LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEBRASKA

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ELAINE WEISS HIGHLIGHTS LWV IN FEBRUARY 14 SPEECH

By Dianne Bystrom and Linda Duckworth, Co-Presidents, League of Women Voters of Nebraska

Elaine Weiss, author of The Woman’s Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote, highlighted the history of the League of Women Voters as well as the important role it plays today in her presentation at Iowa State University on February 14, 2020.

Her presentation was part of a daylong celebration of the 100th anniversary of the LWV as well as Iowa’s kick-off of its centennial commemoration of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. We attended the kick-off at Iowa State along with LWVNE members Linda Bors, Keith Bystrom, Mary Fieber, Karren and Gary Kerr, Joanna Lindberg, MaryLee Moulton, Katie Wadas Thalken and Mark Thalken.

In our co-presidents’ message for this edition of The Voter, we would like to share excerpts from Weiss’ speech from a copy she provided the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University.

“Today is the 100th birthday of the League of Women Voters,” Weiss told the audience of more than 300 people. “One hundred years ago today, Carrie Chapman Catt stood before the National American Woman Suffrage Association convention in Chicago and announced the birth of the League. ‘A mighty political experiment,’ she called it. It was to be the next step for women after suffrage. The next step in her campaign to expand and educate the American electorate. The next cause to promote democracy.”

According to Weiss, the League of Women Voters has been this—and more—for 100 years. “The League is the daughter of the suffrage movement,” she said. “And it was the dream—and creation—of Carrie Chapman Catt, the pre-eminent 20th century suffrage leader in the nation and the world.”

Weiss also noted that in August 2020 the nation will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, “which Carrie Chapman Catt devoted three decades of her life to winning for the American people.” Ratification of the 19th Amendment on August 26, 1920, was the “largest extension of the franchise in our history—giving the vote to half of the citizens of the nation—who were not included when the founding fathers constructed our government, supposedly ‘By and For the People,’” she said.

However, because of barriers enacted by some states—such as poll taxes and literacy tests—mostly in the South as well as fraud, intimidation and violence, not all women—or men—could vote after the ratification of the 14th and 15th amendments, which enfranchised black men, and the 19th Amendment, which declares that “the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex.”

“While the 19th Amendment gave the vote to all women, black women—and men—Asian women and Native Americans would have to wait decades longer to secure their voting rights,” Weiss said, adding that “the struggle to expand our democracy is ongoing. It was not accomplished in 1920; it’s not complete today.”

In closing her presentation, Weiss again turned to the founding of the League of Women Voters and its role today. “Looking ahead, to when women finally won the ballot, Catt envisioned a strong women’s lobby to press for legislation benefitting women and families at the national and local levels,” she said. “From the beginning, even at its birth, the League of Women Voters was controversial. It was to be political, but nonpartisan, which is always a tricky balance as you well know. It was to be a women’s political organization—but outside of the political parties—so politicians were very wary of it.”

However, Weiss noted, “Carrie Chapman Catt never shied from controversy. She urged the new-born League to be bold: ‘The danger is that the League of Women Voters is going to be too timid and too conservative,’ she told her women on February 14, 1920, as the NAWSA transformed itself into the League of Women Voters. Catt said, ‘if the League of Women Voters hasn’t the vision to see what is coming and ought to come, and be five years ahead of the political parties, I don’t think it is worth having.’”

The work of the League of Women Voters to protect the right to vote for all citizens is as important as ever, Weiss said. “We cannot, and should not, accept attempts to restrict or suppress voting. Voting rights is not a partisan issue. It is the stress test of the health of our democracy. We must not fail that test,” she said.

“As we face a new onslaught of threats to our democratic foundations, the work of the League is our best defense,” Weiss said. “We need the League more than ever for the next century.”
LWVNE CELEBRATES “DAY OF ACTION” WITH LEGISLATIVE DAY, ROAD TRIP TO IOWA

From Dianne Bystrom

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters on February 14, 2020, 339 Leagues from across the United States held 402 events as part of a national Day of Action. According to the national LWV, 64,133 people were reached by Day of Action events.

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska held two Day of Action events – its annual Legislative Day at the State Capitol on February 12 and a Road Trip to Iowa to visit LWV’s founder Carrie Chapman Catt’s Girlhood Home and Museum in Charles City on February 13 and participate in the Iowa kick-off of the centennial commemoration of the 19th Amendment on February 14 at Iowa State University.

Attending the LWVNE’s annual Legislative Day were 49 members from Omaha (23), Lincoln (17), Hastings (3), Plattsmouth (2), and 1 member each from Ashland, Beaver Crossing, Belgrade and Grand Island. Legislative Day included a briefing in the morning with updates on the LWVNE’s priority bills; the debut of the seven-panel display on the women’s suffrage movement in Nebraska; introduction in the legislative chamber by Senator Sara Howard of Omaha (District 9); and visits to state senator offices with information on priority bills.

Legislative Day also included lunch at the Governor’s mansion, featuring a presentation by Steven Dunbar, professor emeritus of mathematics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, on gerrymandering and statistical models for fair and representative redistricting. During Legislative Day, several members of the LWVNE attended the hearing on LB1207, Adopt the Redistricting Act, in support of the legislation as one of its priority bills.

“I want to thank all of you who came to our event on February 12, Abraham Lincoln’s birthday, and two days shy of the League’s 100th,” said Sherry Miller, vice president of action for the LWVNE. “Please continue to monitor our Unicameral and be quick to take action on those bills of importance to you as a constituent.”

