

# The Rhode Island Voter

The newsletter of the  
League of Women Voters of Rhode Island  
172 Taunton Ave., Suite 8,  
East Providence, RI 02914



April 2015

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## Nellie Gorbea to Speak at LWVRI Convention on June 13

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island will hold its biennial convention on Saturday, June 13, 2015, at the Ray Conference Center at Butler Hospital from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Rhode Island Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea will address the convention.

The convention is open to all members. Member delegates will approve the budget and by-laws change, and update and approve program. The delegates will also choose a new president, secretary, first vice president, and three directors. The nominating committee report and other convention material is found beginning on page 8. The annual meeting business and updates on new activities will complete the morning's program.

Nellie Gorbea was born in Puerto Rico, moving to Rhode Island in the mid-1990s, and is the first Hispanic to win a statewide office in New England. Secretary Gorbea graduated from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and holds a master's degree in public administration from Columbia University. She was elected in November 2015 on a platform that focused on modernizing voting and elections in the state, among other issues. She was not unfamiliar with the workings of the Secretary of State's office, having served as deputy secretary of state from 2002-2006 under Matthew A. Brown.

In April, Secretary Gorbea presented the "Voting and Elections Modernization Act of 2015" to the RI Legislature. Among

other items, the legislation would allow in-person early voting.

Convention begins at 10 a.m. sharp; registration opens at 9:45. A boxed lunch of assorted sandwiches including a vegetarian option will be served at noon. Registration is \$20 and the deadline is June 4.

The Secretary's speech will begin at 1 p.m. and is free and open to the public, so please invite friends and colleagues to come and hear Secretary Gorbea.

Delegates to the convention will vote on a minor bylaws change that allows the LWVRI Board to vote on issues via phone and e-mail. Although only delegates chosen by the local Leagues will vote on the agenda items, members can caucus with their delegates and any member may speak during the "Direction to the Board" segment. Convention also provides an opportunity for members to learn firsthand about upcoming League programs and to meet League members from throughout the state. You may also register on line at [www.lwvri.org](http://www.lwvri.org) and make your payment by credit card. To learn about serving as a delegate at convention, contact your local League president.



Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea

### Call To Action

## LWVRI Makes Major Push to Strengthen RI's Ethics Commission

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island has lent its support to two bills that would strengthen RI's Ethics Commission and restore the jurisdiction of the Commission over the General Assembly. The League believes that Representative Marcello's House Resolution No. 5374 and Senator O'Neill's Senate Resolution No. 56 will do just that. The Providence Journal in its April 23 editorial concluded that "Citizens should urge their representatives to support reform. Ethics Commission oversight of lawmakers should be put to the voters of Rhode Island." This editorial was just one of many requests calling for the public to take action on the important issue of ethics in politics in Rhode Island.

Since 2009 when the state courts weakened the Com-

mission, the League of Women Voters of RI has testified on the necessity of passing legislation that would allow Rhode Island voters to decide this issue. At this time our legislators are policing themselves, and these bills would assure that the Ethics Commission would have power to rule on questionable activities.

Common Cause RI Executive Director John Marion said in response to a May 4 article in the Providence Journal on public officials' travel, "In 2012 Common Cause asked the state Ethics Commission to pass rule requiring that public officials be required to disclose all travel paid for by out-

*Ethics continued page 7*

# Come to Convention & Celebrate the LWV's 95th!

by Jane W. Koster

I do hope you will join us for the annual League of Women Voters of Rhode Island's Annual Convention on June 13. (All the details of the meeting are on page 1 and pages 8-11.) Convention is an important event where members come together to elect officers and board members, vote on a budget, accept bylaws changes and adopt our program.

We hope many members will join us at 10 a.m. for the business portion of the meeting. Please remember the public is invited to hear our keynote speaker, Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea at 1 p.m., so we encourage you to spread the word. Secretary of State Gorbea, who will speak on "Voting Rights and Election Law," has taken the lead on introducing legislation that would modernize the way we register and vote. These changes would make it easier to vote and insure security of our ballots as well. Invite your friends and colleagues to come for her presentation. Not only will it be enlightening for them to learn more about this important issue, but it will also introduce them to the League and its activities.

Our Advocacy committee has been at the State House throughout this legislative session testifying on bills that would allow for online voter registration, online early voting and same day registration. We need you with us—Saturday, June 13 on the Butler Campus. Please be there. It is important that you join us in Advocacy as we improve the voting rights and voter turnout in Rhode Island.

At the State House, the issue of ethics in the General Assembly is still with us. The Legislature has been monitoring itself with no other oversight since 2009. Your state League has once again been at the State House throughout this session testifying in support of Senate 56 and House 5374. The action is fast moving, and we have been sending updates to our members and supporters via e-mail, our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/lwvrhodeisland](http://www.facebook.com/lwvrhodeisland)) and our blog (<http://lwvriaction.blogspot.com>). (If you aren't receiving these updates, please like us on Facebook and sign up on our webpage ([lwvri.org](http://lwvri.org)) to receive them.) We need your support.

As I finish my first term as president of the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island I am motivated by all we

have done in the past two years. We have increased our membership, had a strong voice in lobbying and advocating for good government alongside our partner organizations at the state and local levels, had an active role in the annual LWV New England Leadership Development Conferences, offered many forums and debates during the 2014 election season, and had wonderful attendance and participation at our League Days at the State House.

