



# The VOTER

VOLUME 48 NUMBER 1

January 2009

### Calendar (League activities in bold)

DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION	DETAILS
Jan 6	Tu	7 p.m.	Vogelson Library	<b>LWVCC Board meeting</b>
Jan 20	Tu	6 p.m.	16th Floor Courthouse, Camden	Freeholder caucus meeting
Jan 22	Th	7 p.m.	Bellmawr Community Center, 29 E Browning	Freeholder Meeting
Jan 31	Sa	10 a.m.	Vogelson Library	<b>State consensus on voting rights for ex-felons (Snow date Feb 21).</b>
Feb 4	W	7 p.m.	Vogelson Library	<b>LWVCC Board meeting</b>
Feb 17	Tu	6 p.m.	16th Floor Courthouse, Camden	Freeholder caucus meeting
Feb 19	Th	7 p.m.	Lawnside Public School 426 Charleston Ave.	Freeholder Meeting
May 16/23	Sa			<b>Annual Meeting - Hold the date</b>

#### Voter Highlights

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CAMDEN COUNTY

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## President's Message:

Now that the election and inauguration are over and we have a new president who promises change and hope, we are faced with an economic crisis that few of us have ever experienced. The unemployment rate is increasing almost daily and the depth of our financial crisis is still not known by those who are trying to fix it. It is going to be a very difficult and challenging time for our elected officials. Now is the time to make your voices heard by joining the League to advocate for policy changes that will move us in the right direction. I personally still have faith that this country will correct its mistakes and we will once again prosper as a people and a nation.

The American people have always been resilient during adverse times and will recover as a stronger people from this crisis. As we go in to a troubled new year, I appeal to the Camden County residents to join the Camden County League of Women Voters to make your voices heard. Our job is to inform so that our members can be better prepared to address the challenges that we are now facing. The League of Women Voters is an advocate for you and as we grow our membership, we will have a greater voice in our community while navigating this economic crisis.

Sincerely,

Ann Saunders

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**The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization of men and women, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.**

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Visit our web site: <http://www.lwvnj.org/camdencounty>

*The VOTER* is published ten times a year to keep the membership and public informed of the activities of the League of Women Voters of Camden County. For subscription or membership information call (856) 795-7878.



## Getting there - Directions!

**Bellmawr: James Mullen Community Center**, 29 E. Browning Rd, Bellmawr. Take 295 to 168 South. Browning is in about 0.4 miles. Turn left. In about a block, the building is on the left. *The 400 bus runs up and down Route 168 from Turnersville hourly or more often evenings.*

**Camden County Courthouse:** Take 676 north to Mickle Blvd. Flow right at the fork (don't go on Campbell Place), then turn right onto 5th street in a few blocks. The courthouse is at 5th and Federal, a block up from Mickle.

**Camden, Federal Courthouse:** 4th and Cooper, but we generally car pool. Call 856-795-7878 if you're interested. *About 3-4 blocks from the City Hall PATCO station.*

**Lawnside Public School** 426 Charleston Ave. From the east, take route 295 south to the exit for Warwick Road south (toward Lawnside). Stay on Warwick Road for about 0.6 miles, then turn left at E Charleston for 0.7 miles. // From the west, take 295 north to route 30 south. Stay on 30 (White Horse Pike) for 0.8 miles, then turn left onto E Charleston for 0.8 miles. // From the south, you can come up route 30. About 0.5 miles past Evesham Road, angle right onto Warwick. Stay on Warwick for 0.2 miles, turn right onto E Charleston for 0.7 miles.

**Voorhees: Vogelson Regional Library:** Driving south on 30, turn left onto Somerdale Road, just above the Echelon Mall. Go under the train bridge in about a half mile, then turn right onto Burnt Mill. Soon turn left onto Laurel Road. The library is on your right. Burnt Mill Road also crosses 544 (Evesham Road) north of the library and White Horse Road (an extension of Springdale) south of it. If you know where the Echelon Mall is, you're home!



