



# The Chicago Voter

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

October 2011  
Vol. 62 No. 3



## In this issue

- September Activities...p2
  - Redistricting Activities...p3
  - Membership Directory...p3
- Voter Service...p4
  - Unit Meeting Schedule...p4
- Health Insurance Exchanges...p5
- Great Decisions...p6
  - Other LWVs...p7
- Chicago Government in Focus Flyer...p8

## Upcoming Events

Monday, October 3  
10 AM to Noon  
Social Policy Committee

Monday, October 10  
5:00 PM  
Executive Board  
6:00 PM  
Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 12  
5 to 7 PM  
**Chicago Government in Focus**  
Union League Club  
65 W. Jackson, Chicago

Saturday, October 15  
10 AM to noon  
All-Member Meeting  
Redistricting

Call 312-939-5949  
For more information

## President's Message

Thanks to members and friends who came to the Fall Kick Off Open House and to the first of the **Chicago Government in Focus** series. Theresa Mintle, the chief of staff of Mayor Emmanuel, spoke and responded to questions. See some photos and a summary of her remarks on page 2. At the October 12 event Alderman Brendan Reilly will speak. This series, co-sponsored with and held at the Union League Club, is open to the public so please invite anyone interested in our city to attend.

At the September unit meetings members discussed education issues and the concept of a core curriculum. At the October unit meeting members will discuss and respond to additional questions about the federal role in education. It's important that we participate in the education consensus of the National League. We live in a city whose public schools must address issues of poverty, diversity, immigration, and preparing students for post-secondary education and work. Federal support of specific programs has been significant in the Chicago schools. Current discussions of public policy on education address questions of local control of curriculum, funded and unfunded mandates, the effect of mandated testing. The consensus questions are broad in scope. I urge you to attend a unit meeting and participate in developing the Chicago consensus which will be submitted to the National League.

At an all-member meeting on October 15 Mary Schaafsma of LWVIL will discuss redistricting. Neither the new Chicago wards nor the new Cook County commissioner districts have been drawn. Based on the demographic shifts big changes are due. Are they likely to occur?

**Margaret**

## Social Policy Committee

For the past several years Lois Snyder ably carried on the work of the Social Policy/Housing Committee so well established by Betty Wilhoite. Lois and her husband have recently moved to a retirement community in Indiana. As social welfare and jobs programs are being threatened by budget cuts and the impending actions of the Super Committee let us make a special effort to continue the work of this important committee. The committee will meet on Monday morning, October 3, at 10:00 am in the office conference room to talk about how to proceed. All are welcome.

**Herb Ziegelendorf**

## Chicago Government in Focus with Alderman Brendan Reilly

The next session in this series will be on Wednesday, October 12 and will feature Chicago Alderman Brendan Reilly from the 42<sup>nd</sup> ward. This ward includes all or parts of the following neighborhoods: Streeterville, Gold Coast, Near North, River North, New East Side, Fulton River District, and the Loop.

Alderman Reilly is in his second term as alderman. He is Vice-Chair of the city council committee on Budget and Government Operations. He also serves on the Committee on Committees, Rules and Ethics, the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Transportation and the Public Way, the Committee on Workforce Development and Audit and the Committee on Zoning, Landmarks and Building Standards.

## LWVChicago Open House and Chicago Government in Focus



Terry Williams, Margaret Herring, Patricia Horton



Helene Gabelnick and Pat Graunke



Pat Graunke, Theresa Mintle and David Kohn



Jim Heinlein, Bev Meyer, Emelda Estell and Bernice Fortini



Joyce Hecht and Lettie McSpadden



Bernice Fortini, Mary Neu-Stoppelman, and Leslie Corbett

Theresa Mintle, Chief of Staff for Mayor Rahm Emanuel, was the first speaker in the **Chicago Government in Focus** series co-sponsored by LWVChicago and the Union League Club of Chicago. She spoke to approximately 70 attendees for about 30 minutes and then participated in a question-answer session for another 30 minutes. She described the Mayor as “awesome” and indicated that he gets 110% from his assistants.

