



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA VOTER

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Winter 2018

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sherry Miller, President

Season's Greetings! Enjoy this interlude between Thanksgiving and convening of the state legislature in January. There will be many challenges for LWVNE as we monitor bills regarding voter suppression, election reform, health insurance, water quality, redistricting reform, financing public education, and much more. I encourage you to become acquainted with the legislative website (Google Nebraska legislature), which is a very user friendly way to get to know your senators, monitor bills, and mark your calendar for hearings. I also recommend Public TV live streaming coverage of the Unicameral.

Be sure to mark your calendar for February 20th, when we will once again gather at the capitol for briefings, observe debate in the chamber, visit ALL senators, and enjoy a delicious lunch at the Governor's Mansion, where we will learn more about redistricting reform from our guest Senator Burke Harr, who introduced LB 216 on behalf of the League. Your first invitation can be found in this issue.

LWVUS continues its journey of transformation, preparing to remain one of our nation's leading advocacy organizations as it approaches its 100th birthday. The national board adopted new mission and vision statements, which will be used in all correspondence and on our website. They are:

MISSION STATEMENT: *"Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy"*
VISION STATEMENT: *"We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate."*

I hope you agree these are worthy ideals to live up to. Let's go to work in 2018!

NATURAL RESOURCES NOTES

Janece Mollhoff

I thought things would settle down this fall, but it just stays busy in the world of conservation and sustainability. **I have a few action items in my report this time.**

The Board approved the report from the Water Study committee, and we just need to decide if there should be any Program changes based on our findings. You can find the report at <http://www.lwv-ne.org/> click on Our Studies on the left side of the page. **Let us know which findings you think should be included in the LWVNE Program.**

As part of the Nebraska Clean Energy group, I have been working with Nebraska Wildlife Federation and others on drafting a clean energy plan for Nebraska that achieves basically what the federal Clean Power Plan would have done to decrease greenhouse gas emissions in Nebraska. The plan is called the Husker Power Plan and shows how Nebraska can feasibly add wind and solar, increase energy efficiency, and decrease demand. By doing so we could close the oldest and dirtiest coal plants within the next 5 years. With the current cost of new wind and solar currently less than maintaining old plants, this will actually save Nebraskans money as well. LWVNE logo will appear on the final plan, and it will be used to inform Legislators and Public Power Officials. There will be a link on the LWVNE website as soon as it is final.

The Public Service Commission voted 3-2 in favor of a Mainline Alternative Route for the KXL Pipeline. It says something that both of the "no" votes were women, one Republican and one Democrat. This decision did not give TransCanada their Preferred Route, and opens a lot of legal questions since this Alternative Route has not been fully studied for environmental impact, nor were all of the landowners notified prior to the hearings. It may be 2 years before the alternative route will be cleared for building. TransCanada is supposed to announce in December whether it will even go ahead with the project.

The Papio-Missouri River NRD is proposing new guidelines for mitigating nitrogen contamination of groundwater. **Omaha League members are encouraged to attend the public hearings or contact the NRD to voice support of the new management plan.** It goes as far as is allowed by the Legislature to control fertilizer application in at-risk areas. This action will address some of the concern about the Premium Poultry plant being built in Fremont and the amount of manure that will be spread across the watershed that feeds Omaha. **Other League members outside Omaha are**

encouraged to contact your own NRD and ask if they have a groundwater management plan that regulates fertilizer application. <https://www.nrdnet.org/nrds/find-your-nrd>

On a high note, Congressman Bacon and Congressman Fortenberry voted last month to defeat an amendment to the Defense Act that would have prevented the Department of Defense (DOD) from analyzing and addressing climate change. Congressman Smith voted to prevent the DOD from considering climate change as a threat to national security. With 46 Republicans voting with the majority of Democrats, the vote is an indication that there is a “bipartisan majority in Congress of members who understand that climate change is a real threat to our communities, our economy, and our military readiness.” **Please write a note to thank Rep. Bacon and Rep. Fortenberry for taking this stand, and to Rep. Smith if you are in his district to express disagreement with his vote.**

SOCIAL POLICY ACTION TEAM REPORT

John Else

The Social Policy Action Team is preparing for the identification of continuing and new bills that will be priorities in the 2018 Legislature. We are adding a few new members to our Action Team in preparation for 2018.

