

League of Women Voters
of Dallas

VOTER



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

League Members Meet at the National, State, and Local Levels

National Convention in June

Delegates adopted a **fast-track study** on the advisability of using the National Popular Vote Compact among the states as a **method for electing the President**. Carolie Mullan of LWV-Lubbock has been appointed to chair this study. Local Leagues are urged to save a date in January or February 2009 for a consensus meeting.

Priority Advocacy Issues are Global Climate Change and Health Care Reform

League Principles were expanded by concurrence to state "that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial."

A two-tier PMP (per member payment) increase, **raising national dues by \$1.50**, was approved.

State Convention in April

Delegates voted to update our Voting Procedures position by considering various means of **Increasing Voter Participation** during the next biennium.

Adopted unanimously was the new **Public School Testing** and Accountability position as well as a change in the wording of the **Child Abuse position**.

PMP will be held this year at \$22.



Local Convention in May

For the first time, LWV-Dallas has a **President Elect!** She is **Sandy Greyson!**

Also voted in at our May Annual Meeting were new Board Directors **Carolyn Dunnigan, Rose Harder, Ellen Key** and **Doug Taylor**.

Fifty-year members **Dottie Box, Nettie Terry Brown, Ann Tabb** and **Ginny Whitehall** were celebrated for their decades of dedication to the League. In addition to Bulkley-awardee **Susybell Gosslee** and Macdonald-awardee **Linda Camin, Becky Brakke, Jane Pak** and **Alix Mason** received the **Presidential Meritorious Service Awards**. **Cherlyn** and **Karlton Remington** received the **Board's MVP Award**, and **Barbara Downey**, a **Special Recognition Award**.

Annual Meeting business included membership dues remaining at \$60. In addition, the **City Observer Corps** will be continuing the work of the Boards and Commissions Update Committee in revisiting our position on public participation in government.

From the President's Desk

Board of Directors

2008-2009

Officers

President

Libbie Terrell Lee

**Vice Presidents
of**

Organization

Katherine Homan

Program

Mildred Pope

**Advocacy
Brenda Marks**

**Voter Outreach
Doug Taylor**

Secretary

Suzanne Wills

Treasurer

Miriam Foshay

Directors

Ann Adams
Barbara Downey
Carolyn Dunnigan
Rose Harder
Ellen Key
Cherlyn Remington
Karlton Remington
Toni Rose
Nancy Todes

As we move into this next phase of League growth and visibility in the Dallas community, my agenda is simple. What I envision is that the League of Women Voters of Dallas will continue to grow in membership; identify additional ways to strengthen our programs, and enhance our position to be seen as the premier leader in providing information, advocacy and education around local civic issues. It is a tough task to keep the focus simple, especially when there are so many issues that need addressing.



But our focal point must be strategic and measurable; attainable and timely. We cannot chase any and every issue, because that will not promote success. Knowing the issues is one thing, but it serves little purpose for it to remain only in our ranks. So there are five questions that I am proposing as we move toward this critical time in our organizational existence.

- What are the issues that we must address sooner than later as an organization?
- Do we currently have the capacity to get it all done?
- Are our strengths matched with the tasks?
- Will this increase our visibility?
- Will it grow and diversify our membership?

At the beginning of each League year, the LWVD has developed a program calendar, identified venues to support, and determined the organization's priorities. This year, I want to focus on those activities that can increase the Dallas League's visibility, attract new members, while making the most of our limited resources.

We are a voice for women and men of all ages and backgrounds; we are a nonpartisan organization working at the local, state and national levels; we encourage informed and active participation in government at every level. The League of Women Voters is the oldest and one of the most respected grassroots citizen network in America. So please find your place of action this year and let's make it happen.

Until next time...

Libbie Terrell Lee



Libbie leads her new board at its retreat in May. Pictured are Mildred Pope, Katherine Homan, Doug Taylor, Libbie Lee, Brenda Marks and Sandy Greyson.

Introducing Our New Board Members

Sandy Greyson, President Elect

Sandy Greyson has been a member of LWV Dallas for 25 years and has served in a number of board and off board positions.