More good news is the two very energized initiatives taking place in the northern and southern most locations of our state. Many thanks to Judy Dorian, a North Providence resident and member of the LWV Providence, who is holding meetings in North Providence and Greenville for people interested in joining in the League's work. Judy declared a while back, "I cannot believe I am the only member of the League from my town of North Providence." She has already corrected that and is not stopping there. Bravo, Judy.

Also, Pam Ancheta, president of the LWV South Kingstown/Narragansett, and members Rosalie Harris and Christine Davidson have responded to several Westerly residents who have recently joined the League as they work to strengthen their voice in promoting good government in Westerly.

As I finish my first term, I would be amiss if I did not thank my board and other League leaders throughout the state who have served me and the League so well. In particular, I wish to thank Derry Riding and Susan Escherich, co-chairs of our Advocacy Committee, who track all bills coming out of the legislature and research those bills the League will support. Susan does double duty as the LWVRI board secretary. Thanks to Mary Chace who represents LWVRI on the Coalition for Reproductive Justice Board. Many thanks to Patty MacLeish, Communications Chair and *Voter* editor. Thank you, too, to LWVRI treasurer Rosemary Forbes-Woodside whose attention to detail helps keep us financially stable.

It is hard to believe that five years have passed since the 90th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters and the LWVRI when, on August 26, 2010, we celebrated the passage of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote at the beautiful and historic Marble House, home of suffragist Alva Vanderbilt Belmont. Let's do it again. The Preservation Society of Newport County has invited us to return to Marble House on August 26, 2015, at 11:00 a.m. for a 95th celebration. We hope you and your family and friends take part in the celebration with us at Marble House. The next five years will pass quickly, so we have already begun planning for the 100th anniversary in 2020. Stay tuned for details and how you can participate in both these meaningful happenings.

Thanks to you all for your continued support and belief in our mission.

## The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island

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[www.LWVRI.org](http://www.LWVRI.org) 401-434-6440

Jane Koster, President

Patty MacLeish, *Voter* Editor

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership in the League is open to any citizen of the United States. Non-citizens may become associate members. Annual dues of \$45 include automatic membership in Local, State and National Leagues. Membership forms are available at [www.LWVRI.org](http://www.LWVRI.org) or call 401-434-6440. Please join us and help promote informed citizen involvement in government.

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# League Day at the State House 2015



Top. LWFRI President Jane W. Koster presented Governor Gina Raimondo with a plaque commemorating her visit with the League.

Above. LWV Providence members Liz Head (left) and Judy Dorian (right) at League Day. Liz, president of the LWFRI Education Foundation, reported on the Fund's activities this past year.

Right. LWV South County/Narragansett President Pam Ancheta addressed the group.



This year League members made a special effort to invite their state representatives, colleagues in other good government group, and friends to League Day to learn more about the work the League is doing. The response was wonderful. More than seventy members and friends of the League attended the 2015 League Day at the State House on March 25.

LWFRI President Jane Koster welcomed all to the gathering and gave a report on the state of the League. Local League presidents and State Board members reported on their activities. Advocacy co-chairs Derry Riding and Susan Escherich reported on the current status of the issues the League is following this year. Mary Chace provided an update on women's health issues as well. President of the LWFRI Education Fund Liz Head apprised the group of the Fund's current activities. Board members Jill Kassis and Patty MacLeish reported on membership and the 2015 Convention, respectively. Linda Jenkins extended a welcome to everyone to join the LWFRI Book Club. Members and guests alike left with a renewed interest in and understanding of the League's work.

After these reports, Governor Gina Raimondo spoke to the group, and President Koster presented the governor with a memento of her first meeting with the League.



Above. Helen Taylor, LWVRI Board member and President, LWV West Bay, updated members on her League's activities.

Below. LWV South Kingston/Narragansett member Christine Davidson (left) and LWVRI Board member and past president Joanne DeVoe (right) at League Day.



## League Reaches out to Northern Rhode Island

Several parts of the state do not have local Leagues, and an effort is underway to establish a League presence in the northern part of Rhode Island. Informational meetings are underway. The first was held in the North Providence Union Free Library on April 20. Judy Dorian, Liz Head, and Maureen Romans of the LWV Providence and LWFRI President Jane Koster spoke to the attendees about the League, its activities, and plans for the future. Subsequently, the Greenville Public Library requested a similar meeting. That meeting will be held on May 18 at 6:30 p.m. in the Greenville Public Library.

If you know of individuals who might be interested in the League or learning more about it, please contact Judy Dorian ([judydorian@gmail.com](mailto:judydorian@gmail.com))

## Jill Kassis Honored by Pell Center



Congratulations to LWVRI board member Jill Kassis, who has been working on developing Leadership Matters, a program of public sector leadership development in Rhode Island. Jill was given a Certificate of Appreciation for her “commitment to serving the public good by supporting the development of public leaders in Rhode Island” during the recent Inaugural Innovation Conference. LWVRI President Jane Koster and LWVRI former president Derry Riding were in attendance. Jill is pictured here (center) with Georgie Bishop (left), President of the Public Sector Consortium, and Jim Ludes, Director of the Pell Center, at Salve Regina University. More information about the program is available at the Pell Center Web site.

## Financing Education Subcommittee Release Survey

Joanne DeVoe, Chairman LWVRI Education Subcommittee, has released the results of the survey that the subcommittee conducted. Joanne and the committee interviewed school superintendents from eleven local school districts in Rhode Island. The LWVRI conducted the survey of the local school districts during the 2013-2014 school year about the education funding formula enacted by the General Assembly in 2010. The League circulated a letter requesting survey participation to all of the school districts with the support of the RI State Superintendents Association.