We are also making special preparations for pushing for the passing (first out of the Executive Board—the review committee for the bill—and by the Legislature) of LB216 The Redistricting Act. Its sponsor, Senator Burke Harr of Omaha, has agreed to several minor edits that Kate High and John Else identified in a careful reading of the bill. Kate High has taken significant initiatives in this effort, preparing a wonderful document “A Practical Guide to Redistricting-LB 216” (See insert). She also drafted a letter to all State Senators regarding the importance and the structure of the bill. Senator Harr has made LB216 his top priority bill for the session.

The Omaha LWV conducted a Dine and Discuss session on redistricting on October 30. Senator Harr, who introduced LB216, and Senator McCollister, a member of the Executive Board, presented and participated in a lively discussion.

With the assistance of three LWV women from Hastings (Phyllis Salyards, Laura Schneider, and Judy Reimer), we planned and conducted a public event at Hastings College on November 29. Sherry Miller accompanied me. There were about 40 people present, including a panel of Rachel Schmalz (Hastings College student and the master of ceremonies), Bob Amyot, Political Science Professor, and State Senator John Kuehn (who is a member of the Executive Board and also a professor at Hastings College). A stimulating discussion.

From there, Sherry and I drove to Kearney, where we had a morning breakfast with a great group of Kearney activists, including representatives from the Kearney Action Network, Kearney Indivisible, and UNK Political Science Department. We planned an LB216 presentation for Kearney on January 25, and they promised 80-100 people.

Our fourth priority is a meeting in Norfolk, and we are making contacts there for a planning meeting with local folks.

Our first goal for LB216 is to obtain the legislative committee (the Executive Board) approval of the bill and submission to the Legislative Floor. There are nine members of the Executive Board: Watermeier (chair), Kuehn, Bolz, Chambers, Crawford, Hughes, Larson, McCollister, and Scheer. Four members (Bolz, Chambers, Crawford, and McCollister) appear to support the bill. We need a fifth vote.

We need everyone’s help on this very important bill.

Have you called.....?

ACTION ALERT

Darci Garcia, Vice President for Action

When you get an Action Alert from the state League asking you to make a call to your Congressional Representative, do you call? It takes just a few moments to tell him or her or a staff person that you are a constituent calling with a specific concern. State that concern, state how it impacts you, your family, community, and ask for a vote to pass or defeat the legislation in question. Calls are the quickest way to make your opinion known, although e-mails are also counted.

There is an urgency for making calls now as the U.S. House and Senate seek to pass tax reform before the end of the year. Two bills have been passed, but reconciliation must take place, so there is still time to call. Whether you are concerned about health care, tax deductions, the repeal of the Johnson Amendment, or hidden goodies for special interests, please call!

Congress must also decide what to do about Dreamers, young people covered by DACA which was rescinded by the president. If you support Dreamers, call!

Funding for CHIP, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, has expired, leaving states facing the difficult choice of finding the dollars to continue the program or cutting it. If you support providing health insurance for prenatal care, infants, and children, Call!

AND REMEMBER, YOU ARE CALLING AS AN INDIVIDUAL, NOT ON BEHALF OF THE LEAGUE.
YOUR VOICE IS WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR.

U.S. Senator Ben Sasse
DC office: 202/224-4224
Lincoln: 402/476-1400
Omaha: 402/550-8040

U.S. Senator Deb Fischer
DC office: 202/224-6551
Lincoln: 402/441-4600
Omaha: 402/391-3411

Rep. Don Bacon
DC office: 202/225-4155
Omaha: 402/938-0300

Rep. Jeff Fortenberry
DC office: 202/225-4806
Lincoln: 402/438-1598
or 308/633-6333.

