



The VOTER

VOLUME 51 NUMBER 9

October 2012

Calendar (League activities in bold)

EVENT/ACTIVITY	DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
General Election - Vote!	Nov 6	Tu	6 am - 8 pm	Your local polling place
LWVCC Board Meeting	Nov 7	W	7-9 pm	Barbara Sielaff's House
LWVCC Program Planning and Holiday Party	Dec 12 (tentative)	W	6-9 pm	Bobbie Porter's House

Voter Contents

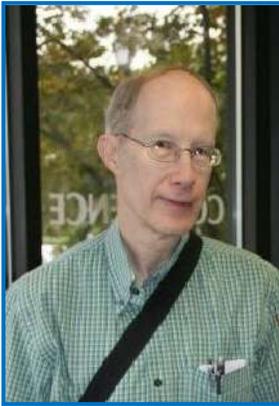
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Board Report

At its Oct 3, 2012 meeting, the LWVCC board:

1. Reviewed the Kickoff. Asked Secretary Joyce Kurzweil to write appropriate thank you notes.
2. Discussed our successful voter registration efforts this fall.
3. Continued discussion of a topic for a spring speaker/panel event. Ed Gracely and Harriet Snyder agreed to do some research.
4. Determined group leaders for program planning in December. Ed Gracely will run the session.
5. Annual meeting very tentatively May 18. Topic to be determined after the election!

Board Message:



Dear League members:

I hope your fall is going well. We've had some wonderful fall weather (and some less than wonderful weather as well)! Meanwhile, the LWVCC had a very successful fall voter registration season. See the notes by Harriet and Bobbie, below. We'll be moderating some forums in the near future as well. I'll put those in the calendar on the web site (<http://www.lwvnj.org/camdencounty/calendar.html>) as the dates, times, and locations become more specific.

Our next big LWVCC event will be the Holiday Party and Program Planning event, tentatively set for Wednesday, December 12. Please hold the date and watch for details in the November Voter.

Several of us attended the LWVNJ fall workshops. I'd love to see more LWVCC members there. In years past we had several carloads of eager members wanting to pick up some useful skills and learn about League issues. This year's theme was Citizens United and campaign finance reform, but there were afternoon sessions on climate change, moderating, and more!

There are two constitutional questions on the ballot this year. As usual, both are complicated and hard to understand. The LWVNJ has analyzed and summarized them. A copy of the summary is in the Voter starting on page 5. Take a look - you'll be asked to vote on these on Nov 6.

Yours in League

Ed Gracely, Board member

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.

The League of Women Voters of Camden County, LWVCC

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***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!

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.*

Voorhees: Vogelson Regional Library: Driving south on 30, turn left onto Somerdale Road just above the Voorhees Town Center. Go under the train bridge in about a half mile, then turn right onto Burnt Mill (at the light). Soon turn left onto Laurel Road at a light. The library is on your right as you pass the mall.

Freeholder Meetings

We encourage League members to observe Freeholder meetings when they are convenient for you. Just show up with a LWV button to let them know we are watching! Don't make any statements -- you aren't entitled to speak for the League (or even yourself after wearing a League button). You can ask a neutral/informative question, however. Meetings start at 7. It's good for Camden County!

Oct 18: Pennsauken

Nov 15: Camden

Dec 20 Lindenwold

See <http://www.camdencounty.com/government/freeholder-meetings/2012-freeholder-meetings> for details.

Donors -- Thank you!

Thanks to Janet Morrison for her generous donation with her membership renewal.

Voter Registration Notes

Bobbie Porter wanted to pass along the following: We increased the scope of our registration events this year, from the very young to the very old; from colleges to 55+ residences. In the future, we must be a presence in these senior communities. I plan to build on that as we continue at the new citizen naturalization ceremonies. Special thanks to Pauline Kohl for her work this past weekend at Spring Hill, Cherry Hill, NJ.

Harriet Snyder wrote: The voter registration that Bobbie Porter & I conducted at the Prism Career Institute on September 19th, from 10am to noon, was most successful. The school had a table set up for us with prominent signage and red and blue balloons. Bobbie immediately added two little American flags. The students were hungry for information on voter ID laws, how to determine if they were registered, how to register, what to do about a change of address, and how to vote by mail--all of which we supplied. The students were also glad to have our Camden County Guides. We registered twelve voters, and several others took applications to complete later. When Bobbie suggested that we come back every year, her offer was enthusiastically accepted.

LWVNJ Senate Debate - watch it this Sunday!

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey is proud to announce that we have partnered with ABC television affiliates WABC and WPVI, and Univision to sponsor a debate between State Senator Joseph Kyrillos and U.S. Senator Robert Menendez for U.S. Senator.

