



# The Chicago Voter

League of Women Voters of Chicago  
Website - [www.LWVChicago.org](http://www.LWVChicago.org)

September 2010  
Vol. 61. No. 2



## DATES TO REMEMBER

All meetings are held in LWV Conference Room

Tuesday, Sept. 7th  
Executive Committee  
Call of the Co-presidents

Monday, Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>  
12:30 to 2:30 pm  
Social Policy Committee  
Chair – Lois Snyder

Board meeting  
5:45 pm

Wednesday, Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>  
**Lunch with the League**  
BP Oil Spill  
12:15 – 1:15 pm  
Chair – Margaret Herring

Thursday, Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>  
SOC Committee  
12:00pm  
Chair – Bernice Fortini

Saturday, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>  
Briefing on Redistricting  
10:00 am to noon  
Chair – Helene Gabelnick

Wednesday, Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>  
Book Club  
6:00 pm  
Chair – Bernice Fortini

Environment  
Chair – Pat Graunke

Membership Committee  
Chair – Bernice Fortini

Health Care  
Chair – Clara Fleming

Call  
312-939-5935 x28

## CO-PRESIDENT'S COLUMN:

Dear League Members;

It's hard to believe that summer is drawing to a close. I like to hold on to the season as long as possible - probably left over back-to-school feelings. However, it is time to look at the calendar and fill in the spaces with recurring and new activities. We League members need to get active again.

The tentative schedule for our meetings was sent with the **Summer Voter**, but updates and changes will be on the website and in each monthly **Voter**.

We are continuing "Lunch with the League" and Saturday morning briefings with timely topics. Very important is the General Election in November and the Aldermanic/Mayoral Election in February. There are some candidate forums scheduled already (see article page 5 in this **Voter**). As for issues from LWVUS; Privatization and the Federal Role in Education are the topics to be studied. The issue of redistricting the legislative districts (including county commissioners) is a state and county project. You can sign up to get involved.

The Board of Directors welcomes some new members. Leslie Corbett Chenoweth, Annie Logue and Martha Music. By next spring there will be a need for other new directors, because the Treasurer, Rochelle Riffer and Secretary, Norma Braude, will be ending their terms and a few other directors' terms expire. Why not get acquainted with the board members and procedures to find out if this is for you. League members are permitted to attend these meetings, just let us know ahead of time.

We are anticipating an interesting year and hope to see you at some of these events.

*Esta Hallen*

Join a local Unit

Attend Briefing Sessions and Committee meetings

Be an Observer

Be visible in the Community – go to Candidates Forums

Be a Deputy Registrar and Poll Watch the Election

Come to the Book Club

## **LEAGUE WORK OR ACTIVITIES IN WHICH YOU MAY BE INTERESTED**

### **BRIEFING SESSIONS**

Briefing sessions for the following month's unit presentations will be held normally at the end of each month (except Dec/Jan). Each Unit is expected to send a resource person, but all Leaguers are welcome to attend such sessions. Many briefing sessions have outside speakers and for those who cannot attend unit meetings may be the only way to obtain full information provided. Reviews of such meetings will be given on page 3 of the month in which they are to be discussed, but no review covers all of the points made at such a meeting.

Information from the Briefing Session will be provided at unit meetings, and further discussion is held by those present. Consensus is reached at unit meetings – an example will be the November meeting on Education. Other briefings are simply informational, and updated material is always available. This month's **Voter** includes the LWVUS and LWVIL positions on redistricting as background for the briefing on September 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **LWV CHICAGO BOOK CLUB WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 6 PM, LEAGUE OFFICE**

Welcome to the LWVChicago's new Book Club! The book to be discussed at the first meeting is *Jane Addams: Spirit in Action* by author Louise W. Knight. This book is scheduled for release in September, but may be available in book stores (or on line) sooner. The plan is to meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:00 pm if that proves to be convenient for those who want participate.

### **DEPUTY REGISTRARS**

Deputy Registrar Training will be conducted at 69 W. Washington, 8<sup>th</sup> floor conference room. If you are interested, contact Terry Williams through the office 312-939-5935 x28. You must be approved for this training through the League in order to register. This is good League work. Since registration closes in early October, this training will only be available in September.

Training will resume after the November election.