The following school districts participated in survey interviews conducted by League members: Barrington, Burrillville, Chariho, East Providence, Foster-Glocester, Johnston, Pawtucket, Providence, Smithfield, Westerly and Woonsocket.

The report has been e-mailed to the superintendents. It is available on the League’s Web site ([www.lwvri.org](http://www.lwvri.org).)

## LWV Providence Conversations

City of Providence Councilwoman Mary Kay Harris (Ward 11) was the guest speaker at the LWV Providence’s “Conversation” on April 29. The topic of the meeting was “A Woman’s Perspective: A New Voice on the City Council.”



Providence Councilwoman  
Mary Kay Harris

Mary Kay Harris, Ward 11 councilwoman, has worked as a welder at Electric Boat, an executive secretary, and most recently, for 15 years, as a community organizer at DARE. She defeated an incumbent in the primary and went on to win in the general election. The councilwoman spoke about why she ran for office and the obstacles she faced.

Upcoming for the LWV Providence is its annual meeting and picnic supper on Monday, June 8, at 5:30 p.m. at 603 Angell Street, Providence. The LWV Providence conveners will provide the picnic supper, Call Liz Head (401) 351-2269 or email her at [emhead603@hotmail.com](mailto:emhead603@hotmail.com) to RSVP.



## LWV Newport County Meets with Legislators

The LWV Newport County hosted its annual Legislators Forum on March 22 at the Newport public Library. All the Senators and Assemblymembers representing Newport County voters were invited to attend. The turnout was excellent, the questions thoughtful and the meeting lively.

LWV Newport County member Erin Dollard moderated the event (above, standing) and Representative Marvin Abney and Lauren Carson were among the legislators in attendance.

## Thank You to Our Donors

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island cannot survive without the support of its members and friends. This year the generosity of thirty-nine members and friends of the League added \$2,815 to funding League activities such as keeping the state office running and supporting our lobbying efforts at the State House. The list includes all gifts received as of May 1, 2015. There's still time to give! Send your contribution to LWVRI, 172 Taunton Ave., Suite 8, East Providence, RI 02914. If you feel your name should be here and it is not, or if it is listed incorrectly, please contact our treasurer, Rosemary Forbes-Woodside, LWVRI Treasurer, 23 Skysail Ct., Jamestown, RI 02835 or e-mail [forbes.woodside@cox.net](mailto:forbes.woodside@cox.net).

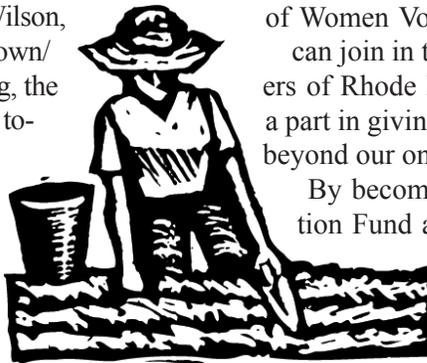
Pam Ancheta, LWV South County/Narragansett  
Rosanne Bootz, LWV West Bay  
Nancy Burroughs, LWV South County/Narragansett  
Mary and Nathan Chace, LWV Member-at-Large  
Mary Clark, LWV Providence  
Kim N. Clark  
Trudy Coxe  
Christine Davidson, LWV South County/Narragansett  
Joanne DeVoe and Tom Padwa, LWV Member-at-Large  
Beth Everett, LWV Newport County  
Barbara Feldman, LWV Providence  
Rosemary Forbes-Woodside, LWV Newport County  
Mary Alyce Gasbarro, LWV Member-at-Large  
Mary Frances Hazeltine, LWV Providence  
Marie Hennedy, LWV West Bay  
Linda Hines, LWV South County/Narragansett  
Linda Jenkins, LWV Newport County

Jill and George Kassis, LWV Newport County  
Charles Kelley, LWV Providence  
Jane and Richard Koster, LWV Newport County  
Patty and Bruce MacLeish, LWV Newport County  
Marilyn Malina  
Elizabeth McNab  
Joan Moore, LWV Member-at-Large  
Nancy Nadeau  
Jane Rankin, LWV West Bay  
Joan Retsinas, LWV Providence  
Derry Riding, LWV Bristol County  
Christine Townsend, LWV Providence  
Norman Turrill, LWV Oregon  
Karen Usas  
Beth Weiss  
Susan and Roger Wells, LWV Newport County  
Harriet Wrenn, LWV Providence

## Spring! Now is the Time to Sow the Seeds of the Future

Following the difficult winter of 2014-2015, the weather is finally warm and sunny. It's spring and time to plant seeds and see them grow into beautiful, useful and (sometimes) tasty plants. It can also be a time to plant the seeds of future success for the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island Education Fund. In 1984, the LWVRI Education Fund received a bequest of \$74,000 from the estate of Susan B. Wilson, a leading member of the LWV South Kingstown/Narragansett. Over the years, with wise investing, the money has grown and currently supports grants totaling approximately \$9,000 per year.

The Education Fund supports League activities (such as the Website) and the funding of local candidates debates and public forums. It also, when funding allows, supports community groups who organize and sponsor local civic and voter education events. The LWVRI's efforts to bring information to voters was supported by the Ed Fund. The LWVRI's participation in VOTE411 during the 2014 election season, which allowed citizens from across the state find information on-line about local and state candidates, would not have been possible without support from the Fund. The League's election year activities, including candidates forums throughout the state, were also bolstered through grants. For the last seven years, the Education Fund has also sponsored the Susan B. Wilson Civic Education Merit Award (which is admin-



istered by the LWV South Kingstown-Narragansett) given to teachers who design interesting and intriguing classroom activities focusing on civic education.

