

VOTER

League of Women
Voters of Indiana
County, Pennsylvania



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

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LWVIC Board of Directors, 2014-15

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Legislative Breakfast to be Held

Each year LWVIC organizes meetings with our state legislators. These meetings are typically held in February and are **open to all members and their guests.**

This is a great opportunity to learn where our legislators stand on specific issues, to get a sense of what legislation might be introduced in a new session, to plant seeds of interest on issues that our legislators might not be familiar with, and to help our League build relationships with these leaders.

Questions are developed by LWVPA and forwarded to our legislators by LWVIC, and questions cover a range of topics. (See Legislative Interview Questions on page 2 for this year's questions.)

This year a legislative breakfast has been scheduled with **Representative Dave Reed on Friday, February 20 at 9:00 a.m.** at Eat'n Park in Indiana.

For more information and to RSVP, please contact Aida Shotts at abshotts@gmail.com or 724-354-3482.

Help the League Recognize People Who Do Good Work

The League of Women Voters of Indiana County is currently accepting nominations for the fourth annual Peggy Clark Grassroots Environmental Leadership Awards. This award recognizes grassroots citizens, groups or businesses who show exemplary leadership and active participation in policy issues that involve protecting or preserving our environment.

This award was created in honor of one LWVIC member who did good work for our community, and it's important to continue to recognize the good work that continues to be done around us. But the LWVIC needs your help. We not only need nominations for this award, but we need people who would be willing to serve on a (short term) committee to publicize the award (and the good work being done around us), screen applicants, and choose honorees.

The deadline for application submission is April 2015, so it's time to get started. Contact Vicki Stelma **to obtain an application or to serve on the awards committee.** Address: 1105 Water Street, Indiana, PA 15701. Email: lwvic@verizon.net. Phone: 724-599-9225. (For more information about the award, see your January Voter.)

Program Planning in Process (And You Can Be Involved)

According to the LWVPA, “Program is the heart and soul of the League. It is our basis of education and advocacy.” With the state convention coming up this June, it is time to review our program and positions; it is time for our local League voices to be heard at the state level. At our next LWVIC board meeting on **Monday, February 16 at 7:00 pm**, we will be discussing/participating in program planning. This is an opportunity for all of our members to be involved, and here’s what you need to know.

The LWVPA holds positions under three broad programming categories—government, natural resources, and social policy. As members, we have the ability to contribute to a statewide discussion regarding these positions. In order to participate in the first step of this process, we need to make recommendations from the local level. If you would like to participate, please read as much information as you can regarding any of these positions before the board meeting. At the meeting, we will briefly discuss each position. As you read, ask yourself the following questions regarding each position:

- is it relevant, and should it be readopted in its current form?
- should it be changed or updated?
- should it be dropped or eliminated?
- is it being used at the local level and in what way?

Please use these links to find the positions and information you need, and see you on the 16th.

Where We Stand, <http://www.palwv.org/where-we-stand-lwvpas-position-on-the-issues/> a compilation of all the LWVPA positions (briefly and in detail.) Reminder: issues not covered in *Where We Stand* may be covered in *Impact on Issues*, <http://lwv.org/content/impact-issues-online-edition> the LWVUS statement of positions.

Legislative Interview Questions 2015

1. What will you do to expand and protect the rights of ALL voters, including independents, third party voters, and citizens disenfranchised by party politics in redistricting?
2. What will you do to ensure that working women receive adequate and equitable pay?
- 3a. What will you do to clarify and strengthen regulatory oversight of transport of hazardous materials through pipelines or aging rail, truck, or barge infrastructures? What safeguards will you support with regard to storage, treatment and final disposal of these materials?
- 3b. What will you do to ensure public awareness of this issue and to protect Pennsylvania's soil and waterways?
4. What bills do you intend to introduce or co-sponsor in the upcoming session?
5. (Optional) What specific actions will you take to ensure that the Pennsylvania legislature meets its constitutional obligation to provide a thorough and efficient system of education for all?

Family Fun Fest Volunteers Needed

It's time to begin planning for Family Fun Fest once again. This year's celebration will feature the 50 states of America, and our League will be educating children and their families about the great state of Michigan. Pepita Jimenez-Jacobs is heading up the League's child welfare committee and is in need of a few folks to help create a simple display about Michigan and/or to man the LWVIC table in 1-2 hour shifts from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm on Saturday, March 21. If you can help with either of these simple tasks, please contact Pepita at 724-463-3616.

Happy Birthday League!

The League of Women Voters celebrates its 95th anniversary on February 14. Founded by suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt just six months prior to passage of the 19th Amendment, the League was charged with "finish[ing] the fight" to ensure that every eligible voter has free and fair access to the polls. Ever since, the League has been at the forefront of efforts to empower citizens to play an active role in our democracy. In honor of 95 years of Making Democracy Work®, LWVUS reveals 10 ways the League has helped strengthen our democracy and ensure equality throughout the past century. The Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921, a groundbreaking law providing federal funding for maternity and child care, was the League's first major success. Read the other nine (and there are countless other successes) at www.lwv.org. While you're on the web, LIKE us at facebook.com/PowertoCitizens!

Potluck a Learning Experience

Contributed by Joyce Magee

At our January potluck meeting, LWVIC members and guests listened to a panel of local professionals discuss current developments in early education, defined as birth through age eight.

Dr. Fredelene Bowers, IUP Professor, Child Development & Family Relations; Ms. Tamara Duff, ARIN Supervisor of Early Intervention; and Ms. Janie Hess-Gray, Education Services Manager, Indiana County Head Start, presented what is known from recent brain research as well as the role of poverty in putting children at an educational disadvantage. For example, there are critical periods in brain development that peak at age four, and childhood experiences shape the structure of the brain. They discussed programs and best instructional practices currently in place in our county and elsewhere that support young children and their families. Enriched environments provided through these programs have a profound effect. Early education programs can help in identifying and providing services for children who may have special needs such as speech therapy. The success of Head Start in improving the cognitive and social abilities of preschoolers has focused attention on the importance of early childhood programs generally.

In addition, the panelists outlined the problems in implementing programs and services due to lack of funds, the difficulties in the coordination of different agencies, and the delivery of services in rural areas where children must travel great distances to access programs. Panelists responded to numerous questions from the audience, and, at the end, our group felt significantly enlightened about early education issues.

A newsletter of the
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CALENDAR of UPCOMING EVENTS

Know someone who may be interested in membership? Let President Vicki Stelma know at 724-599-9225, and she will send a brochure & short letter describing LWWIC's activities.

Monday, February 16, 7:00 pm—Board Meeting, All Members Welcome, PASEC meeting room, (1005 Oak Street, 2nd floor)

Friday, February 20, 9:00 am—Legislative Breakfast with Representative Reed, Eat'n Park

Saturday, February 21—AAUW NICE! Women's Advocacy Training Smart-Start Workshop (Contact Susan Wheatley at wheatleyse@gmail.com for more information)

Friday, March 13—Stormwater Management Workshop, KCAC (Sponsored by the Stormwater Education Partnership)

Monday, April 20— Last day to register before the primary

June 5 — June 7—LWVPA Convention, Pittsburgh

Our Mission Statement

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.