### **Deputy Registrar Training Dates**

Wednesday September 8 <sup>th</sup>	3:00 pm
Thursday September 16 <sup>th</sup>	6:00 pm
Saturday, September 25 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 am

### **OBSERVER CORPS**

Both Chicago and Cook County Leagues continue to seek people to observe governmental bodies, and to report to the organization what they see. If you are interested please call the League office – 312-939-5935 - LWVChicago is extension 28, LWVCook County is x27.

### **LUNCH WITH THE LEAGUE**

Wednesday September 15<sup>th</sup> 12:15 – 1:15 pm. – The BP Oil Spill –The guest speaker will be Bill Simes, a Scene-Coordinator with EPA's Superfund Division. Call LWVChicago office to reserve your place, 312-939-5935 x28. Dessert and beverage will be provided.

### **UNITS**

At present there are two units which meet downtown, one during the morning (Unit 22) – contact Bernice Fortini (September 23<sup>rd</sup>) and one after 5:00 pm (Unit 1/5) – contact Margaret Herring. The South Side unit (66/74) meets at Montgomery Place on the third Thursday of each month right after lunch – contact Dorothy Scheff. The West Side unit (9/11) usually meets at the Unitarian Church on Sunday afternoon – contact Joan Morton. The North Side unit (21/35) meets in homes, contact Carol Westerlund. For the Southwest Side unit contact the office. If none of these units meet at a convenient time and place for you, gather three to five people together and start a new unit. Face-to-face discussion is the best way to learn about the issues on which the league is working. Consensus really requires this interaction; the nuances of body language do not come through a computer at the present time. Our November meetings will be a consensus on Education. We need all of you to participate as fully as possible so that we will have a position with which all Leaguers in Chicago can feel comfortable.

# REAPPORTIONMENT

## LWVUS Position on Apportionment

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be apportioned substantially on population. The League is convinced that this standard, established by the Supreme Court, should be maintained and that the U. S. Constitution should not be amended to allow for consideration of factors other than population in apportionment.

*See also the position on voting rights, which applies to apportionment issues. Leagues applying the Apportionment position should be aware that the Voting Rights position (and League action supporting the Voting Rights Act) recognizes that both the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act require that reapportionment not dilute the effective representation of minority citizens.*

## LWVIL Government Position Redistricting in the State

Support for a redistricting process which is timely, orderly and meets the basic criteria relating to population, compactness and contiguity and the requirements of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and subsequent amendments.

LWVIL supports the following criteria for drawing state legislative districts:

- (1) Population equity: based on current census data, a range of 1% - 5% variation
- (2) All districts in compliance with the U. S. Voting Right Act of 1965 and subsequent amendments
- (3) Compact and contiguous: All districts shall be compact, with the smallest perimeter possible and contiguous, adjacent to one another with more than a single point of contiguity. Areas connected only at points of adjoining corners are not contiguous.
- (4) Boundaries
  - A. The number of counties, towns and cities divided among more than one district shall be as small as possible.

- B. Districts shall follow existing political boundaries (i.e. county, municipal, ward lines) as far as possible
- C. No city block shall be subdivided, since a city block is the smallest parcel for which census data are available. Where possible district lines shall follow permanent and easily recognized features, such as toll ways, expressways, highways, streets, rivers and clear geographical features, and when practical shall coincide with census tract boundaries.

(5) No district shall be drawn with the intent to favor a political party of an incumbent legislator or congressman.

(6) Each state senatorial district shall consist of two entire house districts as currently stipulated in the state constitution. Ideally each senatorial district shall be within a single U. S. Congressional district.

## Do the present maps reflect these positions? NO!

All of the districts below contain some of the weirdest configurations:

- Congressional
- State Senatorial
- State House
- County Commissioners
- Judicial
- Ward

Some of these were created to meet the Voting Rights Act. Subsequent Supreme Court decisions have tightened the restrictions on minority representation.

As you consider the remaps of all districts, keep the above criteria in mind. Computer programming is being designed so that we will be in a position to draw our own map. It should be possible to create a map in which the districts are compact, contiguous and of equal population – districts which do not stretch across the most of a county or state; districts which do not form large letter “C’s”; and districts which really do represent the needs of areas with similar concerns.

## **LWV COOK COUNTY PRESENTATION ON THE HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SYSTEM**

A primary mission of the League is to inform members about vital government functions. LWV Cook County fulfilled this responsibility at a July 28 Lunch and Learn presentation on the Health and Hospitals System. HHS is a major part of Cook County Government activities, comprising about 29% of County expenditures and almost one-third of County personnel, over 7000 employees. This is the third largest public health system in the country.