Susan B. Wilson planted the seed and all of Rhode Island has enjoyed the harvest.

Here we are in 2015 and in five more years the League of Women Voters will be 100 years young! Anyone can join in to assure that the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island Education Fund survives to play a part in giving grants to non-profit organizations well beyond our one hundredth birthday.

By becoming a LEGACY member of the Education Fund and naming the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island Education Fund in your will you will know that the seed you planted will help the League survive for our sons, daughters and grandchildren!

This is indeed planting a seed for the future success of the League. If you currently have a will or trust, you may add a codicil to include the Education Fund bequest. Contact Liz Head (351-2269) and tell us you wish to give money for our future. We will help you with any necessary details.

As we know from Susan B. Wilson's example, small amounts grow and flower for future generations. The Education Fund's future depends on the seed you plant now.

# Review of Constitutional Amendments Proposed in Response to Citizens United

*As reported in the last issue of the Voter, the League of Women Voters of the United States is undertaking two studies related to campaign finance reform. One study would update the League's position on financing election campaigns. The other, in the wake of Citizens United, will look at how the U.S. Constitution can be amended, as that may be the method by which campaign finance will be reformed. More information about these two studies (including the full text of the article that appears here) is available at the LWVUS web page ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)). Further information will also be presented at the LWVRI convention in June. If this article piques your interest visit the LWVUS web site and read more. The consensus discussion questions and study guides are available [notw](#).*

The following discussion is about federal Court decisions interpreting laws and the Constitution regulating free speech, money, corporations, politics, and elections. Proposals to amend the Constitution arise out of fears that the First Amendment to the Constitution is being interpreted in such a way that our freedom, indeed our democracy, can be purchased. Here's what the First Amendment says:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; of the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

## Background of Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC)

**Supreme Court Decision.** In *Citizens United v. FEC*, the Supreme Court struck down long-standing provisions of federal campaign finance law prohibiting the use of corporate general treasury funds for independent expenditures and electioneering communications. (Independent expenditures are communications that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate and are not coordinated with any candidate or party; electioneering communications are broadcast, cable or satellite transmissions that refer to a clearly identified federal candidate and made within 60 days of a general election or 30 days of a primary.)

The Court found that these provisions constituted a "ban on speech" and were unconstitutional under the First Amendment. The Court held that government could not restrict political speech based on the speaker being a corporation and not a natural person.

In its ruling, the Court invoked its landmark 1976 decision, *Buckley v. Valeo*, which held that the use of money,

*Prepared by the LWVUS Campaign Finance Task Force*

for both contributions and expenditures, is a form of speech protected by the First Amendment. In *Buckley*, the Court found that contributions to candidate campaigns could be regulated because they create a risk of quid pro quo corruption. However, the court found no danger of corruption in independent expenditures or in expenditures by candidate campaigns, which therefore could not be limited. The Court defines corruption narrowly to include votes-for-money quid pro quo or the appearance thereof but generally to exclude the other distorting effects that big money has on politics or government.

Following the Supreme Court's reasoning in *Citizens United*, the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled in *Speechnow.org v. FEC* that since independent expenditures do not create actual or apparent quid pro quo corruption, individual and corporate contribution limits to PACs are impermissible if the PACs do not contribute to candidate campaigns but make only independent expenditures.

**Impact on Federal Campaign Finance Law.** Prior to the *Citizens United* ruling, corporations and labor unions were prohibited from using general treasury funds to make independent expenditures and electioneering communications. In the new, post-*Citizens United* world, corporate and labor union general treasuries are permitted to fund independent expenditures and electioneering communications. Subsequent to *Speechnow.org*, they may also give unlimited amounts to PACs or other entities that make independent expenditures. Corporations and labor unions are still prohibited from making direct contributions to candidate campaigns or political parties.

Prior to *Speechnow.org*, individuals were allowed to spend unlimited amounts directly on independent expenditures, but they were bound by contribution limits to PACs. After *Speechnow.org*, individuals are also allowed to make unlimited contributions to PACs that make only independent expenditures.

**Amending the Constitution.** Since the Court's decision is one of constitutional (not statutory) interpretation, amending the Constitution is an option for reversing the effects of these rulings. To date, 14 resolutions have been introduced in Congress to respond to *Citizens United*. Such resolutions require approval by two-thirds of both the House and the Senate, and they require ratification by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states.

To learn more about these studies, visit [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) and click on "Our Work."

**Ethics continued from page 1**

side groups. As today's Providence Journal shows, they are taking quite a number of trips, including one eye-opening trip to Dubai, and another paid for by a group backed by AT&T, Walmart, PhRMA, and GTECH."

House bill 5374 and Senate 56 are being considered at this moment on Smith Hill. The League's Advocacy team has given written and oral testimony in support of both bills. If the legislation passes, voters will decide whether or not to amend the RI Constitution, restoring the jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission over the General Assembly.

There are other bills that have been introduced, but the League feels these bills are the strongest. Why? Senate No. 56 and House No. 5374 include jurisdiction during "speech in debate" when representatives are on the floor debating or advocating for a bill. If there appears to be a conflict of interest the Ethics Commission would be able to examine and investigate and rule on the legislator's action. Other bills being considered would greatly reduce the power of the Ethics Commission. These bills would allow legislators to seek a jury trial in court completely ignoring the Commission's findings and decision. The bills we oppose would also allow thousands of public officials to go beyond administrative oversight and seek a decision in the courts, thereby causing possible lengthy trials and great costs to the public.