Initially the mayor is focusing on transparency and ethics. He enacted six executive orders and submitted proposals to the city council in this area. Issues dealt with included lobbying, gifts, Shakman rules, campaign contributions, credit cards, automobile fleet use, (take

the CTA), furlough program, comp time, vacation time accrual, maternity and parental leaves, and travel. A tremendous amount of data has become available to the public on the web site [data.cityofchicago.org](http://data.cityofchicago.org).

During the Q&A portion some topics addressed by Ms. Mintle were the longer school day, transparency within TIFs, worker’s compensation and disability, lobbying by non-profit organizations, pensions, a Chicago casino, CTA funding and budget preparation.

Mayor Emanuel will be submitting his first budget to the Council and the public on October 12.

**Norma Braude**

## **Redistricting Activities**

LWVIL is one of six organizations partnering to form the Illinois Campaign for Accountable Redistricting (ICAR). LWVChicago will be working with LWVIL on the City of Chicago Initiative.

The history of redistricting in Illinois is one in which political interests dominate. Voters are not equally served, maps drawn favor incumbents and ultimately result in a system where legislators choose their voters as opposed to the other, and more democratic, electoral way. The current system has produced Congressional, state legislative and municipal districts that frequently suppress voter choice and can contribute to gridlock on tough public policy decisions.

With respect to the map drawing process, ICAR organizations agree that maps produced by the State and City of Chicago should respect the following criteria:

- \*That every ward drawn must achieve population equity; each ward must be comprised of the same number of people.
- \*That compliance with the Federal Voting Rights Act, providing for majority-minority districts or wards is imperative.
- \*That the wards be compact and contiguous.
- \*That communities of interest must, where possible, be respected, including minority populations.
- \*That wards be drawn without consideration of an incumbent's address and without regard to political considerations.

ICAR will engage the 2011 Chicago ward redistricting process by means of an education campaign primarily to three groups: the public, the media and elected officials. This campaign will occur in different areas of the City between October 1 and December 1, 2011.

ICAR members will work together on several issues including monitoring the criteria used to draw a new map of Chicago wards so as to ensure it is easily accessible, objective, clear and justifiable.

The city council is required by state law to complete this activity by December 1. The Council committee is chaired by Alderman Mell and already the unified City Council's Black Caucus have proposed one less majority black ward and two more majority Latino wards. The Latino Caucus of the council is planning to prepare its remap after receiving community input.

## **All-Member Meeting on Redistricting**

LWVChicago will hold an all-member meeting on Saturday, October 15 from 10 AM to noon to hear about the various activities of LWVIL and ICAR as they relate to the redistricting of Chicago's 50 wards. Our speaker will be Mary Schaafsma of LWVIL. She had a leading role in organizing the LWVIL's petition drive to put the reapportionment amendment on the 2010 ballot. Please RSVP to League@LWVChicago.org or phone 312-939-5949 to arrange to have your name on the list for building access.

***Helene Gabelnick***

## **LWVChicago Membership Directory**

You may have noticed that we have not yet published the LWVChicago Membership Directory. As of late September only about 40% of our renewing members had returned the form with information and permission to publish. The Board suggests that unless we have a greater response the directory should not be published. If you simply overlooked the form for the directory it can be accessed on our Web site and the information can be submitted to League@LWVChicago.org. If you want to do it by hard copy fill in the form below and mail it to the LWVChicago office.

***Fill in the information below and check the box(es) to indicate that you agree to have that information published in a directory available only to LWV Chicago members.***

LWV Chicago Membership Directory Information	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Name _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Address _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	City, State, Zip _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phone number (home) _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phone number (cell) _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email address _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer <b>not</b> to be included in the directory.

## **Donations to the Tribute Fund in Memory of Winnie Slusser**

LWVChicago Board of Directors  
Norma Braude  
Helene Gabelnick  
Joan Morton  
Dorothy Scheff  
Rochelle Riffer  
Carol and Herb Ziegeldorf

### ***Voter Service News***

LWVChicago participated in a discussion forum on September 15 sponsored by the Chicago Board of Elections entitled “Voter Engagement: 2012.”

