



Missouri Voter

Volume 76, Issue 4

The League of Women Voters of Missouri

July/August 2015

President's Message



Elaine Mitchell Blodgett
LWVMO President

Dear League Members,

Summer has been a harsh one this year: big storms, trees down, leaks found, streams running over banks, yards, streets and heat making an appearance. Farmers have been affected financially and the rest of us sometimes inconvenienced, governments needing to pay more out on infrastructure problems and paying for repairs.

Politics has become a bit harsh also. It's been an interesting summer, politically, as everyone seems to be running for President 18 months out. One candidate has opened up whole new discussions on issues, sometimes shockingly so. Liberal vs conservative approach is alive and well. Missouri politics has hung right in there with two legislators recently resigning from their office for failing to understand what morality actually means and no doubt hurting their families as well. Just recently a third legislator had 'false' information "leaked" about himself.

League has our work cut out for us. First of all, the public needs to hear good, solid information from candidates on various issues. The candidates need to do their homework and most importantly, those Leagues running candidates and issues meetings need to be non-partisan in approach and not take sides on the issues. We need real information, not 'sound bites'. That means we must attract our members and the public to our candidates/issues meetings. Breakfast and lunch issues meetings might be an approach. Take chances and try some new approaches.

Meanwhile, enjoy the end of summer and early fall. We look forward to seeing some of you on August 22 in St. Louis and all of you in November at the fall conference in Sedalia.

—Elaine Mitchell Blodgett

CALENDAR 2015

- August 21—LWVMO Board Mtg.
- August 22—Special Meeting for members -St. Louis
- September 16—Veto Session at State Legislature
- September 18—LWVMO Board Mtg. -Moberly
- November 6—LWVMO Board Mtg. - Sedalia
- **November 7—LWVMO Fall Conference -Sedalia**

2016

- January 6—Legislature Convenes
- **January 12—LWVMO Capitol Action Day—Jefferson City**
- January 23—LWVMO Board Mtg. (Snowdate: Jan. 30)
- February 23—Candidate Filing Day -Jefferson City
- March 5—LWVMO

LWV Websites:

lwvmissouri.org (state)

lwv.org (national)

LEGISLATIVE ACTION REPORT

August 10, 2015

The last day of action by our Governor to sign or veto bills was Tuesday, July 14, 2015. One hundred thirty-six (136) bills were truly agreed and finally passed (TAFP). Governor Nixon vetoed 18 of the non-appropriation bills; 12 House bills-6 Senate bills. Veto Session begins on September 16, 2015. A vetoed bill is taken up in the chamber in which it originated. Override requires a 2/3 majority in the House and the Senate. Overrides become effective 30 days after the override date, unless the bill states otherwise.

Here is a brief glimpse of what may come up in the Veto Session.

SENATE BILLS VETOED

SB 224 would take away the A+ scholarship eligibility of Missouri high school students who have earned the scholarships through their work in the classroom and community but who are not citizens of the United States. The bill would punish immigrant students and require them to pay foreign tuition to our community colleges. Preventing students from attending schools when we don't have enough graduates in Missouri to fulfill Missouri job openings is not good policy for Missouri. **House Vote-108-38, Senate Vote 25-8**

Senate Bill 20 would carve out a special tax exemption for commercial laundries, and reduce state and local revenues by \$4 million annually.

Senate Bill 67 and House Bill 799 would increase court fees and use these fees as a form of revenue to fund local capital projects.

SB 24 Vetoed by Gov. Nixon. Reduces maximum lifetime benefits for those qualifying for 'Temporary Assistance for Needy Families' (TANF). This veto was overridden in May, 2015. On January 1, 2016, nearly 9500 recipients - 6300 of whom are children - will lose their benefits because they have surpassed the new state requirements although not the federal.

HOUSE BILLS VETOED

HB 42 Introduced as a student transfer bill and became a school choice bill. It expands charter schools, authorizes taxpayer funding for privately operated virtual schools and makes it more difficult for students at unaccredited school districts to transfer to a nearby accredited district. **House Vote 84-73, Senate Vote 23-11.** In his veto message, Nixon said although originally intended to fix problems with the state's student transfer law, the bill instead "mandated expensive educational experiments, neglected accountability and evaded the major, underlying difficulties in the transfer law." "The unacceptable results are that HB 42, in its final form, introduces private vouchers without meaningful oversight, builds a larger, more expensive, and unnecessary bureaucracy, and imposes gratuitous requirements and restrictions on local schools,... failing to find fair solutions for children attending school in any of Missouri's unaccredited districts."

HB 63 Makes various changes to laws governing local elections. Nixon objected to one provision of the bill prohibiting former school district superintendents from seeking election to the school board of a district at which they previously worked as superintendent. "The law should encourage – not prohibit – those who aspire to service in public office. In our democratic system, otherwise qualified candidates should not be disqualified simply because of their expertise." **House Vote 111-49, Senate Vote 24-9 (partisan votes)**

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY!! - August 22!!