The debate will air on Sunday, October 14 on WPVI (6) from 9:30 am - 10:30 am and on WABC (7) from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm. Be sure to tune in.

We are pleased to offer a debate on these popular television stations that reach every television viewer in New Jersey. Prior to watching the debate, take a minute to read these [debate watching tips](#).

Note that the showing time is in the **morning**. This is 9:30 am, NOT pm!



LWVNJ Ballot question analysis!

There are two questions on the ballot this November. As usual, the LWVNJ has done a fine job of analyzing the questions and putting them into an interpretable form.

You can get a printable format of the analysis by clicking [here](#). It's also copied below.

Public Question #1 BUILDING OUR FUTURE BOND ACT QUESTION

Do you approve the "Building Our Future Bond Act"? This bond act authorizes the State to issue bonds in the aggregate principal amount of \$750 million to provide matching grants to New Jersey's colleges and universities. Money from the grants will be used to build, equip and expand higher education facilities for the purpose of increasing academic capacity.

INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT (on the ballot):

Approval of this act will allow the State to issue bonds in the total principal amount of \$750 million. Proceeds from the bonds will be used to provide grants to New Jersey's public and private colleges and universities to construct and equip higher education buildings to increase academic capacity. Bond proceeds will be allocated as follows:

- \$300 million for public research universities;
- \$247.5 million for State colleges and State universities;
- \$150 million for county colleges; and
- \$52.5 million for private institutions with an endowment of \$1 billion or less.

Public and private colleges and universities which receive grants will be required to provide funds to support 25% of a project.

Background (LWVNJ):

If approved, the State of New Jersey can borrow \$750 million for capital project grants as allocated above.

The institutions seeking bond funds will submit long range facility plans to the Secretary of Higher Education. The plans must list the institutional proposals to address those needs. Only projects which increase the academic capacity of the institutions, such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, computer facilities, and other academic buildings are eligible. Projects such as dormitories, administrative buildings, athletic facilities or other

revenue-producing facilities are not eligible for grants. The Secretary of Higher Education will prepare a list of eligible projects with priority given to those deemed construction-ready. The Secretary will submit the list to the Legislature and, absent objections within 60 days, the list will be deemed approved in its entirety. Issued grants will support 75% of the cost of the project and the institution will be required to fund the 25% balance. Funds are to be appropriated no later than June 30, 2013.

There are 31 public colleges in New Jersey, which include 3 research institutions, 4 state colleges, 5 state universities and 19 community colleges. There are also 35 independent colleges and universities in the State.

Reasons to vote yes:

1. A highly qualified workforce is necessary for competing in a global economy and for keeping and attracting businesses to New Jersey.
2. In November 2011, the New Jersey Presidents' Council issued a report entitled, Highest Priority Capital Needs – New Jersey Colleges and Universities, which totaled \$6 billion. A general obligation bond is one means of financing these projects other than with campus backed debt, (which can lead to increased tuition.) The last bond was approved in 1988 for \$350 million dollars.
3. The infusion of \$750 million in facilities construction will, in the short term, stimulate New Jersey's construction industry.

Reasons to vote no:

1. During an economic downturn and slow recovery, taking on additional state debt may be unwise.
2. \$750 million falls far short of the \$6 billion the college and university Presidents have identified.
3. The amount is very restricted in purpose, and does not allow the institutions to apply the grants flexibly to their greatest needs, which may not be more classroom and academic space.

Public Question #2**CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ALLOWING CONTRIBUTION TO BE TAKEN FROM JUSTICES' AND JUDGES' SALARIES FOR THEIR EMPLOYEE BENEFITS QUESTION:**

Do you approve an amendment to the New Jersey Constitution, as agreed to by the Legislature, to allow contributions set by law to be taken from the salaries of Supreme Court Justices and Superior Court Judges for their employee benefits?

INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT (on the ballot):

This amendment clarifies the Legislature's authority to pass laws requiring contributions be taken from the salaries of Supreme Court Justices and Superior Court Judges for their employee benefits. These benefits include their pension and health care coverage.

The amendment responds to a question raised in a 2011 lawsuit filed by a judge after the Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law P.L.2011, c.78. That law increased the contributions taken from current and future justices' and judges' salaries for their benefits, starting in October 2011. The lawsuit, which was appealed to the New Jersey Supreme Court, argued against taking the higher contributions from currently appointed justices and judges, citing language in the Constitution that their salaries cannot be reduced during their appointed terms.

The amendment clarifies that such contributions, set by law, may be taken from justices' and judges' salaries during their terms. It would also allow for the higher contributions set by P.L.2011, c.78 to be deducted from current and future justices' and judges' salaries.

