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**NH Voter spring 2013 edition**    Ginny Higgins, editor

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**STATE CONVENTION – JUNE 1 – HOPKINTON LIBRARY – DETAILS  
INSIDE**

## **Prison Privatization at Bay (for now) – Liz Tentarelli**

The long awaited report on the bids to privatize the corrections system in NH was released on April 3, to whoops of joy by League members who have been studying NH's incarceration issues since 2009. Among the 17 bids submitted by four private companies (none of which were to build a women-only prison), the NH Department of Corrections and the management consultant company MGT agreed that none of the plans adequately addressed the court decrees that significantly impact the provision of correctional services in NH. A key factor in the report was the planned wages for security staff that would have been half of what we currently pay: "The state should be concerned that this significantly lower wage may make it difficult to maintain a trained and experienced staff...could result in high turnover and ultimately impact the safety and security of the correctional facilities," stated the report.

Just what the League has been saying since fall of 2011 when privatization first reared its head! Last year we joined the NH Prison Watch coalition opposing privatization. Peg Fargo, LWVNH vice-president and study committee co-chair, has been an integral part of that coalition and has spoken to the governor, executive council, and legislators urging the state to put aside privatization plans. The League has been calling for a commitment by the state to build a new women's prison with the space and staff to offer meaningful treatment, education, and vocation options. This is the only way to bring down the recidivism rate of women offenders.

In addition to meetings and testimony on specific bills to defeat privatization and to build a new state-owned and run women's prison, the League has taken its study results to the public. Peg Fargo and Liz Tentarelli co-taught a course based on our study in Concord last fall thru OLLI. We have been asked to teach the course in fall 2013 in Manchester's OLLI program. At the same time we will be offering the course in New London through the Adventures in Learning program. In January and February Peg and Liz did a series of talks in Hollis, and they have also spoken at one-day events for church groups, civic groups, and local League programs. They have also appeared on radio and TV talk shows on the issue and have been interviewed by NH newspapers. A written study might get dusty on a shelf, but taking it "on the road" has reached a large and diverse group of NH residents, whose help will be needed as we move forward with plans for a new women's prison and increased alternatives to incarceration.

At press time we don't know the outcome of HB 443, the bill to ban prison privatization, or of the \$38 million in the capital budget to build a new women's prison on the campus of the men's facility in Concord. The lawsuit against the state filed by female inmates is on hold until summer, awaiting the outcome of the capital budget. Meanwhile, we are pleased that alternatives to incarceration are happening: drug courts around the state are growing, mental health courts now number 12 in NH, and county programs to assist offenders make the transition from jail to the community are moving forward. Our 3-year study was intense, hard work, amazingly educational, and timely. We've been able to advocate based on our consensus position, and that's the whole point of the League.

## National League Agriculture Update to Begin Soon

How safe is our nation's food supply? What should we know about Genetically Modified Organisms? Are they improving the world's nutrition or threatening consumers and farmers alike? Farm subsidies—do we still need them?

The LWVUS position on agriculture dates from 1988. It includes many aspects, including pesticide use, farmers' access to credit, sustainability, and R&D in general terms. But in 1988 we knew little about GMOs, and mega-agri-corporations were just coming into being. So it's time to update the study.

***The scope of the study is very specific: “The Agriculture Update will focus narrowly on: 1) current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and 2) current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process.”***

The timeline calls for local and state Leagues to form study committees in the summer, hold discussions in the fall and winter, and report consensus results by early spring 2014. Members-at-large will have an opportunity to participate in the study too, through surveys in upcoming issues of the NH Voter.

Articles from the LWVUS study committee to aid in discussions will be published on the LWV.org website. In addition, LWVNH has set up an agriculture study page on our website (LWVNH.org), with additional articles giving a NH or New England slant to the issues. Also we will post events and talks that are happening in NH that deal with agriculture. Please check the site as the study progresses, and send us an email via our website if you come across an interesting article or event that should be posted.

We'll kick off the study at our June 1 convention with two guest speakers familiar with NH's agricultural issues. Representatives Tara Sad (D) and Bob Haefner (R) have both served on the NH House Agriculture and Environment Committee for 7 years. Bob says, “I don't see agriculture as a partisan issue.” They have presented together before and are looking forward to talking with us. Please attend and get inspired to learn more!

### Day at the Legislature

League members, 14 of us, sat wearing our League buttons as the House Election Law committee discussed several bills on voter ID and voter registration. As part of our annual Day at the Legislature, it was satisfying to make our presence known on this important topic. League member and election law specialist Joan Ashwell has testified for the past two years on our behalf of the League's position. We have partial victory: the more onerous voter ID restrictions that were to go into effect in September 2013 are on hold. Over lunch we discussed issues with Rep. Laurie Harding (Dem, from Lebanon), who serves on the Health, Human Services and Elder Affairs Committee. VP Peg Fargo, who is our liaison to the NH Prison Watch Coalition, updated us on efforts to

thwart prison privatization. As always, Day at the Legislature proved both informative and exciting.