**Be in the Know—Sign up for Mailings and Like Us On Facebook!**

The LWVRI has been e-mailing members using our new email service, Mail Chimp. If you are not getting messages from us (the last campaign was about the ethics bills) please make sure we have your e-mail address. You can sign up on our website, as well—look for the button on the left side of the page. If we do have your address, but are not receiving e-mail updates, check your junk emails for a message from the League and then add us to your contact lists. If you have other problems, please e-mail Patty MacLeish, at [pmacleish@verizon.net](mailto:pmacleish@verizon.net).

The League also posts updates on the issues on its blog, (<http://lwwriaction.blogspot.com>.) You can also check out some past posting on the blog for great background information (like why we didn't support the final ethics bill in 2014). We also post lots of updates and background pieces on our Facebook page. If you "like" us on Facebook, you'll receive regular automatic updates, or you can just visit, [https://www.facebook.com/lwvrhodeisland?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/lwvrhodeisland?ref=aymt_homepage_panel).

It's easy to keep track of the issues that are nearest and dearest to you. The RI Legislature's web page has links that provide easy access to the text of bills and where a particular bill is along the path to becoming a law. Visit [webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/legislation/](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/legislation/) to track a bill and get connected. The same links also provide direct e-mail to your senator and representative.

Separation of powers is also weakened when one branch of government (the court) oversees another (the legislature), which could be problematic in Rhode Island where many lawmakers move from the legislature into positions in the courts as judges and magistrates.

House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello was quoted in a Providence Journal article in early March saying that to gain the public's trust he will "make sure that the House serves the interests of the public. Each and every day that I am here, we will serve the public's interest and we will earn the public's trust." He was also quoted in the ProJo's April 23 editorial as saying that "We pass bills that are in the citizen's best interest." The public needs assurance that this happens. Let's "make sure," as Speaker Mattiello says, that the legislature will indeed serve the public interest with proper oversight.

What can you do to have this happen? Contact your representatives and senators and ask them to support these two bills. If they do not support these two bills, ask why. These are the two bills that will actually restore the full jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission over our legislators and hold them responsible to the public.

The League has been e-mailing members with news of updates on these bills.(If you aren't receiving them, make sure that you have signed up for e-mail updates on our web page and refer to the box at left).

And please forward this message to your friends and family members in RI and go to the LWVRI Facebook page and share the League's posting about this action.

Be in League! Take Action Now.

**Join Us! Become Part of**

**Making Democracy Work**

**Membership in the League is \$50; two members of the same household may join for \$75. To join please send a check and this form to LWVRI, 172 Taunton Ave, Suite 8, E. Providence, RI 02914 and help Democracy Work! Or, join on line at [www.LWVRI.org](http://www.LWVRI.org).**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