### Board Report

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#### At its Jan 6 meeting, the LWVCC board:

1. Approved the report from the program planning meeting.
2. Sought board members to be appointed to the Nominating Committee and considered off-board members for the Budget Committee.
3. Discussed dates for our speaker on disaster preparedness, without finalizing one because we need to know the speaker's schedule.
4. Heard an update on Running & Winning, to take place April 21 at Sterling high School.

## LWVUS - National Popular Vote Compact Study

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### Background

The League has a long-standing position in support of the direct election of the president by popular vote. Now, League members have the opportunity to consider whether to support the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact) as a viable process to achieve that result. The NPV Compact would avoid the need for a constitutional amendment abolishing the Electoral College (EC), and would assure that the individual receiving the most votes would become president.

The NPV Compact proposal uses the mechanism of the EC. States that legislatively enact the NPV Compact would agree that their state electors would vote for the individual that received the most votes nationwide. Thus, the popular vote count from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together. State elections officials in all states participating would award their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the largest number of popular votes.

This alternative method of assigning a state's EC votes would take effect only when enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes. This 270-vote threshold also corresponds essentially to states representing a majority of the people of the United States.

The plan includes procedural provisions to help assure smooth functioning of the agreement – conditions that deal with states deciding to withdraw from the Compact at the last moment, enforcement issues and recounts.

Currently four states have passed legislation to enact the NPV Compact.

There are pros and cons to this plan, which are discussed in full in papers found on the LWVUS Web site. Summaries of these papers are also available. League members can learn more about the plan from these sources and consider its ramifications at consensus meetings across the country. Be sure to participate! Who better than the League to be ready to speak to this good-government issue?

**To prepare for the consensus meeting, please read the complete version of this paper (available at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) by the LWVUS National Popular Voter Compact Study Committee. A short summary of the point-counterpoint is on the next page.**

## Summary of Point-Counterpoint About the NPV Compact.

### Constitutional Issues

**Pro:** The NPV Compact is a way to assure that every person's vote counts equally and that the person receiving the most votes is the winner of the presidency. ... A constitutional amendment is not needed to effectuate the NPV Compact because states already have the right to implement changes in how electors are appointed. The NPV Compact is a compact between states—a method of concerted state action that has long been sanctioned by the Constitution and the courts.

**Con:** Many constitutional scholars argue that this plan will lead to extensive litigation involving challenges to the NVP Compact on issues such as the scope of constitutional powers, the Compact itself, the need for congressional approval, the concerns of non-compacting states, and constitutional protections of state interests and their role in elections. In addition, one can question the advisability of a method that bypasses the normal constitutional amendment process in this manner.

### Fairness

**Pro:** As election campaigns are now waged, major emphasis and resources are concentrated in key EC battleground states because that is where elections are won or lost. The NPV Compact would eliminate the emphasis on battleground states and would be more apt to assure campaign strategies that appeal to a broad spectrum of the electorate which would foster greater voter participation. ... Most voters want their individual vote to count, rather than allotting them to electors representing the state as a whole.

**Con:** Voters supporting the candidate who receives the majority of votes in their state want their state's electors to support their choice. Adoption of the NPV Compact may require a state elections official to direct its state's electors to cast their ballots in support of a candidate who was not favored by the voters of that state.

### Mechanical Considerations:

**Pro:** The Compact includes provisions that address issues of enforcement, winning levels, and recounts.

**Con:** The methods for enforcement of this plan are unclear. Opponents question the power and timing to withdraw from the Compact and the power to enforce compliance. Others express concern about an onslaught of lawsuits between compacting and non-compacting states, as well as procedures in close elections.

### Other issues:

**Pro:** The Voting Rights Act and the NPV Compact are in harmony, assuring equality of votes throughout the United States.

**Con:** The Voting Rights Act requires pre-clearance for legislative changes. This, too, has the capacity to engender lawsuits to ensure compliance.