Topics such as voting by email or fax for persons in the armed forces, requiring ID to vote, registration on Election Day and using voting centers (rather than precincts) for election day were discussed. These changes would require action by the state legislature to take effect.

### ***Deputy Registrars***

The Chicago Board of Elections estimates that there are about 486,000 eligible citizens in Chicago who are not registered to vote. This is over 30% of the registered voters (1,400,000)!

This information highlights the need for deputy registrars. A LWVChicago member can become a deputy registrar by attending a one hour training session held at the Board of Election offices at 69 W. Washington St. In October there will be training on

Wednesday, October 12, 11 am  
Thursday, October 20, 6 pm  
Saturday, October 29, 9:30 am

LWVChicago’s Voter Service chair, Terry Williams, must register you for the training at least 3 days ahead. Please call the office so that you can be included in the class.

If you have already been trained as a deputy registrar you are qualified to register voters – find a location and do so!

***Terry Williams, Voter Service Chair***

### **Unit Meetings**

Unit 1/5 Downtown – evening  
Monday, October 17 – 5:30 pm  
LWV Office  
Leader – Margaret Herring

Unit 9/11 West Side – daytime  
Sunday, October 23 – 2 PM  
Third Unitarian Church  
301 N Mayfield, Chicago  
Leader – Joan Morton

Unit 21/35 – North Side  
Tuesday, October 18 – 7:30 PM  
Home of Esta Kallen  
Leader – Carol Ziegeldorf

Unit 22 Downtown – daytime  
Thursday, October 27 – 10 AM  
LWV Office  
Leader – Bernice Fortini

Unit 41/42 – South Side  
Saturday, October 1 – 1 PM  
Home of Anne Schaible  
Coordinator – Marcia Cowing

Unit 66/74 – Montgomery Place – Daytime  
Thursday, October 20 – 1:30 PM  
Montgomery Place, East Room  
Leader – Dorothy Scheff



### ***Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday to Edna Pardo***

Edna Pardo became a League member in 1957. She was known for her hard work, knowledge and passion in the areas of fiscal policy and educational issues. She served on many committees, as observer to several governmental bodies, board member, vice-president and president of LWVChicago.

Edna authored publications on the above topics; the most “popular” was “A Guide Through Chicago’s Tax Maze” which was published in four editions including one in Spanish.

Edna has received recognition and awards from different levels of LWV and civic organizations including the City of Chicago.

## ***Health Insurance Exchanges***

One of the features of the Affordable Health Care Bill is the opportunity for each state to create a competitive private health care market called an Exchange where small businesses and individuals who have no insurance will be able to shop for insurance premiums and discounts the way that large companies are able to do. Participating in the Exchange is voluntary, anyone who has an insurance plan they prefer can keep it. These exchanges are to begin in 2014, but funds are now becoming available to begin developing the exchanges.

Some of the benefits of the Exchanges can be:

\*Competition: an Exchange makes the market more competitive. The exchange forces the insurers to compete for customers based on value.

\*Transparency: Insurers would have to use easy to use language to describe their products, and will be required to share information about plan costs and quality in a standardized way.

\*Accountability: Provider network standards will ensure that every health care plan has enough doctors, and premium reviews will make sure plans aren't unjustly hiking costs for consumers.

\*Affordability: Middle class consumers (family of 4 with income of almost \$90,000) will be eligible for tax credits to help pay for premiums. Many others will be eligible for assistance with co-pays and deductibles. Exchanges will monitor insurers to be sure they are not unfairly increasing premiums.

\*Quality: Quality and customer satisfaction ratings for plans in the exchange will be posted on line. Exchange plans will be required to meet quality standards and implement quality improvement strategies so consumers know they are getting a good product.

\*Assistance: Direct assistance will be available. A toll-free hotline will take questions and "navigators" will help people understand and enroll in coverage. In addition, consumer assistance programs will be available to enrollees who have grievances with their health care plans.

States can design their own exchanges, create regional exchanges with other states, or have the federal government run their exchanges. For any of these options, by planning now, states can customize their exchanges to best meet the unique needs of their residents and small businesses.

