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www.LWVNH.org

NH Voter, the newsletter of LWVNH

July 2020

This NH Voter is longer than usual because the last three and a half pages are reports from some of our delegates to the national LWV convention in June. If this doesn't work in your email, you can read it on the Publications page of our LWVNH.org website as a pdf.

Page 1: highlights of bills passed in the closing days of the NH Legislature for 2020.

Page 2: special zoom meetings of legislators and task force on school reopening policies and on school funding issues. Public may attend remotely.

Pages 3-5: LWV national convention reports from delegates

If you have any questions about **voting and voter registration**, please visit the League's website. If that doesn't help you, call the League office and leave a message and clear phone number and someone will return your call within a few days. (603) 225-5344

The primary is Sept. 8. The general election is Nov. 3. Anyone with concerns about Covid 19 exposure may vote absentee in 2020.

Download an absentee ballot application from the [Sec. Of State's website](#), or phone or email your town clerk. All applications and completed ballots must be mailed or delivered to your own town/city clerk's office.

The NH Legislature has finished its 2020 session, with a number of important bills heading to Governor Sununu's desk. They include HB1665, establishing an independent advisory redistricting commission, League's priority bill for this session.

HB 1672 that would have allowed online voter registrations, no excuse absentee voting, and other 21st century election law changes was vetoed July 10. Gov. Sununu's veto says in part:

“New Hampshire's voting system works very well and we consistently have some of the highest voter participation in the country. The proponents of House Bill 1672 seek to take advantage of a global pandemic to fundamentally and permanently weaken New Hampshire's electoral system. They have put forward a partisan wish list of unreasonable and unnecessary provisions, some of which have already been vetoed and sustained last year. New Hampshire takes pride in our traditions of strong civic engagement and fair, transparent, and secure elections. Our Democratic Secretary of State, who has served our state faithfully for over 40 years, opposes this radical, partisan piece of legislation and so do I.”

HB1266, a “once and done” 2020 bill that would make the absentee ballot application include Covid 19 as a reason to request an absentee ballot and allow early processing of the many absentee ballots we expect. House vote was 221-101 and was unanimous in the Senate. *The indications are that the Governor will sign this bill.*

HB731 minimum wage increase—minimum wage in NH is currently \$7.25 per hour.

HB687 the “Red Flag” bill, creating a process by which firearms can be taken away from people who pose a threat to themselves or others.

HB1245 is omnibus legislation concerning state agencies, including earned-time credit reductions for prisoners who participate in programs, and establishing an offshore wind commission and development office in the Department of Business and Economic Affairs.

HB1280 includes provisions about copayments for insulin, wholesale prescription drug importation program, establishing a NH prescription drug affordability board, establishing the prescription drug competitive marketplace, pricing of generic prescription drugs, prior authorization for prescription drug coverage, and requiring insurance coverage for epinephrine auto-injectors. This bill had strong House support, 224-104.

If you have a personal plea to make to the Governor about any of these and other bills, now is the time. Here is his contact information: <https://www.governor.nh.gov/contact>

To read the school reopening guidelines of the task force, issued 7/14/20, visit the NH Dept. of Education website: <https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/commissioner/covid-19>

School reopening policies in NH: The NH House and Senate Education Committees will hold a joint Zoom session on July 21 to get the report of the appointed task force on school reopenings. This is from the House Calendar:

TUESDAY, JULY 21

EDUCATION JOINT WITH SENATE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Presentations:

9:00 a.m. School Reopening Task Force Recommendations and Follow Up Guidance -
Commissioner

Edelblut

9:30 a.m. Superintendents Panel

10:00 a.m. Employee Guidance

10:20 a.m. Access Issues

11:20 a.m. Policy and Regulations

Members of the public may attend using the following links:

To join the webinar: <https://www.zoom.us/j/92277769775>

OR

To view on YouTube, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjBZdtrjRnQdmg-2MPMiWrA>

The joint House/Senate **commission on school funding** is holding meetings via zoom on July 13, 16 and 20 via zoom. Check the Senate Calendar for details. Public can observe.

LWV Convention 2020 reports:

League members, send “Thank You” vibes to our 6 NH delegates to the biennial League of Women Voters national convention. This involved many hours in front of their computers to prep for the virtual convention, to attend zoom caucuses, and then to join the online plenary session and cast votes for the various resolutions and action items. Our delegates were past LWVNH presidents Sally Davis and Lillian Nelligan, LWVKearsarge/Sunapee board member and state board member Sara McNeil, PeterboroPlus unit leader Kate Coon, new board member from Merrimack Jane Rothwell, and dedicated League member from the Dover area Sue Nastasi. Also on the delegate list but unable to attend was Sylvia Gale from the Greater Nashua Unit and state member. We hope you are on the road to getting well, Sylvia.

A recap of the convention is at this LWV.org webpage: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/council-convention/2020-convention-daily-briefing>

NH delegates held a zoom meeting to debrief and have sent short summaries of some key items, for those who don't wish to run through the entire online briefing.

Lillian Nelligan offers this summary of the plenary session, where delegates voted remotely to adopt several resolutions in addition to the one approved by the national board.

Being a child of the 20th century, and having attended numerous National Conventions in my 52 years of League membership, I found this to be a unique experience. Who could have imagined that our 54th Convention attendees (consisting of 1267 delegates from 50 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico) would all gather on Zoom?

It was a little disconcerting to realize we were all individually digitally visible.

