



NH Voter

**League of Women Voters
New Hampshire**

LWVNH.org

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LWV Upper Valley

OCTOBER 2015

Are you registered? Presidential primaries are coming closer.

The NH Secretary of State's office has not set the date for the Presidential primaries (likely in February 2016, but could be earlier). They have, however, set the date for the filing period. That means **if voters wish to change their party affiliation so that they can vote in a different party's primary, they must do so this month.**

From the Secretary of State's website comes this announcement:

The supervisors of the checklist in each town and city in New Hampshire must hold a session for correction of the checklist on Friday, October 30th between 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. In addition to registering new voters, this is the LAST DAY that registered voters may change their party affiliation prior to the Presidential Primary.

Registered voters wishing to change party affiliation may also do so at their city or town clerk's office during regular hours up to October 30.

Voters who are registered as "undeclared" do not have to do anything at this time. If they want to vote in the primary, they will ask for a ballot for whichever party they wish. Doing so will change their affiliation to that party. If they wish to return to "undeclared" status, they should fill out paperwork at the polling place after voting but before leaving the polling area.

As of September 30, 2015, the number of registered voters in the state is:

Undeclared – 380,751
Republican – 261,906
Democrat – 229,884
Total registered voters: 872,541

- Liz Tentarelli, President

League Consensus Meeting on Amending the US Constitution

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

10:00 am-1:00 pm (Bring a brown bag lunch)

Bow Baker Library

South Street, Bow

All league members invited to participate in this discussion.

LWVUS Constitutional Amendments Study

Mark your calendar right now and get there on time to get a good seat for the best discussion in town. In 2014, delegates to the LWVUS National Convention voted to consider three areas of the Structure of Democracy which includes: a study of the US Constitution amendment process, an update of the League's campaign finance position and a study of the redistricting process. This consensus is the first part of that agenda.

Excerpts from the LWVUS Constitutional Amendments Study Guide.

Perhaps it goes without saying that the League of Women Voters believes it is right and permissible to amend the Constitution of the United States when circumstances demand. The League was born from the successful decades-long effort to pass the 19th Amendment.

The question for today is: What are the shared values and beliefs within the League – what consensus do we have – regarding the circumstances that might allow or compel the League to endorse a constitutional amendment or an Article V Convention?

If we do find that we have consensus on some of the principles that should guide us, mobilizing the organization to advocacy for or against a particular amendment would fall under the established protocol by which the League determines its advocacy agenda, as laid out in "Impact on Issues." (<http://lww.org/content/public-policy-positions>)

Constitutional Background

In 1787, delegates from twelve of the thirteen states then in existence met in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation. Instead, they drafted a totally new document, what we know as the US Constitution. It was unanimously ratified by the states. While this all seems very long ago, how the Constitution began and how the 1787 Convention was convened and conducted are cited in the current debate about calling a Convention under Article V.

Here's what Article V of the U. S. Constitution says about amending the Constitution:

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution, or, on the application of the legislatures of two thirds of the several states, shall call a convention for proposing amendments, which in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three fourths of the several states, or by conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress.

So Article V 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 (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 by another amendment, the 21st. The 21st Amendment was also the only one ratified by conventions in the states, rather than by state legislatures. In June 1920, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously, that the U. S. Constitution provided for state legislatures, not citizen referendum campaigns, to ratify amendments. The second method, an Article V Convention, has never been successfully invoked.

For study reading materials and consensus questions, check the website: <http://www.lwvnh.org/LWVUSstudies.html>

- Peg Fargo, LWV Greater Concord Area

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LWVNH Greater Nashua Area Unit

The fledgling Greater Nashua Area Unit League has been very visible in the Nashua Community since our formation at the end of July. We have provided Voter Service at events including three Pre-Primary Mayoral Forums and at a Positive Street Art Cultural Festival. Between now and the November 3 Municipal Elections, we plan to provide voter registration and voter ID materials in Spanish, English, and Portuguese at Nashua's 2nd Annual Fall Festival, a Post-Primary Mayoral Forum sponsored by the Nashua Public Library and at the Annual Community Resource Fair hosted by the Nashua Adult Learning Center.

On October 20, we will host a Mayoral Election Forum in partnership with the John Locke Honors Social Studies Society, the Nashua Telegraph and WBIN-NH 1 News at Nashua High School-South. This event will be moderated by our own LWVNH President Liz Tentarelli, and will include a Meet and Greet Reception open to all candidates in the upcoming Municipal Election.

