



League of Women Voters New Hampshire

LWVNH.org

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President's Message

We've just passed the halfway mark in the NH Legislature. Some bills we supported failed to pass in their house, so they are dead for the year. Some we supported are being retained, may reappear. Details on some bills are given elsewhere in this newsletter. From now until June we will be tracking the bills that remain on which we've taken a position, so do check our [Action and Testimony page](#) to read our testimonies and the final results.

But the biggest challenge in the next few months will be the state budget. You'll read in the newspapers of massive cuts by the various finance committees, often to the programs and populations least able to fend for themselves. There is almost no talk at this time of increasing revenue. It will be a difficult time for many.

On the happier side, the almanac tells us it's spring, and eventually the weather will agree. We're just starting to plan the LWVNH convention for this year, so look for details on our website as they develop, and keep an eye out for your next **NH Voter** with all the details. We hope to see you at convention!

Liz Tentarelli, co-president

Members' News

Be sure to check our newish website page, **Member News**, to find out about things beyond League some of our members are doing in the public arena. Have any members been elected to school or municipal offices this year? Let us know and we will post them. Involved in other good works? Tell us so we can share. Email your news to: LWV@kenliz.net.

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Protecting the Right to Vote Where You Live

For more than 10 years now, LWVNH has been testifying and campaigning against a series of bills that attempt to redefine what it means to live in New Hampshire for voting purposes. Our Constitution and our current laws on domicile for voting are quite clear on the subject. To vote in NH, you must physically live here more than any other place, your civic, social, cultural and domestic life takes place here, and this is the place where your political interests lie.

Most of the voter suppression proposals have involved tying financial conditions to the definition of domicile. For instance, requiring someone to show income, property ownership, taxable resources, etc., in order to register to vote. Another tactic is to require citizens who vote to get a driver's license or to register a car while citizens who do not vote do not have to do the same. (Motor vehicle laws are different from voting domicile laws and, in some cases, directly conflict with court decisions about voting rights.)

A new proposal this year (SB 179) is to require people to prove they have lived in the state for at least 30 days before they are allowed to register to vote. The Supreme Court ruled in 1972, that no state can impose a residency limit on a citizen's right to vote because it would violate the US Constitution's 14th Amendment. Many Motor Voter states are allowed to have a voter registration deadline so they can review mailed in voter registrations and put them on the checklist before an election. A voter registration deadline is often called a residency requirement, but that's incorrect because it is only allowed for administrative purposes not residency limitations.

New Hampshire is exempt from Motor Voter because the state offered same day registration at the time the law went into effect. Because people here register in person and document their identity, citizenship and domicile, the entire registration process is completed at the time a person registers. There is no need for an administrative period before an election. LWVNH's testimony on this bill can be found here:

http://www.lwvnh.org/files/testimony_on_sb_179_4-7-15.pdf The bill will be voted on in the House Election Law Committee on April 21.

On April 22, at 10 a.m., the NH Supreme Court will hear oral arguments, open to the public, about a case brought by the NH Civil Liberties Union and LWVNH in 2012, about the car registration and driver's license issue. Two courts have ruled in our favor and this is the hearing on the state's appeal. We have also joined the NHCLU and the Fair Elections Legal Network (FELN) in a brief regarding an advisory opinion from the Supreme Court requested by the NH House on the same issue.

- Joan Flood Ashwell, LWV Greater Capital Area

Good News for Women Offenders

In the League's study of the issues facing women offenders, we found that one of the biggest challenges to women who have served their sentences is finding safe, affordable housing where they can put their lives back together. If they move right back to their communities where their friends do drugs and otherwise break the law, their chances of returning to prison are high.

A new group forming in NH, modeled on many such groups in other parts of the country, has just decided to open their first **Dismas Home** as a residence for female ex-offenders. Upon release the women would live communally in a rehabbed house, likely in Manchester or nearby, where they would interact with church groups and students and faculty from St. Anselm College on a daily basis. They would receive needed support and encouragement to find jobs and learn to live sober on the outside.

The board of Dismas Home NH has begun the process to get 501(c)(3) status in order to raise the funds to make this happen. The members of the Citizens Advisory Board to the NH Women's Correctional Facility strongly advocated for making this first Dismas Home NH a women's residence, and they were obviously successful. The home may open in late 2016 or early 2017.

We'll keep you informed.

To learn more about Dismas House projects in other parts of the country, google the term. Four houses currently operate in Vermont, and there is one in Worcester MA operating as a farm. Named for the repentant thief who was crucified with Jesus, Dismas House represents forgiveness and reconciliation. While Dismas House has always enjoyed the support of many different faith communities, it is not a religious organization.

- Liz Tentarelli & Peg Fargo, LWVNH

Women's Prison Construction Update

It's not good news. On March 17, 2015, Department of Corrections Commissioner William Wrenn announced the completion date for the new women's prison will be delayed a year. Announcement was made at a House Finance Committee meeting.

