

League of Women Voters of the Greater Capitol Area

March 2017



**Fake News, Tweets and Facts in our Democracy;
A Panel Discussion
Sunday, March 26
4:00
Hopkinton Town Library**

***Made possible with support of the Hopkinton Town Library Foundation
And co-hosted by the League of Women Voters of the Greater Capitol Area***

Panelists

John Greabe Esq. – UNH School of Law professor with a specialty in constitutional law

John Gfroerer – producer of over 40 documentaries, many on political topics

Ralph Jimenez – editorial writer for the Concord Monitor

Dan Barrick – news director for NH Public Radio

Liz Tentarelli – Facilitator, President LWV of New Hampshire



- ✓ *What is “news” in the broadest, highest sense?*
- ✓ *How does fake news impact the very concept of a democracy?*
- ✓ *How does the rapidity and “hackability” of social media change the way we view news?*
- ✓ *Are tweets news? Are they newsworthy? Who decided?*
- ✓ *What is the “wrong news” (e.g. flashy things versus substantive issues)?*
- ✓ *What is the job of the print and broadcast and print media in providing more complete information about critical issues?*
- ✓ *How do we protect the free press?*

Free and open to the public

Hopkinton Town Library, 61 Houston Drive, Contoocook 746-3663

For directions go to website: hopkintontownlibrary.org

March 26 meeting in Hopkinton

Thanks to the efforts of League member Janet Ward, our league will again partner with the Hopkinton Library in presenting a critical program on fake news and the importance of freedom of the press. Make your plans now to attend and bring a friend along.

Who Represents You

Our state league president, Liz Tentarelli, is doing an amazing job producing a legislative call to action every week. She sends it out to all league members at the end of the week so that league members can keep up with current bills and the league action in the halls of the legislature. Testimony and a complete list of what’s going on can be found on the league website: lwvnh.org.

The league this year has been extremely active testifying and observing issues of league concern. We have seen the results of citizen action and ask once again that you plan to contact your legislator – at the state or federal level – on those issues that concern you most. Keep the contact info handy and make those contacts!

Our league has compiled three brochures listing contact information for town halls, NH Representatives, NH Governor, Executive Councilors, US Representatives and Senators and the President of the US. One covers Concord, one covers the towns of: Allenstown, Chichester, Epsom, Pembroke and Hookset while the third covers the towns of Loudon, Canterbury, Boscawen, Dunbarton, Bow and Hopkinton. The state league produced one which covers the towns of: Bradford, Newport, Springfield, Warner, Grantham, New London, Sunapee, Webster, Newbury, Salisbury, Sutton and Wilmot. Two copies will be mailed to you and if you know of places where we could deliver these for folks to have as a handy reference, please call Peg at 226-4574 or email pfargo@hotmail.com.

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League Convention

The LWVNH convention has been set for Saturday, June 3 at the Slusser Center in Hopkinton. League members from all over the state will gather for program updates, interesting speakers, consideration of a 2-year league budget, election of state-wide officers – great conversation and an amazing lunch as well. Put the date on your calendar and plan to be there!

Death Penalty Expansion – SB351 – would have expanded the death penalty option for anyone who knowingly causes the death of a child. After the House committee voted Inexpedient to Legislate, the full house supported that report and voted overwhelmingly 305-46 NOT to expand the death penalty. This is a true indicator residents in NH are increasingly moving to the position that the state should not be involved in taking a life.

Thanks to League members who contacted their legislators in opposition to the death penalty.

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Saturday, April 1 – 1:00

Open Democracy will lead a walk from Concord High School to the State House Plaza for a rally and activist workshops to support NH Voting Rights. Co-sponsored by the League.

Questions for the Supreme Court nominee

Article from LWVUS

The next Supreme Court nominee will play a major role in the course for American democracy over the coming decades. That may seem like an exaggeration, but the Supreme Court is currently divided four to four on most major issues. The incoming justice will ultimately be the deciding vote on crucial issues that shape the direction of our country.

The League of Women Voters believes that any Supreme Court nominee should share his views on fundamental issues.

1. Must the Executive Branch obey court orders from the federal judicial system? Our system of checks and balances is the basic tenet of a free democracy. To prevent authoritarianism, the Founders made sure that no one branch of the government could dominate the others. But in recent days it appears that the Executive Branch is challenging that system by refusing to obey the federal court orders. The Supreme Court nominee must take a stand, one way or the other, on the role of federal courts in our system of government.

2. What is the appropriate role for voting rights in our democracy? Our nation was founded on a belief that voters should be in charge of our government rather than government being in charge of the voters. However imperfect at the beginning, citizen voting rights have grown through constitutional amendments to include women, racial and ethnic minorities and young people. But we are seeing efforts to roll back voting rights, with laws designed to make it more difficult for people to exercise their right to vote. The Supreme Court nominee should let the American people know his position, whether voting rights enforcement is a vital component of our representative democracy or if the nominee thinks limitations can be justified under our Constitution.

3. Is big money in politics a fundamental part of our electoral system or can limits sometimes be justified?

Some believe that corporations, organizations and individuals should be able to spend unlimited amounts of money to influence elections, and to do so secretly. Others see this as an existential threat to our democracy. The Supreme Court nominee should state his beliefs related to the influence of money in politics.

Judicial nominees should not be required to tell us how they will decide future cases, but they should share with the public the basic principles they support or oppose. For the Senate to carry out its constitutional duty to advise and consent on judicial nominees, truthful answers about basic principles are required. A presidential nomination is not a blank check. The Constitution requires the Senate to do its duty.