



A nonpartisan organization that encourages informed participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DALLAS

February
2007

VOTER

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It's Susan B. Anthony Luncheon Time!



Laura

Come hear
Susan's inspiring words
as delivered by
Brandi Andrade, Ph.D.
and honor our awardee
Laura V. Estrada



Brandi

Making a Difference

Eleanor Sutherland, Dallas League Historian

"More people enjoy the opportunity to vote. Voting is a more private process and is available to more people. Women serve on juries. Voters are able to judge candidates by their stated views on issues. City, county, and education boards and commissions and councils are monitored and held accountable to citizens they serve. The process of city and county government is accessible to the public. Informed, knowledgeable citizens advocate for issues that have been thoroughly studied, discussed and agreed upon at the grass roots level. And the women of Texas have constitutionally guaranteed rights."

The above quote from our 1993 celebration, "Fifty-five Years of Making a Difference." That year we marked those 55 years with an informal history of the Dallas League which laid out the many accomplishments of individuals and the League as a whole in influencing local and state officials and laws that affect us all.

For many years, members of the League of Women Voters have been saying, "We can make a difference." And, in fact, we *have* made a difference. It is no exaggeration to say that the League has in many cases worked to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. Perhaps that is what caused State Senator George Parkhouse to refer to his Dallas League constituents from the floor of the Texas Senate as "The Plague of Women Voters."

No doubt that label and worse were applied to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt and the other women who refused to be denied their right to vote. They left a legacy that was equal parts vision and challenge.

President's Post

2006-2007

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At the League's National Convention last year, a momentous change was made to the League Bylaws. The words "**of citizens**" were removed from the purpose clause, thus acknowledging that **we educate and encourage not just citizens but the entire public - including immigrants** - to take an active role in government and to act on governmental issues. Our mission statement now reads:

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

The League's **mission, therefore, is no longer limited to serving "citizens"** in a narrow, legal way-- meaning only those people who are eligible to vote, but in the broadest, most inclusive sense--meaning **anyone who cares about where they live and how to make it a better place**. However, while the League's purpose clause has deleted reference to citizenship, our **eligibility for voting membership remains "citizens at least 18 years of age."**

Matt Leighninger, longtime Study Circles associate with the League, tells us about **21st century citizens** in his new book "**The Next Form of Democracy: How Expert Rule is Giving Way to Shared Governance.**" According to Leighninger, modern citizens may have less free time to spend, but they probably have higher levels of education and the aid of new tools like the Internet in order to study issues and give recommendations, even on technical policy decisions. Moreover, he says, citizens today want to feel that their civic engagement time is making a meaningful impact. Yet, while citizens feel more entitled to governmental services and protection, they also have less faith that government will be able to deliver on its promises and are consequently **seeking more open and participatory forms of government**. Of course, this is music to Leaguers' ears! My reason, however, for bringing this to your attention is to make you aware that both inside and outside the League, the **term "citizen" is currently taking on new meaning**.

You might be interested and surprised to learn, as I, that from the founding of our country **until the 1920's, non-citizens were allowed to vote**. (LWV-Minnesota Education Fund, *Immigration in Minnesota: Challenges and Opportunities*, May 2006.) Currently, they can vote in local elections in some municipalities in Maryland and Massachusetts as well as in school board elections in New York City and Chicago. Technically, the Constitution does not require voters to be citizens; it grants the powers of regulating **voter qualifications to the states, not the**

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This Month Units Will Meet on February 7 and 8

Please note: these dates fall on the first Wednesday and second Thursday.

Did you know that your **Deputy Voter Registrar card** is expired and needs to be renewed? **All members wishing to be trained and deputized to register voters** should come to a convenient Unit meeting for an update. New citizen registrations are scheduled in March and June.

Units are putting together interesting baskets for the Silent Auction at the Susan B. Anthony Luncheon. **Bring your contribution.** If you don't get a call or an email, contact the appropriate Unit Leader about the theme for your unit's basket.



Adrienne Williams, Unit Coordinator, with Joanne Early, Organization Vice President

Oak Cliff Unit – Wed. at 10:00AM

Co-Leaders:

Mildred Pope 214-374-8067

Kristin DeLoach 972-213-8637

Primrose Oaks Community Room
2999 S. Hampton Rd at Perryton Rd

East Dallas Unit – Wed. at Noon

Leader **Suzanne Wills** - 214-324-1594

Lakewood Branch Library
6121 Worth near Abrams & La Vista

Evening Unit – Wed. at 6:30PM

Leader **Arline Pitt** - 972-243-3966

Central Market (2nd Floor)
5750 E. Lovers Lane at Greenville

Mockingbird Unit – Thurs. at 9:30AM

Co-Leaders:

Eleanor Sutherland 214-368-8215

Pat Vaughan 214-350-2623

St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church
6525 Inwood Rd. NW Corner at Mockingbird

North Dallas Unit - Thurs. at 9:30AM

Leader **Gayle Hurst** - 214-348-7112

Churchill Way Recreation Center
6906 Churchill Way off Hillcrest

Committees Meeting in Preparation for Annual Meeting

Our bylaws require that most committee reports at Annual Meeting be approved by the Board and posted for members at least three weeks in advance of the Annual Meeting.