As part of the LWV’s Day of Action, 13 members of the LWVNE participated in a Road Trip to Iowa on February 13-14. Participating in the road trip were Linda Bors, Dianne and Keith Bystrom, Linda and Charlie Duckworth, Mary Fieber, Karren and Gary Kerr, Joanna and Larry Lindberg, MaryLee Moulton; Katie Wadas Thalken and Mark Thalken.

On February 13, the group had lunch with members of the board of directors of the National 19th Amendment Society affiliated with Carrie Chapman Catt’s Girlhood Home and Museum in Charles City. Following lunch, they toured Catt’s girlhood home and museum.

“The road trip was great,” said Wadas Thalken. “I loved seeing Carrie Chapman Catt’s childhood home and definitely recommend it for a weekend trip. Linda and Dianne did a great job planning the trip.”

“Most memorable was the story about what got Carrie Chapman Catt started,” Bors said. “I read it as I reviewed information on her before our trip, then heard it during our tour of her girlhood home.” Catt’s interest in becoming a suffragist began at the age of 13 when she asked her mother why she wasn’t dressed up to go into town with her father and the hired men to vote in the 1872 presidential election. Her family laughed at her, noting that women weren’t allowed to vote. “This upset Carrie as family discussions routinely included politics, and she knew of her mother’s interest in the election, including whom her mother wanted to be the next president,” Bors said.

“It was empowering to hear the stories about Carrie Chapman Catt,” said Joanna Lindberg, who brought back souvenirs from the museum to share with the Douglas County election commissioner. “The next day, the election commissioner asked if we could work together on a display at the election office.”

The group stayed at the Historic Park Inn – the last Frank Lloyd Wright designed and built hotel in the world – in Mason City on February 13. Pat Schultz, a local historian and retired teacher, joined the group at dinner to discuss her book, Amazing Women of Mason City, which includes local women’s suffrage leaders, as well as the work to renovate the Historic Park Inn.

“Mason City and the Historic Park Inn was icing on the cake for the first day of the trip,” said Wadas Thalken. “The hotel was amazing, and we enjoyed exploring Mason City a bit too.”

On February 14, most of the group attended the Iowa kick-off of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment at Iowa State University. The daylong event included a screening of the Iowa PBS documentary on “Carrie Chapman Catt: Warrior for Women”; presentation by Elaine Weiss, author of The Woman’s Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote; a performance of The Yellow Rose of Suffrage, a one-woman play about Catt by Iowa State theatre professor emerita Jane Cox; presentations on such topics as suffrage in the South, the role of women of color in the women’s suffrage movement, women’s political participation from 1920-2020, and the history of voting rights; and displays on women’s suffrage leaders in Iowa.
The Iowa PBS documentary on Catt includes interviews with LWVNE members Dr. Deborah Turner, a native of Mason City and member of the LWV board of directors and trustees, and Dianne Bystrom, co-president of the LWVNE and director emerita of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University. A promo for the documentary, which will air in May 2020 on Iowa PBS, can be viewed here: http://www.iowapbs.org/catt

"Mark and I enjoyed hearing Elaine Weiss's talk at Iowa State," Wadas Thalken said. "And, it was great to see what the state of Iowa is doing to celebrate the centennial."

"I was so impressed with the diversity of the presentations and incredible display highlighting the contributions of Iowa African American women leaders," said Joanna Lindberg.

Moulton agreed: "I was particularly impressed by the panel exhibit on Iowa African American women's involvement in the suffrage movement and I am excited to bring it to Omaha for the Eighth Circuit Judicial Conference in August."

During their tour of Carrie Chapman Catt's Girlhood Home and Museum in Charles City, members of the LWVNE road trip group gathered around a National Votes for Women Trail marker presented to commemorate Catt and her work for woman's suffrage.

The LWVNE's road trip to Iowa included lunch with members of the National 19th Amendment Society board of directors before touring Carrie Chapman Catt's Girlhood Home and Museum in Charles City.

ACTION ALERTS - JOIN THE FIGHT!!

By Sherry Miller

Action Alerts have been shared with local League leaders to pass on to the membership and to our members-at-large. The most recent alert asks members to contact their senators regarding LR 294, the resolution submitted by middle school students from Prairie Hill Learning Center. Senator Kolowski introduced the bill and was joined by several other senators. The non-binding resolution asks the legislature to review various climate-related findings and acknowledge anthropogenic (HUMAN CAUSED) climate and ecological crisis. The resolution was heard on February 20th and remains in the Natural Resources Committee. A letter was sent to the co-signing senators asking them to help move the resolution out of committee and perhaps include it in discussion of LB 283 (Climate Change Study). I hope you found time to contact your senator also as their constituent. These children are leading us into a much needed discussion to recognize that extreme weather events don’t just happen, there are causes to be recognized and prevented!

IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE ACTION ALERTS DIRECTLY FROM THE VP ACTION, PLEASE CALL THE LEAGUE OFFICE (402/475-1411) OR SEND AN EMAIL TO THE LEAGUE OFFICE AT lwv-ne@inebraska.com OR EMAIL ME AT kitty66hawk@aol.com.

Much thanks! Sherry Miller, VP Action, LWVNE
VOTE411 EXPANDING STATEWIDE!
Caryl Guisinger & Toni Monette
LWV-NE, Voter Services Co-Directors

Vote411, the League’s election database, is going STATEWIDE for both the primary and general elections for 2020. Vote411 is a one-stop-shop for nonpartisan information that will include elections in all 93 Nebraskan counties—a first for Nebraska.

