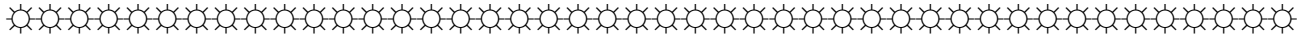




The Chicago Voter

League of Women Voters of Chicago
Website www.LWVChicago.org

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President's Message

The lengthy primary and campaign season is almost over. In a short time the results of these many months of polling and reporting will have led us to voting for president and other officers of government. In Illinois, at the top of the ballot, is the proposition on having a constitutional convention. The League of Women Voters recommends a "No" vote. Also on the ballot in Cook County is an advisory statement on the recall of state officials. The League has no position on this.

Visit our Web site www.lwvchicago.org to view the Voters' Guide.

Chicago voters can download their ballot from: www.chicagoelections.com

You should have received a notice from the Board of Elections with the location of your polling place. Speaking of your polling places, how about being a pollwatcher? We have mentioned it before, but we can always use more help. You only need to go to your own polling place and do your own precinct. However, in more heavily populated neighborhoods, a few precincts will be located in one polling place, so you can report on two or more. We supply credentials and the questions. Scarcely ten minutes of your time is required. The October pollwatching briefing is Saturday, October 18 at the office at 10 AM.

If you are unable to vote on Election Day there is an opportunity to vote early at certain locations around the city. To find these locations, you can call the office, your neighborhood library or the Board of Elections. Early Voting ends October 30.

Articles on other election-related topics are elsewhere in this issue. Please VOTE!

ESTA

Voter Service

by Terry Williams

Pollwatching Project Needs You!

Who can be a pollwatcher? Anyone who is a registered voter in the state of Illinois.

How do I get started? Come to the briefing on October 18 at 10 am at the League office or to the training session at Roosevelt University, 430 South Michigan, second floor Congress Lounge, 6:00 pm on October 21. You will receive training, materials, and pollwatcher credentials.

What if I am not able to work all day? The most important times to be present are during opening to be sure everything is set up and voters are handled correctly, and during the closing after 7:00 pm. But other times are of value also.

Fiscal Policy Briefing

The City Budget is the topic of the briefing to be held **Saturday, November 8 at the office**. We will meet from 10 AM until noon. Ralph Martirie of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability will be a speaker. Mr. Martirie has addressed the Chicago and Illinois Leagues many times. The City Budget Office is expected to send a representative. Please come and find out about our city's financial situation. No doubt, you will have some good questions. We request an RSVP for building security.

Reports from the Social Policy Committee

FOOD RESEARCH AND ACTION CENTER

FRAC is pleased to share with anti-hunger and anti-poverty advocates around the country a new compendium of public opinion research on public attitudes toward hunger, food insecurity, and federal nutrition programs. The analysis was conducted by the bipartisan team of Peter D. Hart Associates and McLaughlin & Associates. It concluded that Americans believe that the nation is not doing enough to combat hunger-related problems and that candidates for public office need to speak about solutions to hunger. American families are increasingly worried about being able to afford enough food and believe eliminating hunger should be a priority of the federal government and the next administration.

The full report is at:
http://www.frac.org/pdf/hungerpoll08_fullreport.pdf

NATIONAL HOUSING TRUST FUND

In the debate on the bail-out bill, opponents were making unfair and false attacks on the fund. John Boehner (R-OH) issued an alert on September 27 that characterized a proposed new dedicated source of funding for the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) as a "left-wing giveaway Democrats are pushing to force taxpayers to bankroll a slush fund for a discredited ally of the Democratic Party," referring to Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). The NHTF campaign quickly issued the media a correction establishing a website to counter negative bloggers.

Advocates should know: In his initial proposal, Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-CT) suggested a draft that expanded upon the initial bail-out bill from the administration. "He would have directed to the funds 20% of any profits made on the sale of the troubled assets that the federal government bought from the banks in the bail-out." However, this was eliminated in the final draft and most people doubt there will be any profits. ACORN is a national grassroots organizing organization that is ineligible to receive funding from the NHTF.

Another charge suggested was that this NHTF funding was an "earmark." "A dedicated source of funding for NHTF is as much an earmark as a contribution to the Highway Trust Fund." The NHTF campaign does not want it to become a political football that will make preserving and expanding the fund difficult in the future. Supporters of the fund are asked to monitor their media for "falsehoods and distortions" and to report them to the outreach@nlihc.org.