Rep. Adrian Smith
DC: 202/225-6435
NE: 308/384-3900

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK!!!

INTERIM HEARINGS OF LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTIONS

ROOM 1507, STATE CAPITOL

December 7, 2017 1:00 P.M.

Eileen Durgin-Clinchard, Government Director Off-board

On December 7th, the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee held a hearing on LR 132, introduced by Senator Murante.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to study elections conducted by and on behalf of political subdivisions. The issues to be studied include the potential effect of requiring all such elections to be held in conjunction with the statewide primary and statewide general elections, including the potential effect on voter turnout, voter knowledge regarding local candidates, campaign finance and strategies, election officials and volunteers, property taxes, and the confidence of the public in the election process. The study shall include a review of elections conducted by and on behalf of various sizes of political subdivisions held in conjunction with the statewide primary and statewide general elections and elections conducted by and on behalf of political subdivisions held at other times. The study may review other alternatives including conducting elections by mail.

LR 182, also introduced by Senator Murante, should be quite interesting.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to study the extent of voter fraud in Nebraska and possible methods of detecting and combating voter fraud. This study is needed in order to preserve the relative power of each eligible citizen's right to vote, to modernize the election infrastructure of this state, and to ensure the integrity of the elections of this state so as to preserve public confidence in the legitimacy of elected government. The study shall include an examination of the following:

- (1) The extent to which voter fraud occurs in the State of Nebraska;
- (2) How an individual could commit voter fraud;
- (3) How voter fraud is investigated;
- (4) The extent to which such investigations occur; (
- 5) Possible ways to improve the detection of voter fraud; and(
- 6) Any other matters relevant to preserving the election integrity.

You are invited to come observe our senators at work between sessions.

EMPOWERING VOTERS, DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

SUGGESTED BYLAWS AMENDMENTS DUE JANUARY 28

According to Article XIV, one method of amending the bylaws is by a two-thirds vote at any LWVNE Annual Meeting, using the following procedures: Proposals for change shall be submitted by any local League board or committee appointed by the president to the board of directors at least three months prior to the annual meeting. All such proposed amendments together with the recommendations of the state board shall be sent to the presidents of local Leagues and members-at-large at least 30 days prior to Annual Meeting.

The bylaws are on the LWVNE website in the left-hand column. Please review the bylaws and send your proposed changes to LWVNE Office Administrator Sharon Nemeth (lwv-ne@inebraska.com). The first three articles must remain the same to be consistent with LWVUS requirements. The deadline for submitting proposed amendments is January 28. If you have questions, please contact Caroline Sedlacek, Bylaws Committee Chair (csedlacek@cox.net).

CALLING ALL MEMBERS

All Member Call January 4: Legislation Discussion

It's time for another New Member - All Member Conference Call!

Join President Sherry Miller and other League leaders in a discussion regarding:

- Our upcoming Legislative Day on February 20
- The Redistricting Bill we support
- Our Money in Politics research
- Observing the Unicameral in person or TV/online

Thursday, January 4

7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Call

712-775-7031

access code: 874-022-658 #

An rsvp to lindabduckworth@gmail.com is appreciated. We hope you can join us on the call!

INTRIGUED BY LEAGUE?? READY TO BE ACTIVE?? JOIN A COMMITTEE!!

EDUCATION:	Mary Ann Sturek, Chair	masturek@q.com
HEALTH CARE:	Phyllis Salyards, Chair	hpsalyar@inebraska.com
SOCIAL POLICY:	John Else, Chair	elsejf@gmail.com
NATURAL RESOURCES:	Janece Mohlhoff, Chair	wjmohlhoff@windstream.net
GOVERNMENT:	Eileen Durgin-Clinchard, Off-board Directpr	jeaneileen@gmail.com
LEGISLATIVE DAY: 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION:	Darci Garcia, VP Action	darci_m_garcia@yahoo.com
	Sherry Miller, Chair	kitty66hawk@aol.com

These chairs would welcome your input and willingness to help research, monitor, and take action on the important issues of their portfolios. Remember the Legislature convenes in mere weeks!!