There will be a special meeting for LWV members who would like to learn more about state and national LWV initiatives on Saturday, August 22 at the state office.

Breakfast will be available at 8:00 a.m. Then at 9:00 a.m., we will meet with our membership/leadership person, Donna Lauffer from Kansas. In addition, we will host Karen Nicholson, LWVUS secretary.



Members who would prefer to come the day before may arrive in St. Louis on Friday afternoon and either get a motel room or can stay at a home of a St. Louis League member. (Please provide notice so arrangements for a home stay can be set up.)

The more members at the meeting, the more fun and informative it will be. It's a rare opportunity to converse with state and national LWV members.

Money in Politics Consensus Study

National Convention is next year in June in Washington, D.C. We need to complete the study item on Money in Politics by the end of January 2016 in all of our Leagues. The topic lends itself not just to League, but to your community. Planning programs on the subject might give a chance for them to have input on the subject.

This is the latest schedule from LWVUS:

- Fall 2015—Study guide and consensus questions posted. Leagues hold consensus meetings.
- February 1, 2016– Consensus reports (electronic) from Leagues due to LWVUS.

Be sure to read the article about Money and Politics on page 7 of this issue of the Missouri Voter.

Other Background Materials can be found on the LWVUS webpage:

HISTORY OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE CHART <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/history-campaign-finance-chart>.

DEFINITIONS FOR MONEY IN POLITICS TERMS <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/definitions-money-politics-terms>

Local League News

Moberly-Randolph County

The Moberly-Randolph County LWV is excited to report FIVE new members joined during our special membership push in May. Barb Riley graciously hosted us in her 50's Diner themed rec room complete with working soda fountain, ice cream tables and chairs, juke boxes (with 50's and 60's records of course), pinball machines and Coke memorabilia. The great ambiance as well as everyone sharing why League is important to them no doubt contributed to this 40% increase in our membership.

Our first meeting will be in September as we hear what did and didn't happen in the last legislative session, what new laws went into effect on August 28, and the upcoming Veto Session. We will also sketch out programs for the rest of the year and update and add to our Observer Corps. The Observers have been active during the summer but we were happy to have a bit of a reprieve from forums due to a quiet August election date. We will be gearing up for a busy 2016 election season and ensuring that more of our citizens are registered to vote and informed on the issues.

—Nancy Copenhaver, President; Janie Riley, Vice President; Cheryl Allen, Secretary; Karen Berding, Treasurer; and Connie Asbury, Membership.

Columbia-Boone County

After our successful fundraising play in June, we turned our attention to the upcoming national studies on amending the Constitution and Money in Politics. An active study committee has been working on planning events and coordinating the consensus processes. We will have a speaker on amending the Constitution for our Constitution Day event, Dr. Justin Dyer of the MU Political Science Department. Everyone is welcome to join us at the Boone County Government Building on Sept. 16 at 7:00 (6:30 refreshments) to hear what he has to say. We will also be distributing the questions and links to suggested readings through our local *Voter*. For Money in Politics, we will have a Lunch and Learn on September 15 and a public forum on Nov. 9. Again, everyone from other leagues is welcome to attend. We may use this topic to launch a new speaker's bureau to take our messages to community groups rather than expecting them to come to our events.

The CAT-TV group has been busy this summer, with a program on a recent ballot issue and another on Aug. 12 on a project funded by the Kettering Foundation through the *Columbia Daily Tribune* to encourage public dialogue in a democracy. The coordinators of the project see clear connections with the work of LWV. The program will be available on our website (lwvcbc.org) or at www.columbiaaccess. We will also be represented at a Senior Living Fair and the Sustainability Fair this fall.



—Peggy Placier, co-president

Missouri Legislature—Update on Medicaid

Rep. Marsha Haefner has been appointed by Speaker of the House Todd Richardson to chair a statewide committee to review how services are provided to those in Missouri on Medicaid. She has indicated that she will recommend a managed care system. More later as additional information is available.

—Barb Davis, Health Chair

CALENDARS!

Members of the Sedalia-Pettis County LWV got together early this month to work on the Calendars, also to catch up on all summer gossip. A good time was had by all! Don't forget to place your order!

—Maureen Talley, Treasurer, Sedalia-Pettis Co. LWV



Our thanks to these wonderful members of the Sedalia-Pettis County League for their generous donation of time!

Fall Conference

League of Women Voters of Missouri Fall Conference

Saturday, November 7, 2015

9:00 a.m. (registration) to 3:30 p.m.

State Fair Community College, Sedalia

The League of Women Voters Fall Conference is open to all members and friends of the League. This is a great opportunity to meet and network with Leaguers from around the state. There will be several interesting sessions, including one on the topic of Money in Politics. Details about the Conference will be included in the next issue of the *Missouri Voter*.



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Legislative Action Report

(continued from page 2)

HB 116 So-called “right-to-work” bill making it a crime punishable by up to 15 days in jail and a \$300 fine for companies to negotiate a labor contract that requires workers to pay dues for the union representation they receive. It also would subject business owners to unlimited civil liability for entering into such agreements. **House vote 92-66; Senate 21-13.** In his veto message, Nixon said right-to-work laws “create a less skilled workforce, drive down wages and directly interfere with a business owner’s right to contract.”