The April issue of the *VOTER* will be the last call this year to inform members by our May 5th Annual Meeting. If your committee is meeting now you may also publish in the March issue of the *VOTER*.

The **Local Program Exploratory Committee** has been gathering your input. Call Committee Chair **Ellen Key** (214-824-3958) if you have additional suggestions. The Bylaws Committee has met, and the Periodic Program Review Committee is gearing up.

The **Nominating Committee** chaired by **Cecilia McKay** (972-702-8402) is one you may want to contact with your suggestions for next year's leadership, including President, Organization Vice President, Secretary and Board directorships. Other members of the Committee are **Susybelle Gosslee, Julie Lowenberg, Brenda Marks, and Suzy Wills.**

Challenges Our Community Faces

Lou Ann Ligon, LWVD Immigration Committee

As the population of Hispanics living in North Texas soars, we are faced with a number of new challenges that demand our urgent attention. One of the most pressing of these is education. Hispanic children are not succeeding in school at the same rate as their peers. **If something is not done to reverse this detrimental pattern, we in North Texas will face a crisis that will affect not only the Hispanic community, but will negatively impact the quality of life and the economic vitality of North Texas and the state of Texas as a whole.**

Just take a look at the numbers...

The Hispanic population is growing faster than any other ethnic group in the state of Texas. **In 2000, the Hispanic sector made up nearly one-third (29.87 percent) of the population of Dallas County.** However, by the year 2040, that number will leap to a staggering 73 percent of the population. **Hispanics will also account for well over half of the total state population,** with 58 percent of the population of the state of Texas being Hispanic.

One of the main causes of the astonishing growth in the Hispanic community is the number of children who are born here to Hispanic families. Here in North Texas, four out of ten children up to five years of age (41.1 percent) are Hispanic, a percentage larger than that of any other ethnic group.

The Education Dilemma

Because these young Hispanic children are paving the way for a Hispanic majority in our community in just a few years, their education is of the absolute highest importance for our future. That is why it is extremely alarming that Hispanics are more likely to fail in school than any other ethnic group. **In the Dallas Independent School District (DISD), for every ten Hispanic students entering the ninth grade, only three or four earn their high school diploma four years later. Clearly, when it comes to education in our Hispanic community, we are on the verge of crisis.**

What about our future?

Unless we take well-thought action to change these negative educational trends, we in the Dallas area and the entire state of Texas will have a population that is vastly undereducated, and we will also have to face the many problems that a lack of education inevitably brings: poverty, illiteracy, crime and an economy that will ultimately lack the educated workforce necessary to remain competitive in the national marketplace.

Avance — Dallas

Avance* — Dallas is a parent-child education program that serves predominantly poor Latino families by teaching parents to be advocates and role models for their children. Their nine-month program caters to parents with children 0-3 years of age and operates in housing projects, community centers, and schools. Avance instructors guide parents through their children's stages of emotional, physical, social and cognitive development with special topics ranging from the importance of reading and effective discipline to nutrition. Parents also attend classes in literacy, learning English and attaining a GED. More than 90% of Avance grads not only finish high school but go on to college or trade school.

This nationally recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization was established in 1973 and is located in Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, Laredo, San Antonio, Waco, and the Texas Rio Grande Valley.

*Avance is a Spanish word meaning "to advance" or "to progress." We have excerpted this information from their website.



AVANCE

Unlocking America's Potential



Doug

Voting Matters

Editor's Note: This is a new monthly column which will address voting and election issues. Our contributing columnist is League member **Doug Taylor** who has an impeccable background in information technology and security.

Securing Our Elections

With current voting systems a single person in the wrong place could change votes and rig an election. We can't be certain that past elections haven't been rigged. Ever wonder why the audit procedures for slot machines are better than voting machines? Let's look at the **Brennan Center Task Force on Voting System Security's** study on voting system vulnerabilities. This study is available at <http://www.brennancenter.org>

The Task Force divided **voting machines into 3 basic types**: Direct Recording Electronic (DRE), DRE with Voter Verified Paper Trail (VVPT), and Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS). All three types have significant security and reliability vulnerabilities. Fortunately, the most serious vulnerabilities of each system can be substantially reduced if proper countermeasures are implemented. Unfortunately, few jurisdictions have implemented any of these countermeasures, and few states have codified any of these countermeasures into law.