If you are interested in what candidates for county commissioner, school board, city mayor, among other races, think are important issues and how they propose to handle them, you’ll find it on Vote411. Candidates running in contested elections sharing their views with their constituents—what could be better?

Vote411 has long been a trusted source of objective and nonpartisan information since 2006, and it has served tens of millions of voters across our nation. Vote411 data is tailored to a specific address or you can explore by state to:
- see what’s on your ballot
- check your voter registration
- find your polling place
- read about ballot initiatives,
- and much more

When? April 15th for 2020 primary candidate information

Spread the word to your family, friends, and neighbors near and far across Nebraska. Let’s ensure that voters have the information they need to make informed choices.

LWVNE SUFFRAGE DISPLAY
DEBUTS AT LEGISLATIVE DAY

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska’s seven-panel display on “The Long Road to the 19th Amendment in Nebraska” made its debut at the State Capitol on February 10-14, the week of the LWVNE’s Legislative Day on February 12.

“We are excited to have our historical banners done and available for events,” said MaryLee Moulton, who serves on the state board as the centennial celebration director and led efforts to create the display.

Pictured with two of the seven panels at Legislative Day are LWVNE co-president Linda Duckworth and Palistene Gray-Moore, who serves as co-director of mental and behavioral health on the state board. Both are from Omaha. They are pictured with the panel on Doris Stevens, a suffrage activist from Omaha who protested at the White House in 1917 as a “silent sentinel.” Keith Neville Bystrom of Plattsmouth is pictured with the panel noting that his grandfather, Nebraska Governor Keith Neville, signed a limited suffrage act on April 21, 1917.

The banners were next displayed on March 6 at the “Women Lead 2020: Claim Your Power” conference at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Innovation Campus. The conference, sponsored by the UNL College of Business and UNL College of Law, included a break-out session on “How Leaders Can Overcome the Impostor Syndrome” by LWVNE co-president Dianne Bystrom.

“The banners will be at the LWVNE annual state meeting on April 25 in Seward and the League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha annual meeting on May 2,” Moulton said.
“In addition to the banners, we also have seven posters available with the same information as the banners,” Moulton said. “A set has been given to each of the local leagues in Omaha, Lincoln, Seward and Hasting as well as the state league. The LWVGO has already deployed the posters to local libraries and to a display at Union Pacific.”

If you could like to have the banners at a meeting, please contact MaryLee Moulton at marylee@lwvg.org.

GOVERNMENT
By Sheri St Clair

Thirteen proposed bills or constitutional amendments have been followed since the second session of the 106th Legislature began in January. Several of these were identified as priority bills by LWVNE. Current status of these bills is shown in the following table. Activity of the Government, Military and Veterans affairs committee has been monitored, and LWVNE was represented at several meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LB/CA</th>
<th>Title of Bill</th>
<th>Senator</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LB1005</td>
<td>Change provisions regarding nomination and election of certain partisan candidates: “open primaries”</td>
<td>McCollister</td>
<td>Gov’t Comm Hearing 2-26-20</td>
<td>Written/verbal testimony in support: to encourage citizen participation, making government more representative in uncontested elections, 21% nonpartisan registrants in NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LB1157</td>
<td>Provide for counting Nebraska residents in NE prisons for redistricting purposes: to count inmates at address prior to confinement</td>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>Ex Board Hearing 2-12-20</td>
<td>Recommend support: otherwise the 2020 census will count incarcerated persons as residents of penal site rather than home, giving prison districts skewed boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LB1207</td>
<td>Adopt the Redistricting Act</td>
<td>McCollister</td>
<td>Ex Board Hearing 2-12-20</td>
<td>Written/verbal testimony in support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>279CA</td>
<td>Constitutional amendment to authorize an increase in the number of members of the Legislature: to 55</td>
<td>Scheer</td>
<td>On General File; bracketed to 4-22-20</td>
<td>Recommend oppose: cost, necessity. US avg is 156K/senator and 57K per rep. NE has 37K per senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280CA</td>
<td>Constitutional amendment to change legislative term limits to 3 consecutive terms</td>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>Ex Board Hearing 2-18-20</td>
<td>Written support:: LWV-NE 2019-20 Program: “...no term limits for legislators”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>292CA</td>
<td>Constitutional amendment to require verification of identity prior to voting</td>
<td>La Grone</td>
<td>Gov’t Comm Hearing 2-27-20</td>
<td>Verbal/written testimony in opposition: LWV opposes state legislation that requires proof of citizenship or picture ID to register to vote or vote</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Priority bill LB1207 was discussed at the Executive Board hearing on February 12. Since this was also our Legislative Day, we took advantage of this opportunity to deliver postcards urging support to members of the Executive Committee. To date, this bill has not moved from Committee and therefore, we do not expect the Legislature to take action regarding redistricting. We are aware that the ACLU of Nebraska is exploring the feasibility of initiating a ballot initiative to support fair redistricting and have reached out to this organization. LWV-NE will actively support and participate in this effort.

Although not identified as a priority bill, LB1055 was proposed to change provisions for voting by mail in some Nebraska counties. LWV-NE testified in support of this bill, which was moved to General File as a Committee priority. Amendment 2573 to this bill included criteria to be met for poll watchers. Several election commissioners had testified in support of defining these criteria.