Details of the work of the Independent HHS Board and its new Strategic Plan were presented by Warren Batts, Chairman of the Board, and William Foley, CEO of the Health and Hospitals System. They pointed out that the system provides medical services to Cook County residents, mostly those without insurance. Currently the system includes three hospitals and a number of primary care clinics, receiving more than 600,000 patient visits this year. Total expenditures for health and hospital services are about \$1 billion this year.

The Independent Board was created in February 2008 to remove the system from oversight by the County President and put it under professional management. After gathering extensive information about how the system used its resources, the Board developed a strategic plan to respond to an anticipated increase in patients through creating a patient centered system with more outpatient services better utilizing the funds currently maintaining three hospitals. The Board is also committed to improving patient care and service in the system, reducing the long waits and becoming more efficient through better staff training and utilization of electronic records. The newly created and expanded clinics will provide better access to care, and the County will develop partnerships with other providers to better coordinate primary and specialty care. Recognizing the value of this independent oversight, the Cook County Board at the end of July made the HHS Board, initially a three year experiment, permanent.

The proposed reorganization of the County Health Services has come about after a decade of effort to bring about reforms in County government and the provision of vital County services. LWV Cook County encourages this

reform effort, observing County government activities and meeting with County officials to support steps to make government more efficient and cost effective.

As well as observing and reporting on County Board meetings, LWV Cook County has observers at the meetings of the Independent HHS Board. LWVCC also has an Interest Group which focuses on the Cook County Health and Hospitals System. This group is currently reviewing the Strategic Plan to determine further action the League can take. Anyone interested in joining the LWV Cook County HHS interest group would be welcome and should contact the League office at 312-939-5935 x27 or by email [cook@lwvill.org](mailto:cook@lwvill.org).

### **PRESENTATION TO LWVCHICAGO ON NEW HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION**

Last Spring, LWVChicago was host to a presentation on "Health Care Reform – A New Day – What the New Law Means for You" by Jonathan VanderBrug from the Campaign for Better Health Care.

The National Health Care Reform bill is called the Patient Protection Affordable Care Act of 2010 and has been signed into law. The overall positive effects will mean that 96% of all Americans will have health insurance, including the 31 million persons now uninsured. This will reduce the federal deficit by more than \$140 billion over the next decade (according to the CBO - Congressional Budget Office), and will produce a reduction of \$683 billion in overall health care spending over the same period. It will result in \$12 billion investments in community health centers adding over 250,000 jobs (Harvard and USC). The amount of premiums for the overall population will decrease by 8.4% and for the subsidized health care plans by 59% (CBO).

Some of the provisions take effect immediately, others will come in Fiscal 2011 and still others later. Those which take place in Fiscal Year 2010 include an added 0.09% Medicare tax on high income (more than \$200K for individuals, more than \$250K for a family); a 10% excise tax on indoor tanning salons; ensure consumers have the right to an effective appeal process (HB2823 as passed); all new plans must cover preventative services without co-pays, (also exempt from deductibles); increasing the

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number of primary care physicians with new investments in training programs; \$12 Billion more for community health centers (doubles the number of patients seen over the next five years); \$250 rebate to seniors in the “donut hole”; young adults are allowed to stay on parents’ plan until the age of 26, at parents’ choice; address racial - ethnic disparities; and provide a temporary high-risk pool for uninsured with pre-existing conditions.

Changes to take effect in FY 2011: (Jan) Long term care for disabled adult with a new insurance program financed by voluntary payroll deductions’ (Jan) Medical loss ratio (80% for individuals and small groups; 85% for large group market – or give rebates); (Jan) Administrative simplifications (also note HB3912); (Jan) funds for states to develop consumer assistance offices to help consumers file complaints/appeals; and (Jan) Medicare/Prevention – no co-pays – deductible exempt. (2011-2020) 50% discount on brand-name drugs in the “donut hole” leads to its elimination by 2020.

In FY 2014: end gender rating; limit age rating; States must establish “Health Benefit Exchanges” to compare, inform, and facilitate use. Expand Medicaid to cover up to 133% FPL (Federal Poverty Level) and to childless adults (Illinois has expanded this in Apr. 2010); “Premium Tax Credits” apply to employers with sliding scale subsidies for 100-400% FPL. Individuals must be provided coverage with minimum requirements unless the cost is greater than 8% of income; and, there are regulations on employers which state their responsibility dependent on the number of employees. Otherwise the business will pay an assessment of \$2,000/FT (not 95% of US business will be exempt, and small businesses will receive tax credits).

