



League of Women Voters New Hampshire

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President's Message

You win some, you lose some.

I need to keep that in mind as League members and our coalition partners work on testimony for and against a wide range of bills in the New Hampshire Legislature.

Just got word from one of our coalition directors that HB269 was defeated on the House floor today (Feb. 11). This bill, if passed, would have exacerbated the housing situation for many low income families by requiring much larger up front security deposits than current law allows. From our study and ongoing work on the issues faced by women offenders after they have served their sentences, we know this bill would have made many of them homeless upon release. Next month, I hope to be able to report on another positive step toward improving housing conditions for released female offenders—keeping my fingers crossed on this new initiative.

The fight goes on with election law, and you can read our testimony for and against various election law bills wending their way through the system. Visit the [“Action and Testimony”](#) page of www.LWVNH.org to find copies of our testimony and links to the text of the bills. Our goal is to protect voting rights, and it's an uphill battle. Our thanks to our fearless “Election Law Specialist,” board member Joan Ashwell, for keeping us on track.

Sally Davis, LWVNH co-president and go-to person on energy issues, submitted testimony on a bill that proposes to repeal the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. The testimony is posted on our website. (**Update:** This bill was amended to eliminate the part about repealing RGGI but kept the part that would return the money from greenhouse credits to ratepayers rather than the current situation, which returns money to municipalities to improve energy efficiency in public buildings.) It's scheduled for a vote in the House on Feb. 18.

We won't win all these fights, but join us in rejoicing over those we do win.

Liz Tentarelli, co-president

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Happy 95th Birthday to the League of Women Voters!

Founded by [suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt](#) on February 14, 1920 – 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.

From the beginning, it was apparent that the legislative goals of the League would not be exclusively focused on women's issues and that education aimed at all of the electorate was in order. For 95 years, the League has helped millions of women and men become informed participants in government. And it has tackled a diverse range of public policy issues. From the beginning the League took action on its stands. Over the years many procedural changes have been made in the way League program is defined, adopted and structured, but through all the changes the basic concept of study-member agreement-action has remained constant.

The League is political, but non-partisan. It never supports political parties or candidates, but it does study issues, develop consensus positions and then actively work to support those positions. As Carrie Chapman Catt noted in 1919, "Is the (League) political? Certainly, but not partisan. Its members are as free as other women to join and vote with the party of their choice. They make no pledge otherwise in joining the League."

<http://library.lwv.org/content/league-women-voters-through-decades#sthash.WqKMhcC1.dpuf>

***Editor's Note:** Look for the LWVNH story and another League member story in this issue.

Candidate Forums

March 3, 2015 - 7 p.m. - Veterans Hall, Rte 103, Newbury

Candidates for the contested Newbury Selectboard seats will participate in this LWV Kearsarge/Sunapee Area forum. Public and press invited.

March 4, 2015 - 7 p.m. - Dorchester Town Hall

Candidates for the contested Dorchester Selectboard seats will participate in this LWV Upper Valley forum. Public and press invited.

March 5, 2015 - 6 p.m. - Meredith Community Center

Candidates for the contested Meredith Selectboard seats will participate in this LWVNH moderated forum, organized by the Lakes Region Democrats. Public and press invited.

NH's Budget—a work in progress

Several LWVNH board members and other League members attended the NH Fiscal Policy Institute Budget and Policy Conference in January. They joined NH policymakers, nonprofit and community leaders, academic and policy experts to explore current needs, future goals, and strategies to build a state budget that moves NH forward.

League members attending included state representatives Susan Almy and Karen Ebel, LWVK/S president Sally Embley, Members-at-large Sylvia Gale and Laurel Redden, and LWVNH board members Peg Fargo, Liz Tentarelli, Mary Perry, and Mary Davies.

The slides from the excellent panel presentations are available on the [NHFPI website](#).

The Governor presented her budget in mid-February for the coming biennium, and work in the Finance Committees of the NH House continues.

Constitutional Amendment Study

The 2014 LWVUS Convention adopted a study and review of key, specific structures of American democracy including a study of the process of amending the US Constitution.

Article V of the US Constitution provides two ways of proposing amendments to the nation's fundamental charter. Congress, by a two-thirds vote of both chambers, may propose constitutional amendments to the states for ratification. OR, the legislatures of two-thirds of the states (34 at present) may ask Congress to call a convention to propose amendments to the Constitution; this is commonly called an Article V Convention. Amendments proposed by either method must be ratified by three-fourths of the states, 38 at present.

The first method has been used by Congress to submit 33 amendments to the states, beginning with the Bill of Rights. Of these, 27 were approved; 26 are currently in effect, while one – the 18th Amendment (Prohibition) – was ultimately repealed.

The second method, an Article V Convention, has never been successfully invoked.

League members may find a variety of articles about amending the Constitution by an Article V Convention at: www.lwv.org

International Relations and the NH League

The World Affairs Council of New Hampshire called on the League recently, as it often does, to talk with a group of international visitors about the work of the League. Liz Tentarelli, Peg Fargo and Mary Davies met with representatives from Colombia, Liberia, Lithuania, Nigeria, Suriname, Tunisia and Ukraine. The visitors were in NH to study Accountability in Government. Their trip is sponsored by the U.S. State Department and the group came here from Washington, D.C., and then were going on to sunnier climes: California and Texas.