The Task Force **analyzed voting system vulnerabilities** and concluded that some apply to all electronic voting systems, and others only to specific technologies. Vulnerabilities common to all systems include insertion of malicious code to change close races and the use of wireless technologies in voting systems. DREs without a paper trail are vulnerable to any kind of electronic attack. For VVPT and PCOS, a paper trail alone is not sufficient; it only has value if an audit procedure is in place. Even with the paper trail and routine audits some attacks cannot be detected.

The Task Force made **several recommendations**. The first is conduct routine audits of the paper and electronic records after every election using a **transparent and random selection process**. Next is performing **random "parallel" testing** of voting machines on Election Day to detect software attacks. On the technology side, they recommend **banning wireless components** for voting machines. Voting system programming and administration should be **decentralized and closely audited**. Clear and effective **procedures** must be in place **for reporting and investigating evidence of fraud or error**.

On another note, **Representative Holt's H. R. 550, an amendment to the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to require a voter verified paper trail, is a partial response** to the Brennan Center's recommendations. The Holt Amendment requires a voter verified paper trail for any voting machine, which addresses some of the major concerns of the Brennan Center study, but not all of them. Unfortunately, **there is no requirement for independent audit or verification**. For a more detailed discussion look on <http://www.blackboxvoting.org/>

In the next issue I will discuss in greater detail the vulnerability analysis section of this report. This will help in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of proposed legislation both at the state and national level.

President's Post (Continued from Page 2)

federal government. After World War I, however, growing "anti-alien" sentiment ended most States' practices of allowing non-citizens to vote. Today, there is a renewal of interest because of the nearly 30 million foreign-born who live in the United States.

Since the League of Women Voters formed for the purpose of extending the franchise to women, the issue of expanding voting rights to non-citizens is of particular interest.

Some reasons for permitting non-citizens to vote in local elections are:

(1) It's fair because it expands democracy. (2) It's feasible. Other communities are finding ways to permit non-citizens to vote in local elections even if they are not allowed to participate in national elections. (3) Our country was founded on the principle of "no taxation without representation," and immigrants pay local property and sales taxes. (4) It takes most immigrants ten years to achieve citizenship, a time during which they are paying taxes and sending their children to school.

Some reasons for not permitting non-citizens to vote in local elections are:

(1) If immigrants want to vote, they can become citizens. (2) Giving them the vote takes away incentive to become citizens. (3) Since non-citizens have not sworn loyalty to the United States, they cannot be trusted to vote in the best interests of this country. (4) Non-citizens could vote as a block in a state or a community. For example, they might raise taxes to grant greater public assistance to undocumented immigrants.

In closing, I refer you to **LWV-Dallas's very own Bill of Rights position** (p. 31 in H&D) supporting:

- **participation:** of **all residents** of the City of Dallas, 18 years old and older, shall have the right **to vote** for representatives, in fairly apportioned districts, for all public policy decision-making bodies which affect their welfare; and they shall be free **to seek public office** and **serve as public representatives**
- **environment:** the City of Dallas shall guarantee clean air and water, freedom from exposure to environmental hazards indoors, and preservation and conservation of natural open spaces and parks
- **conscience and expression:** the City of Dallas shall make no law establishing a religion nor prohibiting the free exercise of religious conscience, nor make a law which interferes with the rights of freedom of speech, of freedom of the press, to petition the government or to assemble peacefully
- **privacy:** the City of Dallas shall protect an individual's right to privacy including choice in human reproduction and the use of life support systems
- **nondiscrimination:** the City of Dallas shall not, directly or indirectly, discriminate against persons **because of** race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, **national origin or citizenship status**
- **children:** every child is entitled to have basic needs met, such as: food, clothing, health care, attention, education, nurturing, freedom from exploitation and a community advocate to see that these rights are implemented
- **safety:** the City of Dallas shall maintain a safe environment for individuals, free from threats, violence, abuse or official misconduct. This right shall be guaranteed by independent civilian oversight
- **education:** the City of Dallas shall guarantee that **every person** has access to free public education
- **housing:** adequate shelter from the elements shall be the right of **every person**

Susan B. Anthony should be smiling brightly upon us and pleased with this "new age" in which the League is championing the continued extension of voting rights to "all people."

42nd Annual SMU Women's Symposium

A Collective Purpose Crossing Cultural Boundaries

March 1, 2007

www.smu.edu/womsym
for information

*Children's Medical Center Dallas and
Women's Council of Dallas County*

14th Annual Connections Conference

Children and Youth Advocacy

Saturday, March 3, 2006

8:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Fellowship Dallas Church

Park Lane and 75

For information call 972-468-2108