A lot of work went into making this a success. The emphasis was on voting: voting rights, diversity, and inclusion. Items we voted on include the following:

- Support for electoral systems, at each level of government, that encourage participation, are verifiable, auditable, and enhance representation for all voters.
- A motion was approved to add “abolish the Electoral College by Constitutional amendment,” to the program. [editor’s note: see more by Sue Nastasi on this below]
- Concurrence on the transfer of Public Lands to Federal control.
- Motion to retain all current LWVUS positions and proposed 2020-2021 program was adopted.
- Adopt the proposed LWVUS program for 2020-2022, “Making Democracy Work,” focusing on advocacy for voting rights, improving elections and the National Popular Vote Compact. [editor’s note: This detailed concurrence statement was approved by the national board of directors. LWVNH board also had concurred] Motion #2020-119
- Campaign Finance Reform: money in politics and redistricting.
- Continue work on urgent issues: climate change, the ERA, healthcare, gun safety, and immigration.

Resolutions included:

- Re-affirming our commitment to immigration reform
- Advocating against systemic racism and excessive force by law enforcement
- Prompt action by all League members to eradicate systemic racism and the harm it causes at all levels of government
- Restore and protect an ecologically sustainable environment

Our new LWVUS President, Dr. Deborah Turner, was introduced and gave us her vision for the next biennium:

- Making Vote 411 a household name (Vote 411 is election information presented by LWVUS Ed Fund)
- Advancing our DEI (Diversity/ Equity /inclusion) work and enhancing inter-generational conversation. *“We, as an organization, acknowledge our own difficult history with racism while we embrace our future where DEI will become part of our DNA.”*

Dr. Deborah Turner welcomed everyone to join LWVUS in Denver for the next Convention in 2022.

[editor’s note from LWV press release: “Deborah Turner’s commitment to advancing voting rights and her dedication to democracy reform make her the right leader for our national board of directors,” said Virginia Kase, CEO of the League of Women Voters. “As a medical doctor and an attorney, Deborah’s experience and vision will shape our work for the next two years. The League is preparing for the election of our lifetime and our membership is fortunate to have such an accomplished woman directing our focus.”

Sue Nastasi reports on Motion #2020-157, proposed by the League of Women Voters of Illinois to adopt the **abolition of the Electoral College by Constitutional amendment** as a LWVUS action focus for the 2020-2022 biennium. *[editor’s note:* the League has held this position since we did a national study in 1970. In 2008 we studied the National Popular Vote Compact and adopted a position supporting NPVC as one way to achieve popular election of the President while working to abolish the Electoral College.] The motion PASSED on 681 yay, 458 nay votes, and will be added to the program *[another editor’s note:* in League parlance, “program” refers to the positions on which we take action.]

Sue’s personal reaction: The nationwide system should be updated especially when the delegates are not required to vote for their state’s winning candidate. But to remove the electoral college without a detailed replacement is not a comfortable situation.

An example would be to compare the population of California to New Hampshire and I cannot believe Granite Staters would agree CA deciding our next president. Or calculate the nationwide popular vote without state totals.

Essentially, I have a few conflicts with the electoral college. It does not feel fair, and voters need a better alternative.

Sara McNeil reports on a civics Caucus held on June 23, 2020:

Improving Civics Education & Strengthening Democracy with the Harvard Case Study Method

Speaker: David A. Moss, PhD - Harvard professor

In 2012, Harvard professor Dr. David Moss introduced a course entitled History of American Democracy to his young college students. Within a year or two, his classroom was overflowing with students excited to be learning history and civics via the 'case method'. Dr. Moss stated, "There's a danger in teaching history as just a bunch of facts and dates; it gives students no preparation for life." As part of this method, Dr. Moss teaches history in the present tense. Cases range from The Making of the US Constitution (1787) to Citizens United and Corporate Speech (2010). Students are introduced to the case and are then "placed" into that time period, perhaps representing one of our well-known historical figures. They analyze the issue, debate the pros and cons, and make decisions. What is the conflict? What are my choices? How will my decision affect others? It's critical thinking at its best!

Dr. Moss said this type of teaching results in lively discussions that engage each student to come to their own conclusions. The student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with comments such as "it brought history to life," - "I feel more empowered to become involved in my community" and "I feel I'm a better citizen now."

The success of this method of teaching resulted in some students returning to their high schools and recommending the case-study method to their former history teachers. A few teachers contacted Dr. Moss, who readily agreed to share some of the course materials with them. In 2015, a pilot study was launched, now known as the Harvard Case Method Project. It offers high school teachers a case-based curriculum, free of cost, on the History of American Democracy, developed by Professor Moss. Now 350 teachers in 280 high schools throughout the country are involved in this project.

For several years now, Dr. Moss has partnered with the League of Women Voters in helping to bring the Harvard Case Method Project to as many high school students as possible. In fact, last year, 50 League chapters in 22 states nominated nearly 80 teachers to attend the multi-day workshop. Unfortunately, the deadline has passed for the August 2020 Teacher Workshop but there are still plenty of other opportunities to learn more.

Dr. Moss asked League members to submit the names of any history/civics high school teachers that may be interested in the Project.

To learn more, visit <https://www.hbs.edu/case-method-project/about/Pages/default.aspx>

Sue Nastasi also attended this caucus, and urges us first to find out how civics are being taught in our local schools and then find out more about this method of instruction.

Sally Davis attended the diversity caucuses:

Several delegates attended the caucus on climate; we look forward to a report.

Delegate Kate Coon attended sessions on holding virtual candidate forums, which we will present in the next NH Voter.