We also celebrated the 95th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage On August 26, and were honored to have Joan Flood Ashwell join us at our September meeting to provide up-to-date information on voting rights and responsibilities in NH.

In the coming months we will work to strengthen our leadership and expand the scope of work ahead for this group which has embraced the purpose, goals and mission of the League with great enthusiasm.

- Sylvia Gale, LWVNH Greater Nashua Area Unit

Voter Service: The League in action

Voter service can take many forms. In Nashua, the newly formed League unit has been distributing voting information at several large events in the city. Thanks to Nashua members' efforts at getting our fliers translated, we are able to offer voter registration and voter ID fliers in Spanish and Portuguese as well as English. (See more about the Greater Nashua Area Unit above.)

On Constitution Day (Sept. 17), League members staffed a table at the NH Institute of Art and had a marvelous time talking with students and staff about voting. Our "voting information for college students" flier is especially important for students whose family homes are not in NH but who are currently going to school in NH and are excited about the Presidential primary. They were given information to help them decide where they want to register to vote...most for the first time.

All of our fliers are on our Elections page of our LWVNH website, and may be copied and distributed without any further permission: <http://www.lwvnh.org/>

For a different kind of voter service, League was asked to be the neutral party in overseeing the voting at a HUD housing development in Manchester. Residents will be voting for their governing board and League will act as ballot clerks for the election. Of course we'll also distribute voting information and encourage registration for the Manchester city elections and the Presidential primaries.

LWVNH has a new publication about organizing candidate forums. With step-by-step suggestions and a manual for moderators, we intend to offer training to other groups in the community who might want to host candidate forums. Training sessions are being planned. More information to come. If you know of a community organization that might be interested, please give any board member the contact information.

Did You See What She Wore?! Women in Politics and the Media.

League members and friends in the Kearsarge/Sunapee area may want to attend this talk at Colby-Sawyer College (Ware Campus Center) on Friday, Oct. 16 at 2:30.

“More women are entering US politics, there are more women in Congress than ever, and we have female presidential candidates in both parties. But what does this actually mean for women? What do the media get right and wrong in their coverage of women in politics?” Professor Melissa Meade, chair of the Humanities Department of Colby-Sawyer College, leads this timely discussion.

The program is open to the public.

Thanks to Our Members and Friends

The commitment of League members to improving conditions for [women incarcerated in NH](#) is ongoing. Ever since we began our study in 2009, we've heard from members and others how important it is to change many things to reduce recidivism and to improve women's chance for success upon release. While we work on the big changes, including the new prison, we try to let the women remember that we care about them.

So it was no surprise that members responded generously when our vice-president Peg Fargo told League about the serious transportation issues facing women at Shea Farm, the “halfway house” for women offenders. These minimum security inmates, usually within six months of release, must find jobs in the community and get themselves there. Not an easy matter given Shea Farm's location, and bus passes are only part of a much needed solution. Bus pass donations can be sent at any time to the League at LWVNH, 4 Park St Room 200, Concord, NH 03301.

We also collect small items to give the women at Shea Farm a gift bag each Christmas. A number of local League members have given us socks, gloves, notepads and pens, bottles of shampoo and body wash—all much appreciated by the residents. Contact any board member if you have items to donate for this coming holiday season.

A big thank you to the United Methodist Women, a statewide group that has been supporting the League's efforts for the past two years. Peg Fargo spoke to them in 2014 about incarceration issues, and just a few weeks ago Peg Fargo and Liz Tentarelli addressed their annual meeting talking about voting. The attendees were very generous in their donations to the “fresh start” baskets that the League brings to Shea Farm, where they are given to the women as they complete their sentences and begin a new life in the community. The church women donated items such as towels and cutlery, cleaning supplies and cooking utensils.

Thank you, Leaguers and friends, for caring.

- Liz Tentarelli and Peg Fargo, LWVNH

Question for Candidates:

“What specific reforms will you advance to end the corrupting influence of money in politics?”

This question, at the heart of the NH Rebellion movement, is being asked of presidential candidates as they tour NH and other early primary states. Teams of volunteers are asking, and then recording the answers. These short YouTube videos can be found at this website: <http://www.questionr.us/>

Check it out. As expected, some candidates actually answer, others evade and others go off on interesting tangents. Going to an event? You can ask and record the answer, then post it on the website.