Candidates' Fair

by Clara Fleming

On October 3, 2008, the Chicago League and the Graduate and Undergraduate Student Councils of the University of Illinois at Chicago sponsored a Candidates' Fair. The fair was held in the UIC forum building. The event received a grant from American Express and from the Education Fund of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Of the 43 candidates who confirmed, 32 and/or their representatives attended.

The fair provided an opportunity for the public to meet the candidates or their representatives face to face and to question them about their positions on issues. It was also a time for candidates to meet each other and to exchange views and information.

The candidates or their representatives had printed materials available and the Chicago League provided tote bags to carry all of the items. The League also provided information about the location of sites for early voting and membership in our organization.

Voter registrars were present to register students and others and to give information about late registration. This information is available in English, Spanish, Polish, Korean and Chinese.

The Board of Elections provided a DVD "Your Vote Counts" which was shown to the attendees on a large screen.

We thank all the Leaguers and the students who helped with the planning and execution of the Candidates' Fair and our temporary secretary, Tammie Laster, who was a great asset to our team.

Con-Con Meeting

To any north side member, or any one who is interested, there is a meeting of the Belmont Harbor Neighbors on **Tuesday, October 21, 7:30-9 PM** at the John Merlo Library, 644 W. Belmont. The speaker opposing the Constitutional Convention is Ann Logue of the Chicago League. There will be someone to speak in favor of it. With all the publicity about the wording of the proposition itself, controversy about our state officials and the need for Con-Con an interesting evening is certain.

New Wording for Con-Con Ballot ATTENTION VOTERS

PROPOSED CALL FOR AN ILLINOIS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Please read before voting.

You will vote a ballot that includes a referendum asking whether Illinois should hold a state Constitutional Convention. The ballot contains a "Notice" and an "Explanation of Proposed Call" that a court has ruled is inaccurate and incorrect and should be ignored.

You should disregard the "Notice" and "Explanation of Proposed Call" on the ballot and, instead, consider the following information before voting:

PROPOSED CALL FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CALL

This proposal deals with a call for a state Constitutional Convention. The last such convention was held in 1969-70, and a new Constitution was adopted in 1970. The 1970 Illinois Constitution requires that the question of calling a convention be placed before the voters every 20 years. If you support the calling of a Constitutional Convention, vote "YES." If you oppose the calling of a Constitutional Convention, vote "NO."

National Fiscal Crisis

by Margaret Goldstein

The United States government is \$10.1 trillion in debt. Of this amount, \$4.2 trillion is owed to the Social Security and other trust fund and \$5.3 trillion has been borrowed from the public. Of the \$5.3 trillion, half is owed to foreigners who could call in their loans if they lose faith in our economy.

Groups such as the Concord Coalition (www.concordcoalition.org) are attempting to bring this dire situation to the public's attention so that citizens can bring pressure on members of Congress to do something about it. As pointed out by this Coalition, the country was already facing trouble with huge numbers of baby boomers retiring and no plan in place to fully fund promised Social Security benefits and Medicare coverage with far fewer workers. To add to this problem by borrowing \$4.2 trillion from the trust funds is unconscionable.

Congress knows how to pay down huge national debts as it did with our sizable World War II debt. In recent times, it has shown it can balance budgets as it did from 1998 to 2001 actually creating surpluses. The so-called pay-as-you go approach was written into law so that increased spending would require an equal amount of increased revenue and reduced taxes would require an equal amount of reduced spending.

Huge amounts of money are wasted by the national government. \$488 billion is to be spent for the Department of Defense in Fiscal Year 2009, a 6% increase over the previous year, over and above the approximately

\$200 billion to be spent on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This Defense Department spending is up from \$300 billion in Fiscal Year 2000. The government loses some \$700 billion annually in often questionable tax deductions and credits. Billions more are wasted on pork barrel projects and farm subsidies.

The League has a position on this issue (see "Impact on Issues") believing that the current federal deficit should be reduced and, in order to reduce the deficit, the government should rely primarily on reductions in defense spending through selective cuts and on increased revenue through a tax system that is broad-based with progressive rates. We could support deficit spending for stimulating the economy during recession and depression (presumably referring to spending for such things as tax rebates and extended unemployment compensation).

As citizens we should demand that Congress make responsible fiscal decisions.

The Chicago Voter

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