## **ACTION**

### **Testimony before Children and Family Law Committee and House Ways and Means Committee.** – Liz Tentarelli

On Feb. 7 the League testified in favor of HB 525, which would raise the age of offenders to be handled by the Juvenile Justice system from 17 to 18 years. It gave me a chance to tell the Children and Family Law committee about our incarceration study, one part of which revealed that the safety of 17 year olds being held in county houses of correction is a great challenge to the staff. That bill has been retained for further study.

On the same day I left written testimony opposing HB 485, which would have legalized electronic keno slot machines in unlimited numbers in or near every town and city in our state. Electronic keno allows continuous real-time machine gambling with wager results once every four minutes. Keno is far more seductive and addictive than any form of gambling we now have in NH. This bill has been retained for further study.

### **2013 Testimony on Disclosure and Public Funding of Election bills** - Jane Armstrong

As a member of the Coalition for Open Democracy, the League testified on behalf of the Coalition's two bills - disclosure (HB392 & SB120) and public funding of elections (HB250 & SB142.)

The disclosure bills aimed at getting all entities that spend money to influence NH's elections to register with the Secretary of State's office and to disclose their expenditures in a timely manner. It required a change in the definition of a "political committee" and that proved to be more difficult than you might imagine. The bills' definition is simply any entity (Super PAC, 501C4, individual....etc.) that spends more than \$5,000 to influence a New Hampshire election. Both disclosure bills were retained in committee and we expect to work hard to see one passed in January 2014.

The public funding bills both set up a system of small donors and matching funds to publicly fund NH's elections for Governor, Senate and Executive Council. The House bill was retained and the Senate bill ITL'd.

### **Election Law Legislation** – Joan Flood Ashwell

The League has focused on undoing the damage of the voter ID law and removing unconstitutional language from the voter registration form. We were unable to get enough support for a complete repeal of voter ID but we are supporting HB 595 to repeal the 2013 provision that further limits the list of acceptable photo IDs and the provision for taking photos of voters without photo IDs. We are also supporting HB 119 which removes the language in the voter registration form that ties voting to getting a driver's license and registering a motor vehicle. We hope to get the Senate to approve the judge's ruling and removing any need for the state to continue appealing the court's

ruling. We will be following studies of other bills about voter registration and voting procedures over the summer and fall.

**LWVNH STATE CONVENTION - JUNE 1, 9:15 am at the Hopkinton Library, Contoocook.** Please plan to attend. In addition to a short business portion to elect board members and adopt a state League budget, we'll have an exciting guest speaker, a presentation by the Greater Capital Area League on some of our state positions, and a delicious lunch. Our guest speakers will kick-off the LWVUS study on agriculture (see related article on the study). Guest speakers are Representatives Tara Sad (D) and Bob Haefner (R), who have both served on the NH House Agriculture and Environment Committee for 7 years. Bob says, "I don't see agriculture as a partisan issue." They have presented together before and are looking forward to talking with us. Please attend and get inspired to learn more!

The Greater Capital Area League has spent several meetings looking at **our state positions**. They can be viewed in full on our website: [LWVNH.org/Publications.html](http://LWVNH.org/Publications.html) Three of our positions are quite recent and are actively being used for advocacy. However, six of the positions need updating, revision or just clarification in order to be useful for League advocacy. The LWVNH will explain their findings and encourage suggestions from convention on improving these.

The positions in brief are as follow:

**Constitutional Reform**

Action to promote further constitutional reform, especially in the area of taxation and the size of the General Court. Constitutional Conventions. Adopted 1971

**County Government/Regional Organization**

Action to achieve improved county services and to promote reform of county governmental procedures. Adopted 1973 Action to achieve increased effectiveness for Regional Planning Commissions. Adopted 1976

**Energy**

Action to reduce energy growth rates, to promote use of a variety of energy sources, emphasizing conservation and use of energy-efficient technologies.

Action to support limiting reliance on nuclear fission.

Action to promote use of renewable resources and conservation through financial incentives, including R & D.

Action to support mandatory energy conservation standards and policies to reduce energy demand, minimizing the need for generating capacity. In particular, action to reduce New Hampshire's use of energy.

Action to maintain deregulation of oil/natural gas prices and to provide energy assistance to low-income individuals. Adopted 1978 NH; 1989 LWVUS

## **Land Use**

Action to achieve wise use of land; to provide an optimum balance between human, social and economic needs and environmental quality; and to conserve and ensure wise use of energy and other natural resources. Adopted 1975 NH; 1989 LWVUS

## **Juvenile Justice**

Action to achieve an effective, integrated, and coordinated system of juvenile justice in New Hampshire. Adopted 1981

**Nominating Committee Report** - The state nominating committee is pleased to present the following slate to the membership: (to be voted on at State convention.