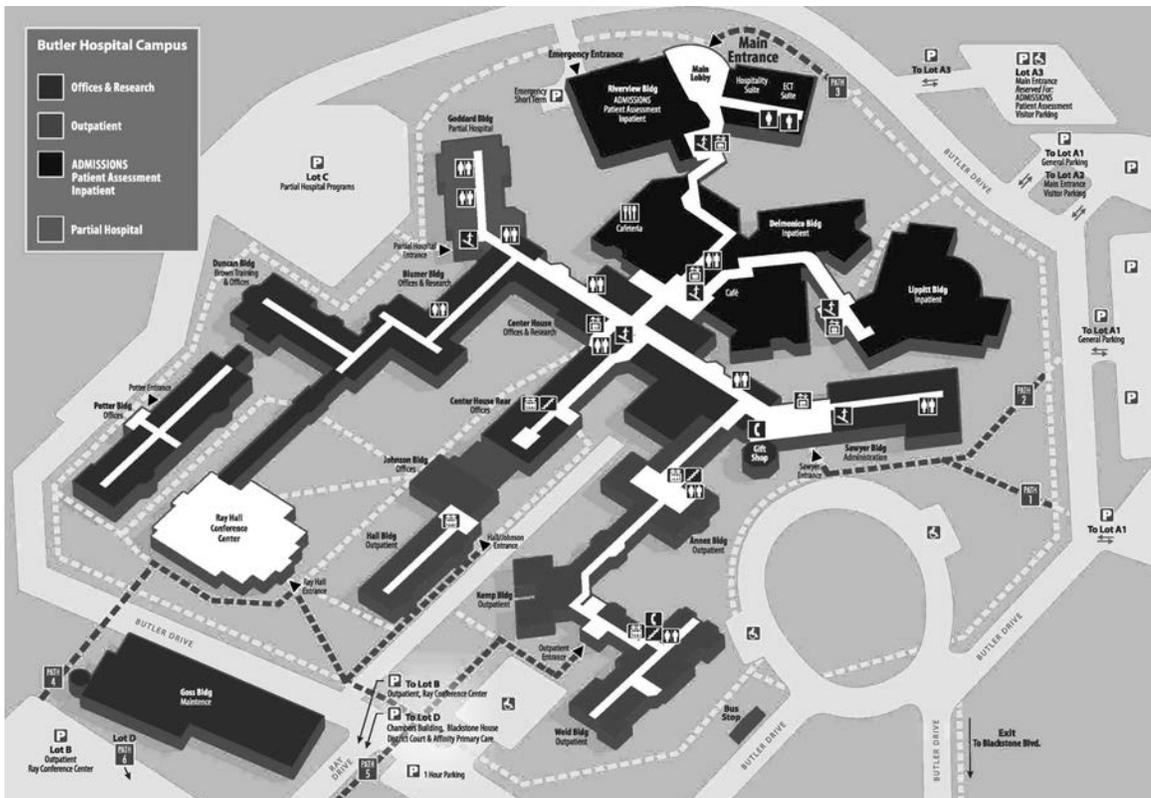
Phone \_\_\_\_\_



# Convention 2015—June 13, 2015

All members of the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island are invited to the 2015 LWVRI Convention at the Ray Conference Center (in the “Back Hall”) on Saturday, June 13, 2015. On this and the following pages is the information that the Board is required to send to the membership in advance of the meeting: the proposed budget, bylaws changes, nominating committee report and program changes. The meeting begins at 10 a.m. with coffee and treats; the \$20 registration includes a lunch of sandwiches, salad and beverages. Use the registration

form found on page 11 or download one at [www.lwvri.org](http://www.lwvri.org). Local Leagues and Members at Large may caucus to choose their delegates at convention or they may gather beforehand to do so. The Board of Directors will notify each League of the number of delegates each local League may send to convention and the number of delegates allowed for Members at Large. All members are encouraged to attend, but only delegates may vote at convention.



**Directions.** The entrance to Butler Hospital is on Blackstone Blvd., diagonally across from Rochambeau Avenue. Once you are on the Butler campus, continue on Butler Drive. Just past the Epoch Assisted Living Center, there will be a sign on right side of road directing traffic to the Ray Conference Center. Take a left at the sign and follow road to Parking Lot B. Park in Parking Lot B and walk across the street to the Ray Conference Center.

## LWVRI NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT 2015

The Nominating Committee of LWVRI offers the following **nominations for the Board of Directors** to serve for a two-year term, 2015 through 2017:

President: Jane Koster, LWV Newport County  
 First Vice President: Jill Kassis, LWV Newport County  
 Secretary: Susan Escherich, LWV Member at Large  
 Director: Janet Carroll, LWV West Bay  
 Director: Patty MacLeish, LWV Newport County  
 Director: Derry Riding, LWV Bristol County

The Nominations Committee of LWVRI offers the following **nominations for the Nominating Committee** of LWVRI to serve for a two-year term, 2015 through 2017:

Rosemary Forbes-Woodside, LWV Newport County, for chair; Helen Taylor, LWV West Bay; and Pam Ancheta, LWV South County/Narragansett.

Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the Convention meeting provided that the consent of the nominee has been obtained.

Respectfully Submitted,  
 The LWVRI Nominations Committee: Rosemary Forbes-Woodside, Susan Escherich, Marian Styles-McClintock

The following persons remain on the Board of Directors through 2016:

2nd Vice President: Susan Wells, LWV Newport County  
 Treasurer: Rosemary Forbes-Woodside  
 Director: Pam Ancheta, LWV So. Kingston, Narragansett  
 Director: Marion Styles-McClintock, LWV Providence  
 Director: Helen Taylor, LWV West Bay

# Proposed Updates to the LWVRI Positions Related to Voting and Elections

## Merging Registration, Elections, Voting, Machines, Voter Registration System

**Background:** At the LWVRI convention in 2011 delegates voted to consolidate the LWVRI positions on Registration, Elections, Voting, Machines, Voter Registration System. The LWVRI Board asked board members Derry Riding and Susan Escherich to review LWVRI positions, combine them without changing the substance of the position, and recommend whether further action is needed. In some cases there were only grammatical changes. The draft updates are noted below and will be voted on at Convention 2015. Proposed additional wording is underlined (underlined). Proposed deletions are marked by strike through (~~strike through~~). Notes are in brackets [notes]. The existing position can be viewed at [www.LWVRI.org](http://www.LWVRI.org).

**Election and Voting Procedures. Proposal to merge positions sent to convention 2015 [The new title will be “Election and Voting Procedures” adopted by merging the positions below June 2015]**

**LWVRI position on “Election Procedures”** adopted April 1986; addition approved June 1986; LWV Providence review recommendations adopted at State Council, April 25, 1998

**LWVRI position on “Voting Procedures”** adopted January 8, 1996

**LWVRI position on “A Unified and Computerized Voter Registration System Position”** adopted January 1995

**LWVRI position “New Voting Machines and a New System for Recording and Counting Votes”** adopted January 1995; amended August 2001

### VOTER REGISTRATION

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island supports the registration of voters by mail. ~~There should be~~ safeguards should be put in place to reduce the possibility of fraud.

LWVRI supports ~~improved~~ accessibility of voter registration is supported. Procedures such as mail registration and the availability of registration at the Registry of Motor Vehicles are examples. ~~To improve the~~ The LWVRI supports minimum standards for the selection of registrars, improvement in the training of those registrars, and brief apprenticeships with experienced registrars. A verification of registration should be given to the voter when person to person registration occurs to encourage registrar accountability.

### VOTING PROCEDURES

#### Poll Workers

LWVRI recommends that Boards of Canvassers be given increased **authority** and **responsibility for recruitment** as well as for selection of poll workers. Except for party primaries, poll workers should not be limited to members of the Democratic and Republican parties. Unaffiliated voters should be eligible, and members of other parties should not be excluded from appointment. To safeguard election integrity, no polling place should be staffed by members of a single party.