We are pleased to announce that our fair maps website is active. See www.fairmapsne.org. An important component of this website is a link to the Fair Maps Crash Course, designed for use by high schools and civic groups.
AUTOMATIC VOTE-BY-MAIL
Caryl Guisinger & Toni Monette
LWV-NE, Voter Services Co-Directors

As a United States citizen, voting is a right and a responsibility. Unfortunately, too few citizens vote. Whether it is apathy towards the system or lack of easily accessible candidate information or inability to take the time off from work, only 20-40% of registered voters typically cast a vote in every election in Nebraska. Though, a few counties have experienced a significant increase in voter turnout—up to 70%! What is making the difference?

Garden county, who introduced automatic Vote-by-Mail for the 2018 primary, saw voter turnout soar from a measly 24% to a whopping 59% turnout rate. Dixon county’s voter turnout rate also soared from 35-45% at the polls to a 65-70% turnout for mail-only precincts.

Nebraska’s law currently allows only counties with populations under 10,000 to apply for automatic Vote-by-Mail from the Secretary of State. As of January 2020, 11 counties have implemented automatic Vote-by-Mail, with another six counties using the automatic ballot for at least one of their precincts.

Individual county clerks and election commissioners, under the current statute, initiate the automatic Vote-by-Mail process by submitting an application to the Secretary of State, which he then reviews and makes a final decision. The Nebraska Association of County Officials is supportive of the automatic ballot process, as it saves clerks much time and money.

During the 2019 Nebraska Legislative session, Senator Megan Hunt sponsored LB163, which would remove the 10,000 population cap, but would still require county-by-county approval by the Secretary of State. Unfortunately, LB163 was held in the Government committee on a 4-4 vote and did not advance to the General File.

There are 26 counties with populations greater than 10,000 residents, accounting for 1.6 million Nebraskans. Conversely, just under 293,000 Nebraskans live in the 67 counties populated by fewer than 10,000 residents. Nebraska’s current law sets up a disparate access to the ballot, which is neither fair, nor equal, as interpreted in the Voting Rights Act and the 15th, 19th, and 26th Amendments.

When the public opinion is loud enough, legislators will be swayed to enact a bill that removes potential bias and restrictions on large counties. Every Nebraskan should have equal access to the ballot, not just residents who live in small rural counties.

So what can you do? Register to receive an Early Voting/Absentee ballot by mail. Currently, 25 percent of Nebraskans request an Early Voting ballot. Once requests consistently hit 50 percent, legislators will take notice and vote for automatic Vote-by-Mail for every Nebraskan.

To request an Early Voting/Absentee ballot for the 2020 primary election, submit the following application between January 13th and May 1st by 6 pm. And then, do so again for the 2020 general election.


Notes: The following counties are entirely Vote-by-Mail for all future elections: Boone, Cedar, Cherry, Clay, Dawes, Dixon, Garden, Knox, Merrick, Morrill, and Stanton;

One or more precincts in these counties are entirely Vote-by-Mail: Cuming, Harlan, Hamilton, Nance, Phelps, and Richardson

EARLY VOTING/ABSENTEE VOTING
Caryl Guisinger & Toni Monette
LWV-NE, Voter Services Co-Directors

If you prefer not to stand in line on voting day, or if you have an uncertain work schedule, or if you just want to try something new, request an Early Voting/Absentee (aka Vote-by-Mail) ballot. Twenty-five percent of Nebraskans preferred voting by mail in the 2018 election, so join the club!

The advantages of voting from home include:

- convenience
- no need to take time off from work
- no need to find childcare
- avoid wait times at local precinct
- time to thoroughly examine the candidates and ballot initiatives with www.Vote411.org
- reduction of county costs for recruiting, training, and paying poll workers
- increased turnout
- significantly decreases use of provisional ballots
Any registered voter in Nebraska may apply for an Early Voting/Absentee ballot without the need to provide a reason, unlike some states that require a reason.

To receive a ballot via the mail, an Early Voting Application is required for EACH election. To request an Early Voting/Absentee ballot for the 2020 primary election, submit the following application between January 13th and May 1st by 6 pm:

https://tinyurl.com/NEEarlyVoting-English
https://tinyurl.com/NEEarlyVoting-Spanish

Early Voting/Absentee ballots must be returned (and received by your local County Clerk) no later than May 11th.

Be aware that registered non-partisan voters may request either a Democratic or Republican ballot when requesting a Early Voting ballot.

You may verify that your Early Voting/Absentee ballot was received and counted via this link:
https://tinyurl.com/NEEarlyVotingBallotReceived

For the 2020 primary election, voters may choose to vote in person at their County Clerk’s office any time between April 12th – May 11th.

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES
Caryl Guisinger & Toni Monette
LWV-NE, Voter Services Co-Directors

When an election year rolls around, it’s sometimes hard to keep track of all the dates. So, we’ve made it easy for you!