In Illinois there has been much work on developing the Exchange. Last spring a proposal SB1729 was developed by a group of providers, small business, consumers,

producers and insurers. It had provided for an independent board made up of a consumer, provider, small businessman, health actuary broker and representative from labor. The goal of this bill was to provide strong provisions dealing with integrity, transparency and conflict of interest.

In May LWVIL sent out a call to action for members to contact their representatives to vote for this bill. However, at the end of May a bill passed that set up for Health Benefits Exchange Legislative Study Committee to further study the issue of the Exchange. This action was supported by the health insurance industry. The Bill was signed by the Governor on July 14<sup>th</sup>. The committee has held hearings in Springfield and Chicago. Their report is due on September 30<sup>th</sup>. It is anticipated that a vote on this issue may occur during the fall veto session. This will be necessary due to tight time frames set up by the federal Affordable Care Act. Much information about this committee including agendas and reports of these meetings can be found on their web site: Illinois Health Benefits Exchange Legislative Study Committee.

The concerns of those who developed SB1729 are that if the health insurance industry is allowed to have a lot of influence on the Exchange, this is a strong conflict of interest. This will lead to less transparency and consumer protection. Much of the difficulty with development the Exchange is that legislators just really are not paying attention to this issue. They have a lot of issues that they are now involved in due to the huge deficits the state is facing, and this is something that will not go into effect for three more years. Also the goal of some members of Congress is to repeal the Affordable Health Care Act, so they have no interest in devoting much time to development of the Exchange. This is an issue that is important to keep up with.

### ***Briefing Meeting on Health Care***

The health care briefing on November 12 will feature Jillian Phillips the Chicagoland Organizer for the Campaign for Better Health Care. The meeting will focus on the latest information regarding the status of the Health Care Exchange in Illinois. This will be just as the Illinois Legislature is completing its fall veto session, having acted, perhaps, on the legislation affecting the Exchange.

If you are interested in joining the Health Care Committee please contact the LWVChicago at League@LWVChicago or 312-939-5949.

***Margaret O'Hara, Health Committee Chair***

## Great Decisions Groups

LWVChicago has decided to try out a program that a number of other leagues in the area have used successfully. While we want you to sign up now, the groups won't be getting started until early 2012.

**What is it?** A discussion group that utilizes the *Great Decisions* booklet put out each year by the non-partisan Foreign Policy Association that features 8 articles of about 10 pages each and discussion questions regarding different foreign policy topics.

**When will the groups meet?** That will depend on who and how many sign up.

**How often do they meet?** That will be determined by each group. Often groups decide to meet twice a month from Feb. through May. Others decide to meet once a month and so may run from Feb. through the fall, depending on if they take a break for the summer.

**Where will the groups meet?** Again, that will be decided once we see who wants to participate. It could be in the LWVChicago office, in members' homes, or at your local library or other public place.

**How long will the meetings last?** Probably 1½ to 2 hours, depending on the group.

**Why participate?** To learn about different aspects of foreign policy and different areas of the world. To meet and get to know others and share interesting discussions. To have some fun!

**Who will lead the discussions?** There will be someone designated to lead the first topic and help get the group organized. At that meeting, participants will sign up to lead future discussions.

**Do I need to know anything about the topic to lead the discussion or participate?** No. The articles provide great background in just a few pages, and the discussion questions are provided (or you can come up with others). If you're interested, there is also a list of resources and further reading ideas at the end of each article, and you can go to the web site: [www.greatdecisions.org](http://www.greatdecisions.org) for further information. The role of the leader is to get the discussion going and help make sure everyone who wants to speak gets a chance, not provide information.

**What are the topics for 2012?** Middle East Realignment, Promoting Democracy, Mexico, Cybersecurity, Exit from Afghanistan and Iraq, State of the Oceans, Indonesia, and Energy Geopolitics.

**Who can participate?** League members and your friends and neighbors.

**Why sign up now when the groups won't get started until early 2012?** So we can put groups together and find places for them to meet.