The new women's prison in Concord will likely open in September 2017, a full year later than expected because although the Governor increased the budget by \$10 million, the new projection is for an additional \$10 million, Wrenn said. Contractors now estimate the prison will cost roughly \$58 million, far higher than originally anticipated. State officials said they are headed back to the drawing board to redesign certain aspects of the project in an effort to rein in costs. "We're trying to find something within our budget that meets all the requirements we have," said Michael Connor, deputy commissioner of administrative services, who helps oversee state construction. "We're looking at where can we make some cuts and still maintain functionality."

The League has studied issues surrounding the incarceration of women since 2009. We supported the construction of a new prison to allow more room for vocational training, education, and better treatment programs for substance abuse and mental health issues. The prison in its concept design, revealed almost a year ago, suggested those rehabilitative features would be included. The League's fear now is that a redesign that emphasizes cost considerations may de-emphasize programs that would lead to better futures for the offenders. Recidivism must be reduced to keep inmate numbers down in future, and anything that threatens rehabilitation may result in higher recidivism.

See the full news article on the "Women Incarcerated Study" page: <http://www.lwvnh.org/StateStudy.html> of our LWVNH.org website. We will provide updates as they become available.

Conversations about the NH Budget

NH Citizens Alliance is sponsoring a series of public conversations throughout the state about the proposed NH budget. Almost a dozen have been scheduled through mid-May. There will be a presentation followed by audience questions and comments. Budget expert Jeff McLynch of NH Fiscal Policy Institute will provide the foundation for these important discussions. Light refreshments will be provided. [Click here for details of dates and places and a registration form to reserve your place.](#)

Money in Politics Study Begins

The LWVUS study of the influence of money in politics will begin in earnest shortly. Study materials will be posted on the League's website <http://forum.lwv.org/category/member-resources/our-work/money-politics-review>. LWVNH.org has a link to that page on our LWVUS Studies page.

The goal of the study is to update the League's campaign finance position through a study and consensus process to consider: (1) the rights of individuals and organizations, under the First Amendment, to express their political views through independent expenditures and the finance of election campaign activities; and (2) how those rights, if any, should be protected and reconciled with the interests set out in the current position.

What members can do:

- LWV Greater Capital Area had their first meeting on this topic on March 18. In addition to local League members, several members from the Kearsarge/Sunapee and a member at large also attended. Any members are welcome to attend; check the [Calendar page](#) of LWVNH.org to find out dates, time, and place of the next meeting in the series.
- Local Leagues can form study committees and set up meetings to discuss those materials, as LWV/GCA has already done. Guest experts are always a helpful part of such meetings.
- Leagues are also encouraged to gather information at the local and state level about laws governing money in politics.
- In mid- to late-fall 2015 Leagues should schedule consensus meetings. Consensus reports are due to LWVUS by Feb. 1, 2016.
- Not able to get to local League meetings? Read some of the fascinating materials on the website, or check out books from your library. Lawrence Lessig, one of the authors recommended, visited NH in 2013 and the Youtube video of his talk is on the Publications page of LWVNH.org for you to watch at your leisure.

Healthcare Costs and the National Debt

From “[FixTheDebt.org](#)” comes information about a summit held last fall at Dartmouth, which resulted in suggestions for reducing Medicare costs while maintaining this important healthcare asset. Fix the Debt points out that “Improving Medicare’s financial outlook will be a big part of getting the national debt under control. It is the second largest single program in the federal budget, only behind Social Security, representing 14 percent of all federal spending in 2013. In addition, Medicare is the nation’s largest health care payer, which means that reforms to the payment model could benefit the overall health care system.”

You can read about the summit and the suggestions at <http://www.fixthedebt.org/dartmouth-summit>

Candidate Forums Update

The League hosted two candidate forums and moderated a third leading up to March 10 town elections.

LWV Upper Valley hosted a forum in Dorchester. Here is part of the report from one of the organizers--

“It was a real first for Dorchester - neither person running for Select Board was a politician so no real drama - people asked questions and they answered them as best they could. The audience - about 100 - seemed to really like the way Ellen Blumberg moderated and having timekeepers (Joyce Knoll and Martin Blumberg) and question organizer (Virginia Dresser) from out of town. Everyone was happy to see civil questions and responses from candidates.”

LWV Kearsarge/Sunapee Area organized a forum for the hotly contested selectboard race in Newbury. Attendees numbered 111, and all five candidates for two seats participated. The audience asked some hard questions, so voters had a good opportunity to see the candidates under pressure. One question in particular is food for thought for everyone: “What would be your choice between raising taxes to make improvements in town or holding taxes steady and skipping the improvements?”

The **LWV State Board** was asked to moderate a forum in Meredith for a contested selectboard race. Using League protocols, groundwork for the forum was performed by the Lakes Region Democrats (there is no corresponding Republican organization in the town). About 55 attendees met seven of the eight candidates, and the eighth candidate sent a statement to be read on her behalf as she was unable to attend. Candidates had tough questions to deal with about economic development possibilities, traffic congestion issues, and a lack of programs for seniors in town.

