1	2 pm	LWVCA Board Meeting
Tuesday	Oct 1	5 pm	Education Committee meeting, LWVCA Conference Room
Thursday	Oct 3*	Noon	Eastern Day Unit - Marjorie P. Lee Retirement Community, 3550 Michigan Ave.
Saturday	Oct 5	6 pm	Cincinnati City Council Candidates Forum -The Greenwich, 2442 Gilbert Ave
Tuesday	Oct 8	Noon	Hilltop North Unit - Friendship UMC, Springfield Pike & Fleming Rd.
Tuesday	Oct 8	7 pm	Anderson Unit - Government Center, Community Room, 7850 Five Mile Rd
Tuesday	Oct 8	7 pm	Mayoral Debate WKRC TV - Channel 12
Tuesday	Oct 8	7:30 pm	Warren/Butler County Unit - Mason UMC, 773 Mason-Montgomery Rd
Wednesday	Oct 9	7:00 pm	Fund Development Steering Committee - 2nd Floor Conference Rm
Wednesday	Oct 9	7:15 pm	Central Evening Unit
Thursday	Oct 10	7 pm	Natural Resources Committee
Friday	Oct 11		Submissions deadline for November/December Voter
Monday	Oct 14	Noon	Housing Committee
Monday	Oct 14	7 pm	Northeast Evening Unit - Madeira Public Library, Miami and Euclid Roads
Tuesday	Oct 15	7 pm	Mayoral Debate - WCPO TV - Channel 9
Wednesday	Oct 16	Noon	Metro Day Unit
Tuesday	Oct 22	7 pm	County Government Committee
Wednesday	Oct 23	7 pm	Board of Education Candidate Forum, Mayerson Academy
Saturday	Oct 26	10 am	Discussion Leader Briefing for November
Tuesday	Oct 29	6:30 pm	Investment Committee
Wednesday	Oct 30	5:30 pm	Program Development Committee (PDC) - NOTE DATE CHANGE
Wednesday	Oct 30	7 pm	Discussion Leader Briefing for November - NOTE DATE CHANGE

\* Note ~ Eastern Day Unit date changed to the first Thursday hence forward.