**How do I sign up?** Fill out the form below and send to the LWVChicago office, or provide the info requested via e-mail to MIMSPA@aol.com or call the office (312-939-5949) and leave your name and phone number refer to information about Great Decisions.

## GREAT DECISIONS DISCUSSION GROUP INTEREST FORM

### Check as many as apply:

I would be willing to come to a group (please check all that apply):

A.  Downtown

in the morning  at noontime  afternoons before 5 pm  between 5 pm and 6:30

And/or

B.  In my neighborhood (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

in the morning  at noontime  afternoons before 5 pm

in the later afternoon/early evening (5 to 7 pm)  in the evening (7 pm or later)

I have other friends/colleagues/neighbors who might be interested in participating with me

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## LWVUS

The League and coalition groups sent a letter to the White House expressing deep concern that the Environmental Protection Agency will not meet its commitment to propose long-overdue Clean Air Act standards limiting dangerous carbon pollution from new and existing power plants. The groups also asked the President to reaffirm the administration's commitment to issue strong standards that significantly reduce carbon emissions from both new and existing power plants as the Clean Air Act requires.

The League of Women Voters of the United States joined the League of Women Voters of Texas in urging Attorney General Eric Holder to reject the congressional redistricting plan submitted by the state of Texas on the grounds that it would disenfranchise minority voters and is in clear violation of the landmark Voting Rights Act. A significant number of individuals, and civil rights, civic, and community organizations including the League testified repeatedly that the map was clearly designed to benefit lawmakers' partisan interests while egregiously shortchanging minority voters and fracturing close-knit communities of interest.

To remain current with the lobbying activities of LWVUS visit the web site: [LWV.org](http://LWV.org) or LWVUS's Facebook page.

## LWVIL

On September 21 Janet Craft, LWVIL Issues specialist, testified and took questions in Chicago at a Public Hearing of the Health Benefits Exchange Legislative Study Committee. This statement is from her testimony:

"LWVIL supports a Competitive Health Insurance Marketplace designed with a consumer focus, independent governance, strong conflict of interest and transparency provisions. The board of the governing entity should have the power to negotiate the services, quality and prices of health care. The integrity and ultimately the success of the Exchange in opening access to affordable health care will rest on the foundation of a governing body free to act in the public interest."

See page 5 for more information on health insurance exchanges.

## LWV Lake Michigan

### Join us for 2011 Annual Meeting

All League members are invited to the Annual Meeting on Friday, October 21 and Saturday, October 22, 2011. It will be held at the Hilton Oak Lawn in Oak Lawn,

Illinois. There will be a variety of speakers, activities and educational programs related to Lake Michigan, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, US EPA and Lake Calumet. More details and registration information may be found at [LakeMichiganLWV.wordpress.com](http://LakeMichiganLWV.wordpress.com) or contact Mo Ormiston, LWVIL Membership coordinator, at 312-939-5935 X37.

## LWV Cook County

The next "Lunch & Learn with the League of Women Voters of Cook County" will be held on **Tuesday, October 25** and will feature the General Superintendent of the Cook County Forest Preserve, Arnold Randall. All League members and their friends are invited to attend. Reservations are due October 18. See the flyer on the LWVCC's website ([www.cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org](http://www.cookcounty.il.lwvnet.org)) or contact LWVCC at 312-939-5935, ext. 27.

In August, LWVCC President Cynthia Schilsky spoke at the public hearing on the Cook County government's preliminary 2012 budget. She urged that the budget that is to be submitted to the County Board for review include any money that would be necessary for the Cook County Commissioners to complete the re-drawing of district lines in 2012, in plenty of time for potential candidates to determine whether to run in 2014 when all 17 Commissioner seats will be up for election. You can read Cynthia's full statement on the LWVCC web site. The President of the Cook County Board, Toni Preckwinkle, is expected to submit the proposed 2012 budget to the County Board in mid to late October, prior to the start of the fiscal year on December 1.

LWVCC plans to meet with each of the Commissioners to discuss several matters and will be contacting local leagues to participate in meetings with the Commissioners who represent their members.