PSSST! HAVE YOU SEEN THE NEW LWVUS WEBSITE?
YOU'VE GOTTA CHECK IT OUT!! YOU'LL BE BLOWN AWAY!!

HOW TO MAKE CHANGES IN THE LWVNE PROGRAM

Local Leagues and individual members may suggest LWVNE program changes for adoption at the Annual Meeting set for April 28, 2018, in Hastings. Any suggested changes may be sent to LWVNE Office Administrator Sharon Nemeth at lwv-ne@inebraska.com; the bylaws require that they be submitted by February 28 (two months prior to Annual Meeting). All suggestions will be compiled for the Board to make its recommendation on them at its March 10, 2018, meeting. Only minor changes may be made without undertaking a study. Recommendations that the Water Study Committee is suggesting be incorporated into the 2018–2019 LWVNE Program have been distributed to local League presidents. The current 2017–2018 Program is on our Web site (www.lwv-ne.org) in the left-hand column.

A HUGE THANK YOU!!

It's a pleasure to announce that our annual fundraiser for the League Education Fund has concluded with generous gifts to the Fund and to the Sandra K. Powell Memorial Fund for Membership Leadership Development. These gifts will enable League to educate our membership and the public at large on issues of importance, as well as working with women and men interested in forming Leagues in their communities.

Thank you!!

A CLIMATE CHANGE REMINDER

Former State Senator Ken Haar is available to present his Climate Change 101 to interested groups. His contact is kenhaar@hotmail.com. The slide show is informative for ages 10 and up.

CALENDAR 2018

JANUARY 3	105th Legislature convenes, 2nd regular session
JANUARY 15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Recognition
JANUARY 13	LWVNE Board meeting (Jan 20th snow date)
JANUARY 27	Legislative Priority Setting meeting (Febr. 3 snow date)
FEBR 1 - 28	Black History Month
FEBRUARY 14	LWVNE Birthday
FEBRUARY 15	Susan B. Anthony birthday
FEBRUARY 19	Presidents' Day
FEBRUARY 20	LWVNE Legislative Day
MARCH 1	Nebraska Statehood Day
MARCH 2	Read Across America Day
MARCH 8	International Women's Day
MARCH 10	LWVNE Board Meeting
APRIL 28	LWVNE Annual Meeting
MAY 15	Nebraska Primary Election

MEMBERSHIP IN THE LEAGUE A HOLIDAY GIFT? WHY NOT?

Sherry Miller - President

It is well known that numbers count when testifying on behalf of an organization. If a person can say "I represent so many members," it adds clout to what is being said.

That being said, the holidays are a great time to increase our members in the League by giving a membership to someone--a spouse, a grown child, a high school senior, a friend, a niece or nephew. My daughter-in-law was thrilled to receive a membership in the Lincoln League last year.

If the recipient does not live near a local League, consider giving a member-at-large gift. Go even further, and give a gift membership to someone who doesn't even live in Nebraska. After all, membership counts, here and all across the U.S.

**PSSST! HAVE YOU SEEN THE NEW LWVUS WEBSITE?
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A Practical Guide to Redistricting-LB 216