Voter Registration Deadlines for the 2020 Primary

- April 24: last day to postmark your Voter Registration application
- April 27: last day to register ON-LINE to vote
- May 1, by 6 pm: last day/time to register at your County Clerk’s office

Register to Vote:

- https://tinyurl.com/NEVoterRegistration-English
- https://tinyurl.com/NEVoter-Registration-Spanish

Verify your Voter Registration:

- https://tinyurl.com/NEVerifyRegistration

Early Voting/Absentee Voting (Vote-by-Mail) Deadline for the 2020 Primary

- Jan 13 – May 1, 6 pm:
  for voters who live in counties/precincts that are NOT automatic Vote-by-Mail, complete this application to receive Early Voting/Absentee ballot; any registered voter may make this request

Early Voting/Absentee Application:

- https://tinyurl.com/NEEarlyVoting-English
- https://tinyurl.com/NEEarlyVoting-Spanish

Voting Dates for the 2020 Primary

- April 6: first day a Vote-by-Mail (Early Voting/Absentee) ballot can be mailed to voters
- April 15: first date Vote411 will be available with STATEWIDE candidate data; accessed via www.Vote411.org
- April 13 – May 11: vote early at your County Clerk’s office; return Early Voting/Absentee ballots
- May 12: deadline by the local County Clerk’s office for RECEIVING ballots from voters in counties with automatic Vote-by-Mail
- May 12: vote at your local precinct from 8 am – 8 pm (central time); 7 am – 7 pm (mountain time)
IMPORTANT VOTING RESOURCES
Caryl Guisinger & Toni Monette
LWV-NE, Voter Services Co-Directors

Vote, because elections matter. Vote, because elections aren’t simply about your representatives in Washington or who is president. Whom you choose to lead your local and state governments will have an impact on the life of your community. Voting matters to you, your family, your neighbors, and your community.

- If you are new to Nebraska, you will need to register to vote in Nebraska.
- If you have moved since the last election, you will need to register at your new address.
- If you are a Nebraska resident but will be out of the country for an extended period of time during the spring, apply for Overseas voter registration and absentee ballot.
- If you have married or changed your name since the last election, you will need to re-register. And it’s important to register early in case additional documentation is required.
- If you haven’t voted in years, VERIFY your voting registration!
- If you prefer to not stand in lines on voting day, or if you have an uncertain work schedule, or if you just want to try something new, request an Early Voting/Absentee ballot (via mail). Twenty-five percent of Nebraskans preferred voting by mail in the 2018 election, so give it a try!

Voting Resource Links

Register to Vote
https://tinyurl.com/NEVoterRegistration-English
https://tinyurl.com/NEVoter-Registration-Spanish

VERIFY your Voter Registration!
https://tinyurl.com/NEVerifyRegistration

Overseas Voter Registration & Absentee Ballot Request
https://tinyurl.com/OverseasVoters

Early Voting/Absentee (aka Vote-by-Mail) Application
https://tinyurl.com/NEEarlyVoting-English
https://tinyurl.com/NEEarlyVoting-Spanish

Verify your Early Voting Ballot was Received & Counted
https://tinyurl.com/NEEarlyVotingBallotReceived

Verify your Provisional Ballot was Validated & Counted
https://tinyurl.com/NEProvisionalBallotVerify

Election Officials/County Offices across Nebraska
https://tinyurl.com/NECountyOffices

NEW 2020 ‘KNOW YOUR VOTING RIGHTS’ BROCHURE
Caryl Guisinger & Toni Monette
LWV-NE, Voter Services Co-Directors

The LWV-NE has updated the ‘Know your Voting Rights in Nebraska’ brochure for 2020, and it will be distributed to every library in Nebraska in March and April. Additionally, all 34 colleges and universities in Nebraska will have brochures available for students across the state.

This new brochure provides a wealth of information for new and long-time voters, and is jointly funded by the Nebraska Civic Engagement Table and the LWV-NE Education Fund.

The different categories of information include information for:

- registered non-partisan voters
- overseas voters
- homeless voters
- former felons and incarcerated persons awaiting trial
- individuals with disabilities

Also included:

- Vote411 going STATEWIDE for the 2020 elections
- 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment and the LWV!
- All-Mail (automatic Vote-by-Mail) Voting details
- Early/Absentee Voting
- Provisional Ballots
THANK YOU TO ALL 2019 FUNDRAISER CONTRIBUTORS

Thanks to the generosity of its members, the League of Women Voters of Nebraska will have more than $7,000 to support its efforts to register voters, provide voter education programs and nonpartisan voters’ guides, expand get-out-the-vote efforts, and celebrate the 100th anniversary of women’s right to vote in 2020.

A total of $7,105 has been raised to date in response to the November 29, 2019, letter from co-presidents Dianne Bystrom and Linda Duckworth: $5,255 to the General Fund; $1,450 to the Education Fund; $100 to the Endowment Fund; and $300 to the Sandra K. Powell Memorial Fund. All contributions, no matter their specific designation, are tax-deductible.

The following LWVNE members contributed to the 2019 donation drive (with additional contributors requesting anonymity):

Those contributing to the General Fund were Marilyn Abariotes, Peggy Adair, Linda Bors, Margaret Brown, Dianne and Keith Bystrom, Nancy R. Comer, Linda and Charles Duckworth, Jackie Egan, Mary Fieber, Janet Gauger, Polly Goecke, Cynthia Hadde, Tari Hendrickson, Susan Hester, Karren and Gary Kerr, Judy Koepke, Bonnie and Jon Kruse, Joanna and Larry Lindberg, Marlene Mahoney, Mele Mason, Deborah McCollister, Amy McGaha, Jan McKenzie, Cheryl Moninger-Bettin, MaryLee Moulton, Terri Rittenburg, Lynn Roper, Mary K. (Molly) Scott, Caroline Sedlacek, Marjorie Shreve, Anne Starr, Susan Weber, and Deborah Wigton.