The group included two women, both PhDs. The woman from Ukraine is an analyst in the anti-corruption department of Transparency International; the woman from Suriname is a university lecturer. Some of the members of the group were quite young; others are in leadership positions and one is a member of his country's parliament. All were fluent in English. An hour was not long enough to get to know these really fascinating people.

League members explained the history and purpose of the League and some of the things we are doing in New Hampshire. However, the visitors were mainly interested in the participation of women in government and how we as an organization furthered women's rights. They were eager to share stories from their own countries, especially the men from Liberia and Lithuania where they have female presidents. The visitor from Nigeria spoke with sadness that women in his northern section of the country were not politically active, but he thought women in other parts of Nigeria were becoming more involved. We were surprised to learn that there is a League of Women Voters in Tunisia (Google this to learn more). Tunisian women have fought to achieve one of the best legal systems for women anywhere in the Muslim world. Tunisia uses gender parity in their elections, requiring an equal number of male and female candidates, thus guaranteeing a stronger showing for women.

After hearing about all of the things the League does, one of the participants wanted to know how many members we have in NH. He must have thought there were thousands and we hated to disillusion him. As a young group they were way ahead of us in technology and had suggestions for our website and a Facebook page.

We truly did learn as much from them as they learned from us. It was nice to hear the State Department officer who accompanied the group confirm that indeed, the League of Women Voters is a very respected organization in the nation's capital.

-Mary Davies, LWV Greater Capitol Area

My League Story

I discovered League in Santa Maria, Calif. as I was "retiring" from High School English teaching because of my first pregnancy. That League was brand new, and was studying ground water issues. I loved the opportunity to study and talk about serious things - diapers and potty training were not going to meet my needs.

I was married to an Air Force officer and we moved often. League became my way of finding my community each time we moved. It helped me know the questions to ask about schools when my sons started school. I saw local government variations in each place we lived - even in Bavaria. I gained confidence to challenge Base authority and tried to help people who didn't know their rights learn about them. Then we moved back to Kentucky where we had grown up, to find no public library and school board meetings that were held in school cafeterias or a room too small for anyone to observe except by standing around the table while the board members whispered. Our League began observing meetings and organizing candidates' forums.

My League life helped me through a divorce by suggesting what I would do next - get a Master's degree in Public Administration. I spent 11 years in county government as a solid waste planner and League experiences helped me build consensus and understand how to question decisions.

I have retired now to NH but League continues to help me better understand where I am living as it always has.

- Sally Davis, LWVNH

League of Women Voters NH

Through the years....

The struggle for suffrage in New Hampshire that began in 1868 was marked by those individuals, both men and women, who were ready to speak out and stand, often alone, for a belief that liberty should be a guaranteed right without the distinction of sex. Susan B. Anthony was touring the country making speeches on right for women. In 1872, she said, "...it was, we the people; not we, the white, male citizens' nor yet, we the male citizen, but we, the whole people.... Who formed the union."

Two months after NH ratified the 19th amendment, at the last annual meeting of the NH Equal Suffrage Association on November 21, 1919, at the Public Library in Manchester, the delegates voted to change the name of their organization to the League of Women Voters. A new constitution was adopted and Miss Martha Kimball of Portsmouth who had been president of the Equal Suffrage Association since 1912, became the first president of the New Hampshire League of Women Voters.

It should be noted that although the Suffrage Association and the National Association of Women had voted to become the League of Women Voters of the United States, the organization did not have official status until February 1920.

Right from the beginning, the league determined issues to be addressed which covered a wide range of topics, not simply those which would be considered "women's issues". Clearly, the League did not feel that the work was completed with the right to vote but that women had a responsibility to make an informed vote.

The program adopted for 1922, just two short years after women got the vote, included: American citizenship, protection of women in industry, child welfare, improvement of election laws and methods, social hygiene, food supply and demand as well as unification of laws concerning civil status of women.

-Excerpts from the booklet written for the 90th celebration of the LWVNH by Peg Fargo

Help Stamp Money Out of Politics!

Since the Supreme Court's 2010 *Citizens United* decision, special-interest money has flooded our electoral process. Last year, outside groups spent more than \$34 million (almost \$40 per voter) on New Hampshire's Congressional and Senate races. A 2013 poll by the UNH Survey Center shows that a bipartisan 64% of Granite Staters believes that Congress cares more about special interests than constituents.

Stamp Stampede, founded by Ben Cohen, is calling for people to stamp messages on US currency: messages like "Stamp Money Out of Politics" and "Not to be used for bribing politicians." Each stamped bill is seen by an estimated 875 people as it circulates through the economy

Stamping messages on money – and using that money to support a grassroots campaign – has its roots in the women's suffrage movement. British Women carved messages into pennies in the early 1900s, then spent the pennies as a way of spreading their "Votes for Women" message throughout society.

Find more information about Stamp Stampede at: www.StampStampede.org or contact David Holt at david@StampStampede.org