<p>Director Legislative Research Office (LRO)</p>	<p>Independent Redistricting Citizen's Advisory Commission</p>	<p>Legislature</p>
<p>Acquires necessary information, material and staff for development of redistricting maps.</p> <p>Acts as a liaison between the Commission, Secretary of State, and the Legislature.</p> <p>Uses census data to assign ideal district population for each of the six public bodies: US House of Representatives, Legislature, Supreme Court, Board of Regents, Public Service Commission, and State Board of Education.</p> <p>Develops maps for review by the Commission.</p> <p>Delivers maps illustrating the Commission's six adopted redistricting plans to the Clerk of the Legislature.</p> <p>Makes public redistricting processes and plans including creation and maintenance of a website.</p> <p>Delivers to the Clerk of the Legislature the Commission's report of the four statewide public hearings.</p> <p>Submits redistricting plans passed by the Legislature to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>Submits a revised map to the Clerk of the Legislature for any redistricting plan which was not passed or governor's veto overridden.</p>	<p>Consists of seven members: Six are selected from the three Congressional District Legislative Caucuses. In each Congressional Caucus, the members of one party (Republican) select one member and the members of the other party (Democratic) select one member. The seventh member, the chair, is elected by these six members and is not associated with any political party.</p> <p>Exists only for the time period needed to complete redistricting plans but may be reconstituted in the event of a special legislative session or successful legal challenge of any part of the redistricting plans.</p> <p>Complies with NADC regulations and subject to Open Meetings and Records Management Acts</p> <p>Follows the principles as defined in Redistricting Act in development of redistricting plans.</p> <p>Adopts by majority vote the six redistricting plans submitted by the LRO.</p> <p>Conducts four public hearings across the state on the six redistricting plans after the plans have been submitted to the legislature.</p> <p>Submits a report of the public hearings to the Legislature including written and oral public statements.</p>	<p>Executive Board of the Legislative Council:</p> <p>Funds redistricting process with prior approval from Redistricting Fund created by Legislature.</p> <p>Coordinates selection of members of the commission by legislative caucus.</p> <p>Adopts procedural and substantive guidelines for the commission.</p> <p>Introduces a separate legislative bill for each of the six redistricting plans adopted by the Commission.</p> <p>Places each of the six legislative bills directly on the General File.</p> <p>Prepares a final redistricting bill and places it on the General File for any of the six district plans after it has been rejected twice.</p> <p>Legislature</p> <p>Votes within five days after introduction to approve or deny the individual redistricting bills.</p>
<p>For any of the six redistricting plans not passed or a governor's veto not overridden, the Director submits a revised map to the Clerk of the Legislature and a bill is again placed on the General File. For any redistricting bill rejected twice, the Executive Board prepares the final redistricting plan.</p>		

REDISTRICTING TERMINOLOGY AND CRITERIA

TERM	DEFINITION
Redistricting	Redistricting is the process of redrawing the boundaries of electoral districts. The Nebraska State Legislature is responsible (but can delegate some responsibilities) for redrawing the districts for these elective offices in Nebraska: US House of Representatives, State Legislature, Supreme Court, Public Service Commission, University of Nebraska Board of Regents and State Board of Education.
Congressional Reapportionment	Every 10 years Congress must adjust (<i>reapportion</i>) the distribution of Congressional seats among the 50 states. The House of Representatives has 435 seats divided among 50 states. The seats are divided or apportioned according to population, as determined by the Census, except that each state is assured of one congressional seat. Nebraska currently has three Congressional representatives,
CRITERIA FOR DRAWING DISTRICTS	
Avoid Gerrymandering	Gerrymandering is the practice of drawing electoral district lines to favor an incumbent, one political party, or some other specific group. In short, the designs pick the voters for the representative rather than the voters choosing their representative.
Population equality	Federal law requires political districts to have virtually the same number of residents, so that every person's vote carries equal weight-- "one person, one vote."
Compact	To the extent permitted by natural or political boundaries, districts should be square, rectangular, or hexagonal in shape--not elongated, spread out, or jagged.
Contiguous	All areas within a district must be physically adjacent.
Comply with Voting Rights Act	The 1965 Voting Rights Act prohibits discrimination in voting laws which result in discrimination against racial, ethnic or language minorities.
Communities of interest	Respect communities of interest, i.e., with shared characteristics, interests, or needs.
Avoid Cracking and Packing	Avoid these gerrymandering methods, which minimize the impact of a voting bloc. Packing concentrates members of a group in a single district, thereby allowing the other party to win the remainder of the districts. Cracking splits a bloc among multiple districts, so as to dilute their impact and to prevent them from constituting a majority in any of the districts.
Geographic & Political Boundaries	Where possible, district lines should follow permanent and easily recognized features, such as rivers, highways, streets; should coincide with census tract boundaries, main city, town, & county boundaries, and not subdivide any city block.
Other	Districts should not be drawn to favor any political party, incumbent in office, or any other person or group. The political affiliation of registered voters, previous election results, or other demographic data should not be part of the consideration in drawing the maps.