Sandy was on the Dallas City Council from 1997 to 2005 representing District 12 in Far North Dallas. While on the Council, she chaired the Transportation Committee and was very active in local, state and national transportation groups and issues. She also chaired the City of Dallas Domestic Violence Task Force for seven years.

Sandy and husband Jim have two sons and two grandchildren.

Doug Taylor, V.P. Voter Outreach

Doug Taylor is a member of the Evening Unit and writes the Voting Matters column for the LWVD newsletter. He is a deputy voter registrar with authority from Dallas County Elections to train and deputize other volunteer deputy registrars.

Doug works for the Federal Reserve Bank as an information security consultant responsible for the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of sensitive financial data. He is a member of the board of directors of the People Empowerment Project, a charity that develops future leaders in Dallas County schools through the student council system. Doug and his wife Elizabeth live in Oak Cliff.

Carolyn Dunnigan, Director

Carolyn is a graduate of the University of Arkansas with a major in English and Journalism. Her first job out of college was as a copy editor for the Dallas Morning News, where she met David Dunnigan. She later worked for the News as a feature writer. Currently, she is the director of the Dallas Friday Group, an organization of business executives who share an interest in business and public affairs issues.

She is new to League membership, but has been intrigued by the political arena since college, when she volunteered for the campaign of Joseph Hardin, one of the six consecutive candidates who went down in defeat to Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus. She recently organized a debate among the District 3 candidates for Dallas City Council. The moderator said it was the best-attended "neighborhood" debate she had ever witnessed, a tribute to the community involvement of North Oak Cliff where David and Carolyn have lived for 40 years.

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New LWVUS Immigration Position

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

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

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

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

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

Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S.

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

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

Administration and Enforcement

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

The League supports:

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

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

Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.

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

Putting Our Immigration Position into Action

Brenda Marks, Advocacy VP

The **National Council of Jewish Women** (NCJW) is embarking on an ambitious immigration project and has asked the **League to be a partner**. In light of our new **Immigration Position**, this is a great opportunity and subject for us to work on with them.

Hoping to build on the success and enthusiasm generated by their February 21 community conference, "Nation of Immigrants: 21st Century Challenges," NCJW is putting together a **coalition of agencies and organizations** dedicated to addressing some of the concerns and issues highlighted at that conference. The **agenda for a recent work group** included discussion of potential goals, methods, and action steps for the coalition.

Voter Service Events

Our new **Voter Service Chair Toni Rose** is forging ahead with opportunities for voter registration in this election year. She reports that the League has received numerous requests for assistance with voter registration drives and campaigns.

Although vastly understaffed, we are working smarter to assist as many people as possible to register. Limited to five deputy registrars empowered to deputize other volunteer registrars, we deputize members of requesting organizations so they can register voters themselves.

With its non-partisan approach, the Dallas League is the only organization currently registering voters at **Naturalization Ceremonies in Dallas County**. However, we have relied on and will continue to rely on volunteers from other organizations who agree to non-partisan participation. Nevertheless, **many League members are needed to set up and conduct these events**.

Upcoming voter service opportunities include Parkland Hospital in August, Dallas County Community Colleges in September, and a new citizen registration on September 15 in Grand Prairie. We are developing a list of potential volunteers who can be contacted as opportunities develop. If you are interested in voter registration, **please contact Toni:** toninrose@sbcglobal.net or 214-376-6140.



East Dallas Unit Voter Service Project

Unit Leader **Suzanne Wills** and members **Ellen Key** and **Liz Wally** in the lobby of the Dallas County Health and Human Services Building inspect the new signage directing people to Voter Services available at the eighth-floor Elections Department.

Unit members recognized the opportunity to inform the public about these readily available services and requested the signage.

“Do Your Own Thing”

Eleanor Sutherland, Unit Leader

The North Preston Unit joined the Mockingbird Unit on their tour the Old Red Courthouse Museum on May 8. The facts about old Dallas County are displayed in what were the court rooms on the second floor. It is worth going to again and again as you absorb the colorful history. A special treat was a presentation about the impact of Deep Ellum and the musicians who gathered there on the blues music genre.