State Budget and Bills

On September 16, the NH Legislature met to pass a compromise state budget—finally—which the Governor signed that day. The legislature also attempted to override the Governor's veto of several key bills. The votes to override Hassan's vetoes were not there.

Bills that will not become law this year, happily from the League's point of view, include allowing concealed carry of guns without a permit. Another bill whose veto was sustained is the requirement to be a resident of NH for 30 days before being allowed to vote. League is pleased that this restriction on voting rights will not take effect, which would have put the lie to our “same day registration” tradition.

Also not to become law is SB 101. This bill would have prohibited the Department of Education and the state Board of Education from implementing common core standards in any school in this state. State officials maintain that common core standards are optional and not mandated by the state on schools or school districts, so if the legislature had overridden the Governor's veto it would simply complicate the public's perception of common core.

What's Up Next?

The House members have already submitted the titles of nearly 700 bills to be considered by the legislature starting in January. At this stage they are titles only, but your state board has highlighted a number of bills we intend to follow. More details as the bills are actually written. Members are encouraged to visit our “Hot Legislation” webpage to learn about hearings as they are scheduled on key bills of League interest. (See Election Law article on the next page.)

In Memory of Alice Krasner

Thank you to members and friends who donated to LWVNH and to the LWVNH Education Fund in memory of long-time Manchester League member Alice Krasner. Alice's family was touched by your remembering Alice this way.

<p><u>Members' News</u></p> <p>Be sure to check our newish website page, <i>Member News</i>, 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</p>
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Where to find everything you need to know

The League of Women Voters NH website (www.lwvnh.org) has everything you need to know about elections, candidate forums and Presidential candidate visits (<http://www.lwvnh.org/Forums-debates.html>).

Election Law

The League of Women Voters NH works closely with a large group of nonpartisan organizations that all include promoting the right to vote as an essential part of their missions. For the past few years, we have worked together to prevent many repressive election laws from being adopted by the NH Legislature. This year, we plan to be proactive in introducing and working for election law reforms to bring our state into line the kinds of laws being adopted across the country to making access to voting easier. Please look at our platform, and sign on as an individual supporter.

- Joan Flood Ashwell, LWV Greater Capital Area

NH Campaign for Voting Rights

As the “**First in the Nation**” primary state with one of the highest voter participation rates in the country, we believe New Hampshire can become a model for the nation in administering inclusive, transparent and high integrity elections. We believe voting must be equally accessible to all citizens regardless of their income, race, gender, disability, age or zip code. We support a voting system that is accessible, convenient and consistent for all.

Make Registration Transparent through Online Voter Registration

While eligible New Hampshire voters must take responsibility to register and thereby participate in our democracy, it is also the government’s responsibility to make sure no eligible voter is prevented from casting a ballot because of human error, complex voter registration rules, or self-interested politicians who manipulate the system for their own gain. We should use existing technology to **enable citizens to register and verify their voter information online** and easily update their records when they move. This system would provide strong safeguards and penalties to prevent fraud and would give voters the choice to register online or on paper.

Twenty-three states allow for online voter registration in 2015. New Hampshire’s voter registration system should be modernized and brought online to give every eligible voter an opportunity to participate in our democracy. Citizens can file taxes, apply for jobs, receive financial aid and register vehicles online. In these tough economic times, people move often for jobs. Allowing for voter registration online ensures our democracy is keeping up with the technological world we live in.

Ensure Equal Access to Polling Places and Ballot Box for Every Voter

The ability to cast a ballot during a fair voting period and the ability to avoid long lines at polling places should not be dependent on the town or ward in which a voter lives. Every eligible American should be able to participate in our democracy, and that begins with making sure that voting is consistent throughout the state. Thirty-eight states **require standardized polling location times** already. Ultimately the ability to vote before, during or after work should not depend on your zip code.

Support our Cities & Towns with the Right Tools

Voting is our most sacred and fundamental right. We must prioritize it and set aside state resources to fully support New Hampshire’s towns and cities as they administer local, state and federal elections. Providing **consistent funding to innovate** and provide online resources and technology to conduct elections is central to bringing New Hampshire into the 21st century.

Questions? Would you like to be endorse the platform? Contact Michael O’Brien at:

nhcampaignforvotingrights@gmail.com

Be sure to include your name, address and title (if you hold an elected office).