Education Fund contributors were Mary Anna and Clyde Anderson, Michele Bever, Eleanor Biederman, Amy Birky, Mary Fieber, Lisa Fricke, Polly Goecke, Kay Lynn Goldner, Caryl Guisinger, Kate High, Connie Kollasch, Harriet Major, Amy McGaha, Jan McKenzie, Judy Paine, Denise Powell, Pam Sorrell, Katie Wadas Thalken and Mark Thalken, Judy Torrens, Marilyn Valerio, Janice Walker, Jane Witte, and Sheryl L. Wright. Katie Wadas Thalken and Mark Thalken contributed to the Endowment Fund and Caroline Sedlacek contributed to the Sandra K. Powell Memorial Fund.

Additionally, during 2019, but prior to the 2019 fundraiser, a total of $405 had been donated by League members; $20 to the General Fund and the remainder of $385 to the Education Fund. Those contributors were Peggy Adair, Lynne Anderson, Helen J. Atwater, Sandy Blankenship, Lynne Elwood, Lois Poppe, Jennifer Pospichal, and Maryanne Rouse.

MONEY IN POLITICS YEAR IN REVIEW

By Kate High

1. Three Money in Politics Reports have been completed and posted on League’s website, https://www.lwv-ne.org/.
   a. Part 1-Overview of the Nebraska Legislature 2016 Election
   b. Part 2-Nebraska Campaign Finance Laws Compared to Surrounding States
   c. Part 3-Conclusion-Restoring Nebraska’s Second House

The Reports were reviewed and accepted by the League of Women Voters US Education Fund Clearinghouse which contains studies and research conducted by League members. Visitors to the website (https://sites.google.com/a/leagueofwomenvoters.org/clearinghouse/home) may download and print documents. The purpose of the site is to share League study documents among national, state and local Leagues and with the public.

2. Money in Politics Meetings/Programs
   a. Go Vote, Omaha! Public Access television program April, 2019
   b. Seward Public Library and Seward LWV co-sponsors, September 2019
   d. OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) at the University of Nebraska course, “Dark Money, Montana to Nebraska and Beyond”. This was a four-session class co-presented with Jack Gould, Common Cause, October-November 2019. Class will be repeated beginning March-April 2020 with potential for a sequel.

3. LWVNE position statement on Money in Politics in Nebraska will be presented at 2020 Annual Meeting.

Thank you, League members, for supporting the MIP project through providing opportunities to present the League’s MIP findings, careful review and editing of the three reports, and your wonderful OLLI Dark Money
evaluations! Also, many grateful thanks to the LWVNE Board of Directors and especially Sherry Miller for providing me with the opportunity, moral support, and courage to proceed with this project. I couldn’t have done it without them.

REPORT OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN NEBRASKA
Megan York Lyons and Janelle Stevenson, Natural Resources co-directors

When the Nebraska Legislature is in session, it’s a busy time of year for all LWVNE members. The time for action; emailing, calling, and face-to-face conversation is critical to educating the public on policy and keeping our senators accountable to its citizens. The following is a brief timeline of actions steps we took to advance environmental advocacy.

Citizens Climate Lobby: January 16, February 8, February 26

The February monthly speaker at CCL was Bob Inglis, Executive Director of republicEN.org. As a former Republican Congressman from South Carolina, he introduced a revenue neutral carbon tax and has founded his recent organization to persuade conservatives to address climate change with market-based solutions.

Another bipartisan success for Nebraskans is Rep. Jeff Fortenberry’s co-sponsorship of the Better Energy Storage Technology Act. A group of 38 Democrats and 16 Republicans are supporting research and development in storage innovation and several large-scale storage demonstration projects. One of CCL’s actions for February was to email or write a letter thanking him for the positive steps he is taking.

Megan is working with veteran members of CCL on expanding outreach to community groups who may be immigrants, non-native English speakers, or people who are unfamiliar with climate change education.

Legislative Day- February 12

On Legislative Day Janelle and Megan focused on LWVNE priority bills with a strong emphasis on LB 283 (2019) and AM 2119 (2020). This bill, with an amendment, requests the University of Nebraska Lincoln create an effective plan to meet the challenges of extreme weather events (aka, climate change) through adaptation and mitigation strategies, including attracting new businesses and investment to NE, as well as reducing the potential negative impacts of climate change. The amendment inserts “Petroleum Release Remedial Action Collection” to be the fund which pays UNL to do the research.

Legislative Hearing on LR 294- February 20

Megan attended an Executive Committee hearing in Lincoln on February 20 to speak on behalf of LWVNE in support of the resolution. Middle school students of Prairie Hill Learning Center developed the resolution for legislators to acknowledge the moral responsibility for the legislature to recognize that climate change is proven to correlate with human activity which affects all people of Nebraska. Prairie Hill students and UNL Sustain continue to strike every Friday until Governor Ricketts and the Nebraska Unicameral prioritize their demands. Combined with LB 283, a climate change study by UNL, LR 294 would be significant in acknowledging the voices of the children and showing a willingness to work on climate change solutions.

Letter to the Editor- LR 294 - March 02, 2020

Janelle submitted an LTE to the Lincoln Journal Star Monday, March 02, 2020 regarding LR 294. The letter emphasized the scientific evidence Prairie Hill Learning students researched to write the resolution. They strongly encouraged state legislators to acknowledge that humans are causing climate change which has inflicted weather related turmoil across Nebraska and our country, let alone polluting our soil, water, and air through various industrial means. Sherry Miller, VP of Action, sent a letter (we co-signed) to the Natural Resources Committee urging them to advance the resolution to the General File. She also sent an action alert to all LWVNE members encouraging them to contact their senators, especially if their senators were on any of the committees.