Some towns will have their town elections and town meeting on the alternative May 12 date. If any of our members or friends want to work with the state board to organize a forum in town, please contact us via our website (www.lwvnh.org) well in advance. It takes several weeks to contact candidates, find a date and venue, and get out publicity. Your state board is willing and able to help and to provide a trained moderator, but we need local people do the groundwork.

Everything You Need to Know about Executive Orders

Why use an executive order? Exactly what is an executive order?

We all learned in school that Congress passes the bills and the President signs them into law or vetoes them. But that's not all. While the Constitution does not specifically permit executive orders, Article II, Section 1, Clause 1 of the Constitution grants the President “executive power.” This has been interpreted to allow a President to issue an executive order which has the force of law. The President uses executive orders to direct officers and agencies of the executive branch to manage operations within the federal government according to congressionally established laws or policies.

The President may issue an executive order to clarify, change or create regulations for an agency of the government or he can create a whole new program. President Kennedy created the Peace Corps through an executive order. Additionally, an executive order can be issued to circumvent Congress if the President wants a program and cannot get traction in Congress. Third, it appears that some Presidents have issued executive orders to create programs that would fulfill their legacies. One of the most famous executive orders would be the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Lincoln. (*Continued next page.*)

George Washington issued eight executive orders while William Henry Harrison issued none. The most executive orders, 3,721, were issued by Franklin Delano Roosevelt (remember he was President for 12 years). In more current times: Ronald Reagan, 381; George Bush, 106; William Clinton, 364; George W. Bush, 291; and Barack Obama, 193 orders.

John Kennedy issued an executive order to create the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Federal Safety Council and the Office of Emergency Planning. Lyndon B. Johnson created the Warren Commission, issued an order that prohibited discrimination in employment decisions based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin and Richard Nixon added the requirement that the military and competitive federal service abide by this prohibition of employment discrimination. Gerald Ford defined and expanded the role, scope and responsibility of the Federal Emergency Preparedness Agency and President Jimmy Carter froze the Iranian assets.

Barack Obama has issued executive orders that impose additional sanctions with respect to North Korea, blocks property of certain persons with respect to Crimea region of the Ukraine, establishes the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing and addresses certain aspects of the immigration issue.

Congress while granting the President significant leeway in the content of an executive order, does have some power to revise, limit or repeal it. Congress can refuse to fund the program, use public pressure to get the President to make changes, take the issue to court or work with the next President who can repeal the order of a previous President.

- Peg Fargo, LWV Greater Capital Area

Quad States Conference, * May 16-17, in Wells, Maine

Join League members from NH, VT, ME, and RI (and maybe Connecticut) for this informative and fun weekend. Attendees will enjoy the lovely rooms at the Hampton Inn and Suites in Wells, Maine, and Saturday dinner at an area restaurant. Saturday lunch at the conference is included in the registration. Registration form for this event is found below.

Program:

Nellie Gorbea, Rhode Island's Secretary of State, will be keynote speaker at the 9th annual Quad States Leadership Conference.

Election Law is the theme of this year's conference, with related issues the focus of workshops to enhance our League leadership skills (focus issues are in parentheses below):

Membership Recruitment - using an issue to recruit members (Redistricting) – Nancy Marashio (NH) will be a workshop presenter.

Working With Others - including LWVUS (Money in Politics) – Ann Luther, (ME).

Conducting a Study (Open Primaries) – Kate Rader and Sonja Schuyler (VT).

A panel of women in public life who have used League experience to launch or inform their careers will conclude the conference on Sunday.

**Last year, the LWV of Connecticut and Massachusetts were invited to join this annual leadership conference, which has been renamed the New England (NE) Regional Leadership Development Conference. We are using "Quad States" as the title for this article because that is familiar to members.*

Register for Quad States Leadership Conference!

[Please note that the LWVNH Education Fund will subsidize attendees \$50/night for rooms at the venue, almost half the cost of the guest room. Share a room and your lodging is practically free (plus tax and tip).]

Fill out the registration form below and return with a check for \$25, payable to LWVME. Note "Quad States" in the memo field. Send to LWVME Education Fund, PO Box 863, Augusta, ME 04332 (they are acting as registrars for the event).

Make your own hotel reservation at Hampton Inn & Suites, 900 Post Road, Wells, Maine 04090 (207-646-0555). Be sure to say you are with the League of Women Voters and the room rate will be \$119.00, whether single or double. Upon request, LWVNH will reimburse almost half the cost of a room. Our block of rooms will be held until May 1, but the rate will be in effect until the event. Breakfast is included in the room rate. Saturday lunch is included in your registration fee. We will have dinner in area restaurants on Saturday night at individuals' expense.

Name _____
Address _____ Town _____ State _____
Phone _____ Email _____

- _____ I plan to attend just the Saturday workshops.
- _____ I plan to stay at the hotel Saturday night and attend workshops on Saturday and Sunday.
- _____ I plan to stay at the hotel Friday and Saturday nights and attend workshops Saturday and Sunday.
- _____ If staying overnight, I have already booked my room at the Hampton In