*Pris Mims*

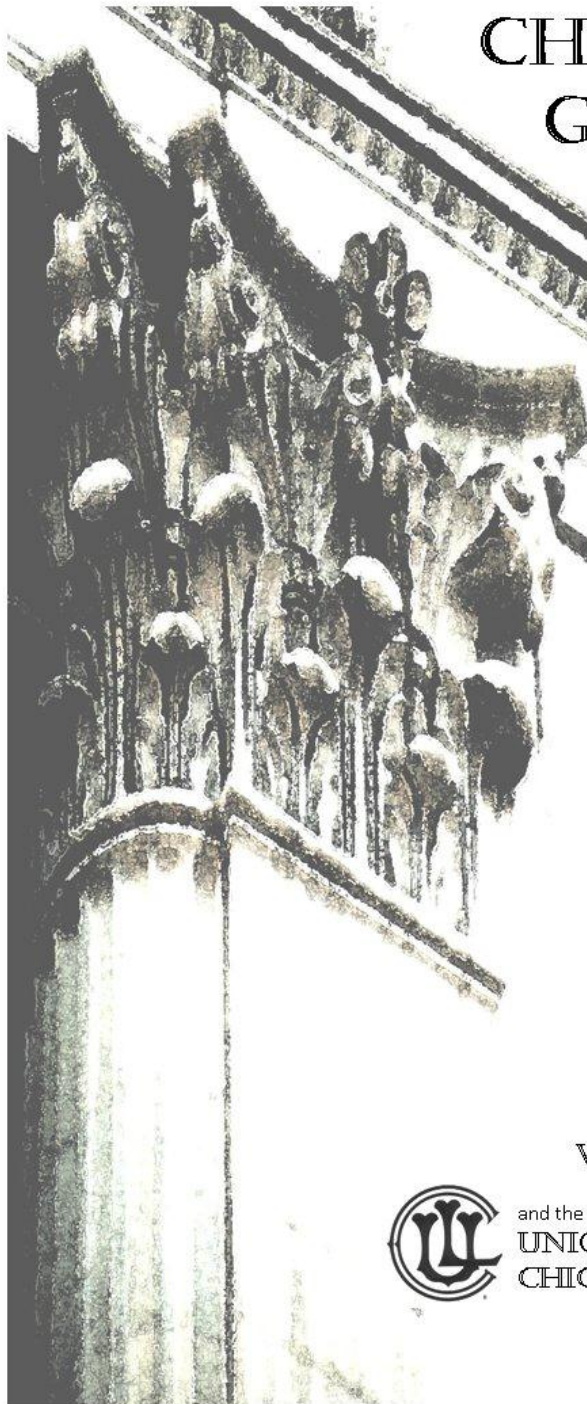
### ***The Chicago Voter***

League of Women Voters of Chicago  
332 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite 525  
Chicago, IL 60604  
312-939-5949

Email – [League@LWVChicago.org](mailto:League@LWVChicago.org)

Margaret Herring	President
Helene Gabelnick	Vice President
Pat Graunke	Vice President
Esta Kallen	Vice President
Marcia Friddle	Secretary
Leslie Corbett	Treasurer
Helene Gabelnick	Voter Editor pro-tem

Please join us at this event.  
Please RSVP to [League@LWVChicago.org](mailto:League@LWVChicago.org)



# CHICAGO GOVERNMENT IN FOCUS

A monthly series of informal public meetings where areas of Chicago government are discussed by city officials.

Speaker:

**BRENDAN REILLY**  
Alderman, 42nd Ward

**WEDNESDAY, October 12, 2011**

Registration 5pm

Program 5:30-6:30pm

**Union League Club**

65 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL

Admission free; cash bar

RSVPs appreciated—312-939-5949

[LEAGUE@LWVCHICAGO.ORG](mailto:LEAGUE@LWVCHICAGO.ORG)

Dress: Business casual; no jeans/denim

Co-sponsored by the  
**LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
VOTERS OF CHICAGO**



and the  
**UNION LEAGUE CLUB OF  
CHICAGO**