Background (LWVNJ):

The Public Employee Pension and Health Care Benefits Act was signed into law in 2011. This Act increased employee contribution rates for teachers, judges, public employees, police and firemen. A lawsuit claiming the law was unconstitutional with respect to sitting Supreme Court and Superior Court judges was upheld based on Article VI, Section VI Paragraph 6 which says:

“The Justices of the Supreme Court and the Judges of the Superior Court shall receive for their services such salaries as may be provided by law, which shall not be diminished during the term of their appointment. They shall not, while in office, engage in the practice of law or other gainful pursuit.”

The Supreme Court found the higher benefit contributions were a reduction of salary and stated that although the pension law “serves a legitimate public policy goal” it must be achieved through constitutional means if it is to be applied to sitting judges and justices. Therefore it becomes necessary to amend the constitution to allow that change.

The amendment adds the following language after “shall not be diminished during the term of their appointment”, except for deductions from such salaries for contributions established by law from time to time for pensions, health benefits, and other benefits.

A YES vote will add this language to Article VI, Section VI, Paragraph 6 and thereby make The Public Employee Pension and Health Care Benefits Act applicable to sitting judges and justices. A NO vote will leave the language as it stands and the Supreme Court ruling will prohibit increasing judicial contributions toward benefits during the term of their appointment.

Reasons to vote yes:

1. It is an issue of fairness. If change in pension and benefit contributions is a legitimate public policy goal, then judges and justices should be treated the same as other public sector employees.
2. The major part of the salary of judges and justices would continue to be protected from reduction during their term. Only increased deductions to fund benefits would be permitted.

Reasons to vote no:

1. Judges are treated differently than other government employees so they will be free to decide issues that come before them without fear of retribution from other branches of government.
2. Judges are also treated differently because they are prohibited from earning additional income and they are not covered by any collective bargaining agreement that provides for increases in salaries or benefits

From the LWNJ - Voter confusion!**League of Women Voters Warns Against Misinformation**

With the voter registration deadline fast approaching on October 16, the League of Women Voters wishes to warn voters to be wary of a widely circulated email that **falsely claims** that voters who have not voted since 2008 are no longer registered. Additionally, the League of Women Voters of New Jersey has witnessed a rise of New Jersey voters confused about voter identification requirements.

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey is seriously concerned about the amount of incorrect information being circulated to voters. This type of false information has the potential to disenfranchise eligible voters and must be corrected. The League does not want to see even one voter stay at home on Election Day because of this type of misinformation.

Here are the facts: You have to re-register if you have changed your name or address or upon completion of a jail sentence, parole or probation because of a felony conviction. Additionally, if you are unsure if you are registered to vote you can find that information quickly and easily using the NJ Division of Election's website, <http://nj.gov/state/elections/voting-information.html>. If you are not registered to vote, you can find voter registration forms available for download on that website as well. The deadline to register is Tuesday, October 16.

At least 34 states have introduced legislation that would require voters to show photo identification in order to vote, and an additional four states have introduced legislation requesting that voters show photo identification to register *or* to vote. These restrictive voter id requirements would disenfranchise many elderly, minority, and low-income voters.

In New Jersey, it is only permissible for a poll worker to ask a newly-registered voter to present identification if that voter did not provide the required identification information on the original registration form, or if the identification information was indicated on the form but could not be verified. Information about ID requirements is available on the League of Women Voters of New Jersey's website, www.lwvnj.org.

The League of Women Voters has a number of resources available on their website, www.lwvnj.org, where voters can find reliable information. Information includes voters' bill of rights cards, produced in partnership with the ACLU-NJ, voter registration forms, vote by mail ballot applications, information to find a polling place, a video for first time voters produced in partnership with the Hall Institute of Public Policy-NJ, voters guides that provide information about candidates, and answers to frequently asked questions.

On Election Day, November 6, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., the League of Women Voters of New Jersey will staff its toll-free voter assistance Hotline to answer questions from voters and offer assistance with problems they may encounter at the polls. The Hotline is open year-round during regular business hours to address questions from the public. The number is **1-800-792-VOTE (8683)**. Remember to vote on November 6.

If You Are Interested In:

- *Learning about government and the political process.*
- *Getting involved in the political process in nonpartisan ways.*
- *Meeting and working with other citizens who care about good government.*



Join the League Of Women Voters of Camden County

Call 856-795-7878 or send this form to: PO Box 245, Voorhees, NJ 08043

Annual membership is \$60 (plus \$30 for each additional household membership). To join, or for more information, send this form or call the number above.

I want to become a member of the LWV of Camden County: _____ (Check enclosed for \$_____)

Please send me information on membership in the LWV of Camden County _____

Name _____

e-mail: _____

Address _____

Phone: _____

(Please include area code)

The



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