HB 722 Prohibits local governments from enacting ordinances regulating the use of plastics bags by retailers or from establishing local minimum wages that are higher than the state minimum wage. This interferes with local government’s ability to establish local policies. “House Bill 722 is a clear example of unwarranted government intrusion – ... interference with the policymaking of local governments and the abandonment of the principle of local control,” Nixon said in his veto letter. “Local voters ought to have the right to decide these issues. Just as there should be an appropriate allocation of responsibilities between federal and state governments, so too should the precept of local control apply to the relationship between state and local governments.” **House Vote 105-48, Senate 24-10 (partisan votes)**

HB 150 This bill reduces unemployment benefits from 20 weeks (one of the lowest in the nation) to 13 weeks without taking into account regional differences. Nixon vetoed the bill stating that “besides being a safety net, the unemployment system has proven to be vital to economic stability”. **The House on May 12 voted 109-53 to override HB 150 reducing the maximum duration of unemployment benefits, but the Senate took no action on it before the session ended on May 15.** Under past legislative practice, HB 150 would be dead. However, Republican leaders contend the legislature still has the authority to override the bill if it chooses. There are three possibilities: 1) HB 150 can’t be overridden; 2) HB 150 can be overridden, but the process must start over in the House; and 3) the Senate can override HB 150 without further action from the House. In the event the General Assembly does override HB 150 in veto session, either by the Senate just picking up where it left off or starting the process over in the House, the Supreme Court likely will have a chance to weigh in on the matter as a lawsuit challenging the validity of such an override is expected.

Fact Checking

Want to check the accuracy of allegations or emails? Go to ...

www.politifact.com or
www.factcheck.org
www.flackcheck.org
www.snopes.com

Background about Money in Elections¹

We will be using the ILR to summarize some of this vast information being posted on the LWVUS website for the Money in Election Study. Please visit the LWVUS website for more in-depth information (follow the links on page 3). Interested in joining our Committee that will work to educate ourselves and our members before the Consensus in January 2016 – call the League Office (314-961-6869)! This first article is a summary of the information presented in *The New Soft Money Outside Spending in Congressional Election*¹.

Regardless of one's view on *Citizens United* there is no doubt that independent spending has increased dramatically. There is increased controversy over the money spent by individuals, corporations, labor unions, Super PACs and other outside groups that influence the federal elections.

Who Spends the Money ¹			
The Old Guard		The New Players	
Candidates	PACs (Political Action Committee is a political committee organized for the purpose of raising and spending money to elect and defeat candidates)	Non-Profits	SuperPACs (A political action committee that makes unlimited expenditures that are not coordinated with any candidate or party.)
Amount Limits		No limits on source or amount of contributions	
Source Limitations: no union or corporate treasury funds		Cannot give money to candidates or PACs	
Can give money to candidates and PACS		Can make independent expenditures	
All contributions and expenditures must be reported to the FEC		SuperPACs must report contributions and expenditures to the FEC Non-Profits report some	

Spending by outside groups not affiliated with candidates or parties has increased dramatically. Most outside spending in congressional races funded express advocacy in opposition to a candidate.

There are four categories of groups that engage in outside spending:

1. **Shadow Parties** that support either Democratic or Republican candidates without being associated with a particular issue.
2. **Old Hands** are groups of long-established organizations with known interests and policy agendas that have multiple organizational forms and typically engage in both electoral and legislative advocacy.
3. **Buddy PACs** developed after *Citizens United*, do not coordinate with a candidate's campaign, but they exist to be supportive of that campaign and that campaign alone.
4. **New Kids on the Block** focus on an issue or region. Unlike the Old Hands, they did not exist prior to *Citizens United* and do not have an associated hard money PAC or obvious lobbying agenda.

Campaigns are greatly affected by the spending of these outside groups:

- Outside groups do the "dirty work" in campaigns and focus their spending on negative ads.
- Outside spending can take control of a campaign's message away from the candidate.
- Political campaigns no longer look to state parties for support.
- Outside groups do engage in cooperation with campaign professional to pursue electoral goals.
- Outside spending can have similar impact of soft money before BCRA 2002 (Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act)
- Outside spending affects the legislative process through perceived threats to incumbents.



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From LWVUS:

Fifty years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act (VRA) into law. The VRA was a cornerstone achievement of the civil rights movement and ensured that every American citizen, regardless of race, ethnicity or language, had equal access to the right to vote. But two years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a key part of the VRA leading to a full frontal attack on the voting rights of American citizens.

Despite public outcry since the Supreme Court's decision, Congress has ignored widespread voter discrimination and the will of the American people.

The Missouri VOTER is published bi-monthly at the League of Women Voters of Missouri (St. Louis)
Subscriptions are \$2 per year.

Periodicals postage paid at St. Louis, MO USPS 593-960

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