### League Issues:

**Pro:** Supporters of the Compact advocate its passage in all states, which would result in uniform voting standards. It is true that the NPV Compact could be in effect for an interlude when not all states had signed on to it. The same could be demonstrated for other laws, such as the Equal Rights Amendment. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that uniform voting standards are not now in effect. The NPV Compact could help assure that every vote would be counted equally. Further, implementation of a method which assures direct election of the president by popular vote is in keeping with the League's long-held position.

**Con:** This proposal does nothing to achieve the goal of uniform standards of voting. The NPV Compact is effective when passed by states representing 270 electoral votes, effectively negating the impact on presidential elections of the voters in states which represent the other half of electoral votes. A system which assures no voter disenfranchisement is a better way to assure that every person's vote counts.



## League of Women Voters of New Jersey Receives the 2008 Rutgers Award for Public Service to New Jersey

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Trenton, N.J. - The League of Women Voters of New Jersey was awarded with the 2008 Rutgers Award for Public Service to New Jersey. The League was granted the award through a unanimous vote on behalf of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. The League is the first organization to receive the annual award, usually reserved for individuals. The award honors those that perform a vital public service to the residents of New Jersey.

"The League of Women Voters has enhanced the lives of countless New Jersey citizens, men and women alike, by promoting political responsibility and active participation in government," writes Richard L. McCormick, President of Rutgers in a letter informing the League of Women Voters of New Jersey that they have received the award.

"It is a great honor to receive this award acknowledging all the League does to help New Jersey," said Anne Ruach Nicolas, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of New Jersey. "The League will continue in our commitment and dedication to the residents of this state through our civic education and advocacy efforts."



Jeannine F. LaRue, Rutgers University Vice President for Public Affairs, presents the Public Service Award to Anne Ruach Nicolas, LWVNJ Executive Director.

**LWVNJ ACTION!****Take Action - Support the NJ Secondary Education Redesign Review Act**

LWVNJ Supports the New Jersey Secondary Education Redesign Review Act

**Take Action!:** <http://capwiz.com/lwv/nj/utr/1/AIIAJRNTAY/ETVJJRNUNR/2844397636>

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey supports the "NJ Secondary Education Redesign Review Act", A3692, recently introduced in the Assembly.

The bill would alleviate some of the concerns the League has expressed concerning the high school redesign proposal, as well as adopt some of the recommendations highlighted by the League in a [letter](http://capwiz.com/lwv/nj/utr/1/AIIAJRNTAY/LASUJRNUNS/2844397636) (http://capwiz.com/lwv/nj/utr/1/AIIAJRNTAY/LASUJRNUNS/2844397636) recently sent to the New Jersey State Department of Education. Specifically this bill would require the Department of Education to report to the legislature on the impact, costs & progress of the Phase I graduation mandates imposed this year before proceeding with Phases II & III (explanation of phases below). The DOE & the State Board would not be permitted to impose additional mandates and graduation tests unless the required evaluation report "demonstrates that school districts have the capacity to implement the requirements."

The bill also provides that "no student be required to pass a competency assessment to receive a State-endorsed high school diploma until the Department of Education has demonstrated that all students have access to the qualified teaching personnel and academic support necessary to prepare the students for such assessments."

This bill provides a much-needed way to highlight critical resource issues raised by the high school redesign proposals and to make sure that accountability is imposed first on those responsible for providing equal educational opportunity, rather than only on young people who may not yet have it.

- \* Phase I requires Algebra I, Lab Biology and 4 yrs of college prep English for all new freshman in Sept. 08
- \* Phase II adds Geometry, Chemistry and a 3rd lab science for new freshman in Sept. 2010
- \* Phase III adds Algebra II for new freshman in Sept. 2012
- \* New end of course exams are planned for each course, some or all of which would be required for graduation.

**Take Action!:** <http://capwiz.com/lwv/nj/utr/1/AIIAJRNTAY/ETVJJRNUNR/2844397636>