The State Board of Elections training of poll workers should be strengthened and improved and should include input from local boards. Smaller class size and more hands on experience with machines exemplify changes LWVRI supports. LWVRI supports mandatory training for poll workers

before certification to work at a poll. A reasonable certification period should be established, so that workers need not repeat training unnecessarily. LWVRI encourages wider use of the half-day at half-pay provision currently in RI law.

#### Election Day/Polling Place Procedures

Because witnessing disaffiliation signatures can consume an inordinate amount of a warden’s time during Primary elections, the law should permit an additional person to be authorized to witness disaffiliation signatures.

Each polling place should be required to have a “street index” of voting districts and a list of polls for the entire city or town, or equivalent information, to assist voters.

Each polling place should have a ~~A~~ method to provide feedback from voters and poll workers ~~should be provided at each polling place.~~

Adequate outside lighting at entrances and in parking areas at polling places should be required by law. While recognizing that additional cost may be incurred in some instances, LWVRI believes that safety of voters is of utmost importance. The law concerning politicking inside and outside the polls should be enforced. Procedures should be written on who enforces the law and how this enforcement is carried out. Penalties should be included in the law for violations. The law should ~~to~~ allow assignment of poll workers to any districts within the city or town they reside in. All poll workers should be appointed, not elected. Multi-media efforts should be made by Boards of Canvassers to inform voters of polling place changes.

#### Mail Ballots

The application for a mail ballot should be revised and simplified. ~~The law requiring that a mail ballot should be postmarked from the state to which it was mailed should be eliminated.~~ [This requirement is no longer listed on Secretary of State’s web site, but the League will retain its substance; see next sentence] There should be no requirements for return of mail ballots which could create a barrier for easy ballot returns, including a requirement relating to mail ballot postmarks.

LWVRI supports the concept of “no excuse” absentee voting, in which any voter may make application and receive an absentee ballot without stating a reason. While this method may present opportunities for fraudulent voting different from the current method, appropriate safeguards would prevent the overall rate of fraud from increasing.

LWVRI does NOT support the concept of permanent “no excuse” absentee status, but believes the voter must reapply for each election.

### **Early Voting (1996)**

~~Early voting procedures should be investigated by the state for feasibility of use in Rhode Island. [Calling for “an investigation” should not be part of a position. Early voting, however, may be supported using the LWVUS position.]~~

### **CENTRALIZED VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM** ~~Unified and Computerized Voter Registration System~~

The League of Woman Voters of Rhode Island supports the state acquisition (or lease) and on-going maintenance of a unified and computerized voter registration system for the 39 local Boards of Canvassers, state agencies, and the Central Voter Registry. Voter registrations should be stored in a central database. ~~Duplicate data entry should be abolished. The new registration system should take highest priority because Rhode Island must meet the requirements of the national and Rhode Island Voting Rights laws.~~

To ensure the integrity of the registration process, criteria for the selection and maintenance of the new registration system and for the procedures on the use of the registration system must include:

- Security of registration, including protection against fraud and other data loss. The following should be included:
  - Audit trails.
  - Maintenance of in-house expertise
    - To provide professional systems management of the whole voter registration system.
    - To assess independently any hardware, software, and support supplied by vendors.
    - Timely updating, ~~Interactive updating or daily batch processing~~ should be the ideal.
- Privacy of all registration information except that legally required to be public.
- Accurate and efficient maintenance of registration records.
- Operating ease for both software and hardware.
- Collection and maintenance of all information required by law.
- Accurate and easy-to-use reports for:
  - Polling place voter lists.
  - Other
- A coordinate computerized system of street indexes:
  - To enable printing of accurate registration confirmation cards.
  - To aid legislators in redrawing district lines.
  - To aid Boards of Canvassers in selecting polling places
  - To provide a report by street that shows the districts and polling place of any address.
- On-going cost ~~Cost~~ analysis, including hardware,

software, personnel, maintenance, phone lines, etc

**NEW VOTING MACHINES AND A NEW SYSTEM FOR RECORDING AND COUNTING VOTES** The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island supports the following standards for state acquisition (or lease) and maintenance of voting machines:

It is essential that any equipment, systems, and procedures used for voting in RI guarantee the integrity of the voting process and vote totals. The basic criteria for selection and maintenance of the voting equipment and for procedures on the use of the new voting system must include:

- Security of the vote, including protection against fraud and other data loss. The following should be included
  - Audit trails
  - Procedures that assure that the software programs used in voting machines are identical to those deposited with the appropriate state office.
  - Mandatory recount of a small percentage of the votes to confirm the computerized results.
  - Maintenance of in-house expertise
  - To provide professional Systems management of the whole voting system.
  - To assess independently any hardware, software, and support supplied by vendors.
  - Escrow of source code to protect the state in case of default of the vendor.
- Privacy of the vote.
- Orderliness of voting.
- Accuracy of vote recording and summation. Rhode Island should adopt formalized written procedures for testing, ensuring, and maintaining (as recommended in National Bureau of Standards 500-158) the following:
  - Logical correctness of the software and the system.
  - Protection of software and data files from outside influences, such as tampering and viruses.
  - Accuracy of the voter’s recording of his or her votes.
- An new absentee ballot system, integrated with the polling place system.
- A new computerized roll-up of vote totals from polling places (to sum the statewide and local votes).
- Cost analysis, including hardware, software, personnel, ballots, maintenance, etc.

At minimum, Rhode Island should adopt the Federal Election Commission Performance Standards for the Purchase of Computerized Vote Tallying Systems.