Co-President (Membership)	Liz Tentarelli	2013-2015
Co-President (Legislation)	Sally Davis	2013-2015
Vice President	Peg Fargo	2013-2015
Treasurer	Mary Perry	2013-2015
Secretary	Mary Davies	2013-2015
Directors:	Marilyn Lieto	2013-2015
	Ursula Maldonado	2013-2015
	Nancy Marashio	2013-2015

## **Meet the nominees (non-incumbents):**

**Mary Davies** has come full circle in agreeing to be LWVNH Secretary. She was secretary of the Minnesota League many years ago. This time she will only need to drive 15 minutes; then board meetings were 240 miles away. Mary first joined the League in Wisconsin, and then belonged to the League in Moorhead MN for most of the 40 years she lived there. That League lost members and eventually combined with the League in Fargo becoming the LWV of the Red River Valley. In 2006 she and her husband moved to NH and she joined LWV immediately.

League has given her so much over the years. Because of League and observing city government she ran for and was elected to the Moorhead City Council. Because of League she was able to attend a conference on international trade and development. Because of League she was appointed to a state lawyer's professional responsibility board. League opened doors for her and gave her the knowledge and confidence to accept these opportunities. Best of all, because of League Mary has made life-long friends who are vitally interested in what's happening in the world, in good government, and who believe in citizen involvement.

**Marilyn Lieto** is returning to the Board after a 2 year absence: She first joined the LWV in Illinois about forty one years ago. She was expecting a baby and was fearful that child rearing would cause her to put her brain on hold. Joining the LWV certainly prevented that from occurring. Marilyn has been a State Board member for the League of Women Voters for New Hampshire and West Virginia. She has lobbied state legislatures for environmental and education issues in three states. She has served as a member of regional Boards of Directors for Planned Parenthood and the American Red Cross. She worked as a professional dietician, elementary teacher and social worker. These various responsibilities have provided a good understanding of how to work with

people from all viewpoints to get things changed. She has lived in a rural environment in six states. She has been personally engaged in rural life, from raising a variety of livestock, extensive gardening, forest and wildlife stewardship, backpacking and hiking. She has a deep love for our natural resources. She looks forward to rejoining the NH LWV State Board and continuing my activities in any of these areas.

**Ursula Maldonado** would like to express her interest in serving on the State board for the League of Women Voters. Publications distributed by the League resonated with her years ago when she was the mother of young children -- the value placed on informed decision-making and respect for autonomy spoke to the best of what she was trying to do with parenting and all other areas of her life. The educational goals and efforts of the League continue to be her most cherished aspect of the organization. Currently the treasurer of the Greater Capital Area LWV, she has had the privilege of serving on that board since 2005 (on checking this date, she was delighted to find she's listed as a charter member of LWVGCA in its April 15, 2003 program). Her experiences with our studies, informational brochures, book sale, and candidate forum / town meeting outreach, as well as our ongoing "routine" business, have taught her a great deal and been so rewarding

**Nancy Marashio** is a native of New Hampshire who cares deeply about her community and her state. A retired Professor and Liberal Arts Department Chair at Claremont's River Valley Community College, she continues to teach as English adjunct faculty and to serve as Faculty Forum Moderator. She has been Newbury's elected Town Moderator since 1996 and serves as a Director on the Lake Sunapee Protective Association and as the Society for the Protection of NH Forests representative to the Oversight Policy Committee on the Mt. Sunapee Area.

*Respectfully submitted; Mary Perry, Chair, Susan Capano, Jan Kruger, Ginny Schultz,*

**CONVENTION SCHEDULE:** Convention begins at 9:15 am with coffee, snacks, and conversation. The speaker will be introduced at 9:45. Lunch will be served at 11:45. The discussion of state positions will start as we enjoy dessert, followed by the annual business meeting. All done and on our way by 2 pm.

**Please register by May 28, if possible,** to help us plan seating and food. Fill out the form on the next page and **mail to the state League office (LWVNH, 4 Park St Room 200, Concord NH 03301).** Or **email your information to [LWV@kenliz.net](mailto:LWV@kenliz.net)** **Cost is \$15** to cover lunch and convention expenses, **payable in advance or at the door.** Make checks payable to LWVNH. Spouses and friends welcome

**Road directions:**

Hopkinton Library in Contoocook is just a couple of miles off Interstate 89, taking either exit 6 or exit 7. You can Google directions for Houston Drive, Contoocook, Hopkinton NH 03229. Or email Liz Tentarelli if you'd like written directions: [LWV@kenliz.net](mailto:LWV@kenliz.net)

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**Yes, I plan to attend LWVNH Convention on June 1**

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Town\_\_\_\_\_

**(names of additional attendees, if any)**