Joining the group was new League member Clare Buie Chaney, a board member of the Dallas County Historical Society which has been responsible for the fascinating “reuse” of the Old Red Courthouse.

On the tour were **Ann Adams, Dottie Box, Shirley Cooper, Lea Frailey, Gayle Hurst, Mardi Jones, Alix Mason, Barbara Materka, Eleanor Sutherland,** and **Barbara Weinstein**

Voting Matters: Voter Suppression

Doug Taylor, Voter Outreach VP

The Supreme Court recently ruled on Indiana's Voter ID law. The majority opinion was that it was just fine for states to require government issued photo identification to vote. In spite of the lack of proof that large numbers of voters are voting fraudulently, the court ruled in favor of the law.

The dissenting opinion shows who the losers in this ruling are. The poor, the elderly, the disabled, those who don't drive—all are losers. Who wins? Political parties who don't want those groups to vote, primarily because they feel that they won't be supporters of their candidates. **This is a policy of voter exclusion, not inclusion, otherwise known as voter suppression.**

Here in Texas our legislature has come very close to passing similar laws several times in the past few sessions. While unsuccessful so far, the Secretary of State's office has used similar means to purge voter rolls and to deny voter registrations. The current policy of matching voter registration application information against the driver's license database effectively denies a voter the right to vote even before they get to the polling place. Supposedly the application is also checked against the social security database, but we don't really know that for sure. The Secretary of State does not publish statistics on the number of voter registration applications denied and the reasons why.

If you think this is an academic exercise, the recent primary in Indiana should be a warning. The primary was held days after the Supreme Court Ruling. In one polling place a group of retired nuns was denied the right to vote. Most had been voting for decades, but since they didn't have a government approved photo ID, they could no longer vote. Similarly, college students who tried to vote with their student ID were also denied the right to vote. It was not one of the forms of photo ID approved by the state. **The burden of getting the required ID is on the voter. Strangely enough, the law doesn't cover absentee by mail voting, which has always been a higher source of voter fraud.**

What we don't know is how many voters left without complaining or reporting that they were denied the right to vote or simply didn't even bother to try to vote. **Voter suppression is a very subtle technique and far more common than voter fraud using false identities.**

A more common problem today is getting anyone to vote at all. Unfortunately unless the election has some controversy or strong opinions on an issue or candidate, turnout is usually very low. Runoffs and consolidated general elections frequently get turnouts in the 2-3% range. **Instead of government spending time and effort to deny people the right to vote, the resources should go into getting voters informed on the candidates and issues as well as making access to the polls easier rather than harder.** Registration should be by default and it should be a burden on the state to prove that you should not vote. Obviously our courts do not feel that voting is a right; we need to change that. **Without a Constitutional Amendment, courts and government officials can and will arbitrarily deny groups of voters the right to vote.**

Introducing Our New Board Members (Continued from Page 2)

Rose Harder, Director

Rose Harder has been a member of the League of Women Voters for 24 years. She has served as Unit Chair for the North Preston Unit and currently attends the North Dallas Unit.

Rose served on the Health and Human Services Commission for the City of Dallas for 8 years. She is currently on the board of the North Dallas Neighborhood Alliance and The Dallas Council of Catholic Women. She also has volunteered on several city council campaigns.

Rose and husband Dale moved to Dallas from California and have lived in Dallas 35 years. They have two adult children. In her spare time Rose enjoys reading and gardening.

Ellen Key, Director

Ellen Key joined the League in the early eighties at the suggestion of fellow church member **Rebecca Bergstresser**, who was LWVD president at that time. Later Ellen served on the board of trustees while operating her own advertising and public relations business. From 1994 until 2004 she worked as media relations manager at the Dallas Museum of Art. Since retiring, she has been attending East Dallas Unit meetings and is looking forward to serving as liaison between units and board.

She lives in Lakewood and is the mother of three children and five grandchildren who live in the Dallas.