Between FY 2014-2018 Additional changes occur.

The material above was taken from the power point presentation given in April 2010: “Health Care Reform A New Day - What the New Law Means for You” - from the Campaign for Better Health Care.

This summary has listed the actions to be taken under the law in chronological order, so that you may see what is expected to happen when. By showing those with immediate implementation and then in the next fiscal year and thereafter, you will be able to see whether implementation is done in a timely fashion. Unless the legislation is changed, the timetable should be adhered to so that by the 2018 everything will be in place. There will undoubtedly be some glitches, but it is hoped that implementation will be smooth.

As of mid-August, twenty states have filed lawsuits to repeal the law as passed. Keep your eye on the papers as this will probably wend its way through the courts to the Supreme Court. Meanwhile the States are starting to implement the above. It is necessary for Leaguers to keep up on what is happening so that we may respond appropriately, both as an organization and as individuals.

## CANDIDATES’ FORUMS

The campaign season is beginning. Elections for Chicago City Council in February will be open season as several of the Aldermen have already indicated that they will not run. Vi Daley in the forty-third ward is one of them, and there will be a Candidates’ Forum in that ward sometime in late November. Watch your neighborhood newspapers for information. Several of those not planning to run again are women.

Those of you who live further north may wish to attend these forums:

- Cook County Commissioners District 13 (Suffredin) – Sunday October 3, 2:00 pm, Beth Emet Synagogue, Evanston.
- 18<sup>th</sup> State Senatorial Legislative District , Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 3:30 pm, Beth Emet Synagogue. These two forums are back-to back.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District (Schakowsky); Sunday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 pm, Niles North H.S. Skokie.

Your attendance and help will be appreciated.

## LWVUS

LWVUS will be holding a National Webinar, Friday, September 27, 2:00 pm (ET) – “Provide voter service best practices while you build the League” – Register on line at LWVUS for this informational session.

Vote411’s Online Voters Guide Resources are available along with T-shirts for voter education events (VIP and Smackdown your Vote!) To order visit the online LWVUS store.

## LWVIL

National and State positions on redistricting are provided on page 3 of this **Voter**. LWVIL is asking us to be involved in learning about this vital issue. There will be a Training Opportunity on Wednesday, September 15, 2010 from 1:30 to 4:00 pm in the conference room. You will learn about why this issue is still so critical, hear from Virginia Martinez of MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense Education Fund); and get receive a toolkit to better educate yourself and others about this issue.

## LWVCC

Material pertaining to the Cook County Board of Commissioners will be available in the redistricting discussions. The County Commissioners map too, shows the irregular formation of districts usually referred to as gerrymandering.

There are five interest groups or studies which are always looking for interested Leaguers: Juvenile Justice, Cook County Government Budget and Structure, Cook County Health and Hospitals System, Cook County Forest Preserve District and the new one adopted at the Annual Meeting of 2010 on Special Purpose Funds. For more information on these call 312-939-5935 x27 or email [cook@lwvil.org](mailto:cook@lwvil.org). All League members are welcome.

## LWVCHICAGO

There are several ways to learn about redistricting. We hope that you will attend your unit meeting on the subject, or help form a new unit

to provide a forum for discussion of all League issues – particularly those noted in the Planning Calendar. You can attend the LWVChicago’s briefing on the subject on Saturday, September 25, or you can go to LWVIL’s Training Session on Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. As you look at the various maps which exist today, you will understand why the League is so interested in seeing that better maps are drawn in 2011. Keeping communities together would seem to be one way to assure better representation at all levels. If you are a Web surfer, just Google the districts and see the problem.

Please plan on participating in some of the activities provided by LWVChicago. No, we do not expect you to attend all of them, but we ask that you try to be more active as we come towards the November election. You can make a difference – helping inform others about the issues which are uppermost in our minds.

LWVChicago is always looking for people to be observers at governmental agencies. If you have interest in Chicago’s various governmental bodies, this is your opportunity to attend their meetings, record your observations and share them with others. Call 312-939-5935 x 28 or email us at [League@lwvchicago.org](mailto:League@lwvchicago.org).

Our committees also need more members; call the League office for information on them. We welcome all Leaguers, whatever your level of expertise on a subject.

We were saddened to hear of the death of Renee Snow, She was an active Leaguer and we will miss her.

### ***The Chicago Voter***

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