Convention 2018



League of Women Voters of the United States®
53RD NATIONAL CONVENTION

CREATING A
**MORE
PERFECT
DEMOCRACY**



Thurs., June 28 – Sun., July 1, 2018 at Hilton Chicago - 720 S. Michigan Ave.

League of Women Voters of Nebraska (LWVNE)

LEGISLATIVE DAY

at the State Capitol and Governor’s Mansion

Tuesday, February 20, 2018

Featured luncheon speaker:

Senator Burke Harr

Legislative District 8

“Nebraska Legislature: LB216 Redistricting Act”

- 8:30 to 9:00 Registration and Refreshments, Room 1023, **State Capitol**
- 9:00 to 10:15 The Legislative process; LWVNE & Senators’ Legislative priorities
 Senator Tony Vargas on Voter Registration Reform
 Senator Justin Wayne on Election Laws
 Senator Sue Crawford on Family Medical Leave
- 10:15 to 11:50 Visit with senators, observe Unicameral in session, tour Capitol
- 11:50 to 1:00 Luncheon (menu TBA) at the **Governor’s Mansion**

Deadline for Reservations is **Friday, February 9, 2018**

*Luncheon seating capacity is 64; the first 63 PAID registrants will be guaranteed a place.
A waiting list will be used.*

*******YOU MAY PAY ONLINE AT** www.lwv-ne.org beginning mid-January*****

To make your reservation, please fill out the form below, detach, write a check payable to LWVNE for the total number of reservations, and mail the reservation form and check to:

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

Questions?
Call: 402-475-1411
or
Email: lwv-ne@inebraska.com

Name _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____

Guest (s) _____ Legislative District # _____

_____ \$30 per registration, includes morning refreshments, workshop, and luncheon

OR

_____ \$20 per registration, luncheon only

_____ I want a vegetarian luncheon (menu TBA)

OR

_____ \$10 per registration, morning only (refreshments and workshop)

_____ Enclosed is a separate tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____ to the LWVNE Education Fund



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
Of NEBRASKA**

NEBRASKA VOTER

Sherry Miller, President
Annette Conser, Editor
4600 Valley Road, Suite 306
Lincoln, NE 68510

402-475-1411
lwg-ne.org

Address Service Requested

TIME DATED MATERIAL - DO NOT DELAY

BE SURE TO PUT THIS ON YOUR CALENDAR

The Second Annual Lincoln Women's Policy Summit will be held on Friday, January 5, 2018, at the College of Law on the UN-L East Campus. Over 90 men and women participated in the first Summit in 2016, so it is exciting to invite you to the next one.

Topics of the day will include Title X/Sex Education, Women and the Prison System, Redistricting Reform Act, Sexual Harrassment in the Workplace, and an Advocacy Workshop.

Sponsors and presenters include Meg Mikolajczyk of Planned Parenthood of the Heartland; Karen Bell Dancy of the YWCA-Lincoln; Sherry Miller of the League of Women Voters of Nebraska; Kathie Uhrmacher of the Women's Foundation of Lincoln; Zack Burgin of Civic Engagement Table; and Danielle Conrad of the ACLU.

Registration is \$10.00, \$5.00 for students and scholarships will be available.

FAREWELL TO LOWEN KRUSE

Lowen Kruse, long time member of the League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha, passed away Nov 26th. His passion for racial justice, immigrant issues, feminism, peace, and LGBTQ equality was seen in frequent letters to the World Herald. Rev. Kruse served in the Nebraska Legislature, representing District 13, from 2000-2008.