Lincoln Earth Day- April 25 – Nebraska Innovation Campus

We are excited about leading the effort for LWVNE’s booth at Lincoln Earth Day in April. An update to consider is that we can host voter registration at our booth if the board is in favor. Other themes we hope to promote:

- Promoting the 100th anniversary of the 19 amendment
- Who is the LWVUS?
- What is their stance on the environmental issues?
- Collaborating with our earth friendly organizations
- VOTE411.org
- + educational activities surrounding our programs on Natural Resources

We are working to recruit individuals to help staff the booth 10am-2pm since LWVNE annual meeting is April 25, 2020.
Social Policy Co-Directors Bridget Claborn and Carol Dennison tracked twelve legislative bills that were singled out at the February 1 Legislative Priority Board Meeting. LB 230 was the only priority bill of the Social Policy Committee that made it into law. LB230 bans the use of room confinement in juvenile facilities, except when necessary to eliminate a juvenile’s substantial and immediate risk of harm to self or others. This was an important protection for juveniles in custody.

- LB 948 would require insurance coverage of essential breast cancer screening services for certain groups of women who were at higher risk of cancer. Testimony was submitted, but the bill did not advance.
- LB 970 would limit the total out-of-pocket costs to patients with insulin drug prescriptions to $100 per each 30-day supply, regardless of the amount or type that is needed to fulfill the prescription. Testimony was submitted, unfortunately, for many Nebraskans who find it more and more difficult to cover the ever-increasing costs of their disease, this bill did move out of committee.
- LB 872 seeks to repeal the language in LB 209 that required both physicians and the state to provide unsafe and inaccurate information to patients regarding medical abortion. Testimony was submitted that cited insufficient scientific studies to support the assumptions that Medical abortions can be reversed after the first drug mifepristone has been administered.
- LB 1049 would increase the initial eligibility threshold for the Nebraska Child Care Subsidy from 130% of federal poverty level (FPL) to 150% of FPL. Increasing eligibility allows families to continue to receive subsidies for child care costs, while parents transition to better employment and wages. Critics say the projected costs, at over $10 million annually, were too high. Proponents note most, if not all, of the costs could be covered with federal dollars.
- LB 915 would increase the minimum wage of tipped workers to $4.50/hr. Letters were sent to committee members in support of LB 915, but the bill did not advance.
- LB 932 would require expansion of the medical assistance program (Medicaid expansion) as prescribed no later than October 1, 2020. This bill would press the Department of Health and Human Services to put Medicare Expansion in place by a set deadline rather than delay further as allowed by recent federal guidelines. LWV-NE members lobbied for the bill on Legislative Day, but it was not designated as a priority bill for this session.
- LB 849 clarifies eligibility in the Young Adult Bridge to Independence Program, which supports former state wards in transitioning to adulthood. Changes to age requirements extend eligibility for the Bridge to Independence program to native youth aging out of Tribal Court proceedings at the age of majority as defined by the Tribe, to mend the year gap in supports between ages 18 and 19 due to the State age of majority. This bill is on General File and the co-directors encourage letters of support to state senators at that time.
- LB 941, Creates Nebraska Youth in Care Bill of Rights; provides youth in care with a list of rights related to services, connection to family, transition planning, & grievances. It also ensures youth in care are expressly informed of these rights. This bill is still in committee.
- LB 851, Extend Medicaid coverage to children age 19, failed in committee due to the large fiscal note of $221,074,112. The bill required the continuous eligibility of minors without additional review and regardless of changes in resources or income, with annual eligibility reviews up to age 19.
- LB 872 seeks to repeal the language in LB 209 that required both physicians and the state to provide unsafe and inaccurate information to patients in re to continuing a medical abortion. Testimony was submitted that cited insufficient scientific studies to support the assumptions that Medical abortions can be reversed after the first drug mifepristone has been administered. Also, the legislation violates the principals supported in Roe v, Wade that medical decisions are between a woman and her doctor. The bill remains in committee.
- LB 1020 changes provisions relating to discrimination under the Nebraska Fair Housing Act. This bill broadens lawful sources of income including, but not limited to income derived from social security, child support, foster care subsidies, alimony, veterans’ benefits, or any other form of federal, state or local public general assistance or housing assistance. The bill remains in committee.
- LB 753 creates the Audiology and Speech Language Pathology Interstate Compact. This compact means that any Audiologist or Speech-Language Pathologist with a license to practice in their home state could travel to a member state of the compact and practice their trade using what is known as a compact privilege without having to test or get a separate license in that remote state. This can support more needed practitioners in rural areas for these medical and educational needs. This bill depends on the cooperation of adjacent states and more to first create the compact. It appears to be a long-term effort. The bill remains in committee.
VICE PRESIDENT ACTION REPORT
By Sherry Miller

Legislative Day was a success! So many interested, engaged Leaguers came to be briefed and carry our message on our Priority Bills to every state senator. They were introduced from the balcony and got to see the League’s 100th birthday display. Thank you, MaryLee Moulton and team, for all your hard work to develop this attractive and informative display.