RI should require regular review of laws and regulations to ensure accuracy, integrity and security in computerized vote tallying.

## League of Women Voters of Rhode Island 2014-2015 Budget and 2015-2016 Proposed Budget

	Adopted Budget 2014	Proposed Budget 2015		Adopted Budget 2015	Proposed Budget 2016
<b>INCOME</b>			<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>Memberships</b>			Building Expenses		
PMP	\$1,300	\$1,157	Rent	\$4,140	\$4,140
MAL Dues	700	700	Electric	120	150
Local League Dues Paid			Telephone/Fax	600	660
<b>Membership Total</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$1,857</b>	Insurance	700	700
<b>Ed Fund</b>			<b>Building Total</b>	<b>\$5,560</b>	<b>\$5,650</b>
Rent	\$2,070	\$2,070	<b>Office Expenses</b>		
Other Utilities	260	295	Voter Publishing/Mailing	\$900	\$1,700
Insurance	350	350	Printing	100	
<b>Ed Fund Total</b>	<b>\$2,680</b>	<b>\$2,715</b>	Administrative (inc Postage)	100	100
<b>Fund Raising (inc. local league gifts)</b>			State Council/Convention	200	200
Letter	\$2,500	\$2,500	Nation Council/Convention	500	500
Donations	250	750	<b>Office Total</b>	<b>\$1,700</b>	<b>\$2,600</b>
Event(s)	1,000	1,000	<b>League Functions</b>		
Local Leagues	200	200	Program Support	\$300	300
State Council/Convention	320	400	Membership	50	50
LWV Day/State House	600	500	PMP/MAL	434	434
Other			Fund Raising -- letter	200	100
<b>Fund Raising Total</b>	<b>\$4,870</b>	<b>\$5,350</b>	Fund Raising -- event	150	500
<b>Miscellaneous</b>			League Day/State House	200	500
Interest (Bank)	\$2	2	Web Site	12	12
Misc/Sales/Paypal	4	32	Miscellaneous/Other		
Poll Running	1,050	0	PayPal	10	
Transfer from Prior Years			Dues Transfer		
<b>Miscellaneous Total</b>	<b>\$1,056</b>	<b>\$34</b>	<b>League Functions Total</b>	<b>\$1,346</b>	<b>\$1,906</b>
<b>Carry forward from prior year</b>	<b>\$1,200</b>		<b>Advocacy Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$10,606</b>	<b>\$11,156</b>	<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$10,606</b>	<b>\$11,156</b>
			<b>Income Less Expenses</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

### Bylaws Change

Below is the proposed bylaws change. The complete bylaws may be found on the LWVRI web site. Text to be added is in bold,

#### ARTICLE V. Board of Directors

Section 9 Urgent Issues. These may be considered and approved by a majority vote between regular board meetings by polling the board **by telephone and/or e-mail. The results of the polling are to be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the board following the polling.** If a financial matter is involved, the Treasurer shall be consulted regarding the availability of funds prior to polling the Board.

### Convention 2015 Registration

To register, use this form or download one from the LWVRI Web site. Please enclose a check in the amount of \$20 and return to LWVRI: Convention, 172 Taunton Ave., Suite 8, East Providence, RI 02914. Please print clearly as we will use this information for your name tag. Registration deadline is June 4. Visit the LWVRI web site to pay on-line using a credit card.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

League \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

The League of Women Voters of RI  
172 Taunton Ave., Suite 8,  
East Providence, RI 02914

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## Coming Up—League Events

**Thursday, June 4, 1 P.M.**

*Book Group.* Gertrude Bell, *Queen of the Desert* by Janet Wallach. All are welcome. To learn more about the Book Group, call Hollie Courage at 401-274-6173 or Linda Jenkins at 401-816-0331.

**Monday, June 8, 5:30 P.M.**

*LWV-Providence Annual Meeting and picnic supper for Monday, June 8th at 5:30pm at 603 Angell St. in Providence. The LWV Providence conveners will provide the picnic supper, Call Liz Head (401-351-2269) or e-mail her at emhead603@hotmail.com to RSVP.*

**Saturday, June 13, 10 A.M.**

*LWVRI Biennial Convention at the Ray Conference Center, Butler Hospital Campus. Check [www.lwvri.org](http://www.lwvri.org) and page 8-11 for details. Guest Speaker: Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea .*

**Saturday, June 13, 1 P.M.**

*Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea speaks to the League and friends as part of the LWVRI 2015 convention. Free and open to the public. Details on page 1 and 8.*

**Thursday, June 18, 5:30 P.M.**

*LWVRI Education Fund Annual Meeting, Tiverton, RI (exact location to be determined). Please e-mail Liz Head [emhead603@hotmail.com](mailto:emhead603@hotmail.com) for more information.*

**Sunday, July 19, 5:00 P.M.**

*LWV West Bay Annual Dinner, Warwick Country Club. Contact Helen Taylor, President, LWV West Bay (824-6490 or e-mail at [lizzytaylor29@aol.com](mailto:lizzytaylor29@aol.com)) for more information.*

**Wednesday, August 26, 11 A.M.**

*Celebration of the passage of the 19th Amendment and the founding of the League, Marble House, Newport.*

**Friday, September 25, 7 P.M.**

*LWV West Bay Membership Dinner Aldrich Mansion. Contact Helen Taylor, President, LWV West Bay (824-6490 or e-mail at [lizzytaylor29@aol.com](mailto:lizzytaylor29@aol.com)) for more information.*