My thanks to Sharon Nemeth and Kate High for helping me locate a meeting place at the First Baptist Church of Lincoln. My sincere thanks to FBLC for accommodating us.

League members shared the four Priority Bills selected for this session:
LB 996 to create the Broadband Data Improvement Program and insure internet access to Greater Nebraska. Senator Brandt has named his bill as his priority, which has been debated and advanced to Select File. This is a long overdue response to the needs of many Nebraskans lacking reliable, fast internet service.

LB 1207 to establish procedures to guarantee fair redistricting after each decennial census. Unfortunately, the bill remains in the Executive Board Committee and may not be advanced, leading to the possibility that an initiative petition effort will go forward to place the issue on the November ballot. The “second house” of the Unicameral will lead this effort.

LB 932 to require that Medicaid expansion will happen no later than October 1, 2020. Medicaid expansion was approved by the voters in 2018; application for a waiver to impose work and other conditions upon recipients has been submitted to the federal government. This has delayed providing insurance to individuals who don’t have insurance and earn too much to qualify for regular Medicaid. This bill remains in the Health and Human Services Committee.

LB 283 to provide for a Climate Change Study. Senator McCollister has made this his priority bill and it has advanced to General File. Priority bills should receive time for debate on the floor, but we have been warned that this is not guaranteed.

When the board of directors selected our Legislative Day priority bills, we also selected a group of second tier priority bills. Directors for the portfolios of Education, Government, Health, Mental/Behavioral Health, Natural Resources, Social Policy, Voters Service, and Women’s Health/Reproductive Health, have been monitoring the status of these bills. Many letters of testimony have been written and submitted to the appropriate committees during the hearings. These letters can be found on the League website at www.lwv-ne.org. I encourage you to visit the website regularly for updates. My heartfelt thanks to the directors for their diligence in not only writing letters, but also appearing in person with testimony on behalf of the League.

CALLING FOR LEAGUE VOLUNTEERS TO HELP US TAKE VOTE411 STATEWIDE!
Caryl Guisinger & Toni Monette
LWV-NE, Voter Services Co-Directors

By March 3rd, the Voter Services directors will have identified all—or almost all—of the candidates running for office in all 93 counties across Nebraska.

Vote411 is an automated system that requires a candidate’s email address, but the current Nebraska statute does not require securing a candidate’s email when they file for office. So we are asking League members to volunteer to contact candidates directly for their email address.

We hope to present legislation in 2021 that will modify the candidate’s filing form that will require their email address for future elections, which would negate the need for this type of outreach.

During the first three weeks of March, our League member volunteers will call candidates in contested races to secure candidates’ email. What better introduction to the LWV than for candidates to receive a personal phone call congratulating them on taking this step to represent their community and/or state?

We currently have a small number of volunteers, but we are seeking about at least a dozen more. A calling script, instructions, and access to the candidate information will be provided to volunteers.

Will you volunteer to reach out to candidates?
If you are interested, please contact Toni or Caryl at: voterserviceslwvne@gmail.com
The 7th League of Women Voters of Nebraska Annual Meeting will be held at the Seward Civic Center in Seward, Nebraska. The meeting sign-in begins at 9:30 am with a continental breakfast, followed by a 10:00 am call to order. A luncheon and entertainment arranged by the League of Women Voters of Seward County is scheduled for 12:30 pm. Registration is $25, which covers the cost of morning refreshments, the buffet luncheon that will include at least one vegetarian entrée, and materials for the meeting.

If you plan to attend, please send $25 payable to LWVNE with the form below BY Wednesday, APRIL 15 (no one will be available to receive registrations after this date) to

Sharon Nemeth, LWVNE Office Administrator, 4600 Valley Road, Ste 306, Lincoln, NE 68510

NAME(S) _____________________________________________________________________
ADDRESS _____________________________________________________  ZIP __________
TELEPHONE ________________________ E-MAIL _________________________________

_____ I want an ELECTRONIC copy of the Convention workbook instead of the printed one; my email is provided for delivery on April 17. I will print it out myself.

_____ $25 enclosed for each person [you may register online at www.lwv-ne.org instead]

_____ Also enclosed is an additional tax-deductible donation of $__________.

LWVNE BYLAWS ARTICLE IX ANNUAL MEETING

Section 2. Voting Body.
a) The voting body shall consist of members from local Leagues who are current in Per Member Payment (PMP) to LWVNE and members-at-large whose LWVNE dues are current, who are properly registered, and who are in attendance.
b) No member shall vote in more than one capacity, and there shall be no proxy voting.

Section 3. Powers. The Annual Meeting shall consider and authorize for action a Program, shall elect officers in the odd years, shall adopt a budget for the ensuing year, and shall transact such other business as may be presented.

Section 4. Quorum. A majority of voting members in attendance shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the Annual Meeting provided that at least two local Leagues are represented and, in addition, two elected officers and two on-board directors are present.
CONGRATULATIONS TO DEBORAH TURNER!

We are excited to spread the word that Dr. Deborah Turner has been nominated for President of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Deborah is a LWV-Greater Omaha member who moved here two years ago from Des Moines, where she had served as President of the Des Moines Metro League and also Co-President of the Iowa League.

In 2018 she was elected to the board of the League of Women Voters - US and has stayed busy in that role, attending conventions in her liaison states, serving on several committees, attending board meetings and speaking about the League.

Consider applying to be a delegate to LWV’s national convention June 25 to 28. This is an historic year for the League of Women Voters, and a proud moment for Nebraska!