

The Rhode Island Voter

The newsletter of the
League of Women Voters of Rhode Island
One Richmond Square, Suite 220 A-W
Providence, RI 02906



Spring 2016

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Call To Council 2016

The 2016 LWVRI council will be held on Thursday, May 5, from 5:30 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. at the Jamestown Philomena Library, 26 North Road, Jamestown. Council is held on even numbered years. At Council delegates elect directors and a secretary. The Council also has the power to change or adopt program, however, no call for changes have been put forward according to the LWVRI Bylaws. Delegates also

approve the budget. (The budget and the nominating committee reports appear on page 5.) Local League, LWVRI officers and committee chairs, and the LWV Education Foundation will also present reports.

All members of the League may attend the meeting, and indeed, they are encouraged to attend so they can learn more about the League's operations and meet members from other

Leagues throughout the state. However, only Council delegates may vote. Delegates are composed of the presidents of each local League or an alternate; one delegate chosen by each local League; the LWVRI Board of Directors; and one delegate representing the LWVRI's members-at-large. Please contact your local League, if you wish to be a delegate to Council.

There is no registration fee, but members who plan to attend should contact Jane W. Koster, LWVRI president, so we can plan to have sufficient materials to distribute.

Agenda Council, 2016

5:30	Registration and Refreshments: Welcome all members LWVRI	Advocacy Report Membership Report
6:00	Call to Order & Credentials Report: Delegates include: Presidents of each local League or an alternate; one delegate chosen by each local League; the Board of Directors of LWVRI; and one delegate representing the members-at-large. Adoption of Agenda President's Report Treasurer's Report Budget Committee Report (see page 5) Nominating Committee Report (see page 5)	Program Review of Positions Issues for emphasis
7:00		Voting: Officers & Board Members and Budget Adoption of Positions Local League announcements and reports New Business: Directions to the Board
7:30		League Connect: LEAGUE IN RHODE ISLAND: THE LONG VIEW

LWV Providence Partners with Lippitt House Museum to Bring a Local Focus to Voting Issues

The Lippitt House Museum and the LWV Providence will hold its second Community Discussion Series, which this year will focus on voting and elections. The series will provide a local perspective on voting-related issues particularly relevant in this presidential election year. The Community Discussion Series will be held on Tuesdays, April 5, 12, and 19 at 199 Hope Street in Providence. All events will be moderated by the LWV Providence. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with a short reception, followed by a facilitated discussion at 7:00 p.m. Admission is free. This series is part of the Pell Humanities Initiative in Rhode Island to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The topic on Tuesday, April 5, is "Becoming Americans: Immigration, Citizenship & Civic Engagement." Providence's population is primarily growing through im-

migration, and this discussion will focus on what it means to become a U.S. citizen and what the barriers and responsibilities that come with citizenship are. This facilitated discussion will include staff and clients of Dorcas International, Rhode Island's largest and longest-running legal nonprofit immigration service. The speakers will be Kathleen Cloutier & Bruno Sukys, Dorcas International

On Tuesday, April 12, the
Voting continued page 6



Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea, one of the speakers in the LWV Providence/Lippitt House Museum series

Join Us as We Engage Our Legislators

Engagement! That's what you'll find in this issue of the *Voter*. On these pages you will see how the LWVRI and the local Leagues throughout the state have been hard at work with advocacy, voter education, and promoting citizen involvement. I couldn't be prouder of the work we have been doing!

Since the beginning of this Legislative session, the LWVRI has been pushing with great energy and determination to see legislation passed on our priority issues. Our advocacy team has been working non-stop lobbying at the State House mostly by testifying before the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. Many bills are submitted and some reach committees but the majority are "held for further study" (HFS). That often means the bill will not become law.

However, I am excited to report, there has been success. Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea's office submitted various bills on voting, and the On-line Voter Registration bill has passed, making Rhode Island the 31st state to offer this secure, convenient, and cost-effective means of registering to vote and updating voter registration information. I was a member of the Secretary of State's Voting Equipment Task Force this past summer. I am proud of the support the League gave these two bills that makes it so much easier for voters to change their registration information. The League is also supporting House Bill 7248 and Senate Bill 2358, the In-Person Early Voting bills, that continue RI's electoral modernization process. These two bills extend the voting period 20 days prior to Election Day. The League urges our General Assembly to support this action.

We continue to support and lobby for Senator O'Neill's version of the ethics bill. The League believes Senator Sheehan's present ethics bill is a compromise that diminishes the power of our independent Ethics Commission. We are asking the leaders in the General Assembly to give the voters the right to restore the Ethics Commission's oversight of the legislators. Put it on the ballot. Voters deserve it. Go to our blog, "League in Action" (lwwriaction.blogspot.com/search/label/Ethics), to read more of the details of this legislation.

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island

One Richmond Square, Suite 220 A-W, Providence, RI 02906

www.lwvri.org 401-339-9766

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 \$50 for an individual and \$75 for a household include automatic membership in Local, State and National Leagues. Membership forms are available at www.lwvri.org or call 401-434-6440. Please join us and help promote informed citizen involvement in government.

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by Jane W. Koster, LWVRI President

Please make sure you are signed up for our email Action Alerts so you can be up to date on the legislation the League is supporting. You can sign up at www.lwvri.org.

Part of our efforts in support of these bills included our first Lobbying Day at the State House, an event we co-sponsored with John Marion from Common Cause RI. We had a great turnout and visited both the Senate and House chambers advocating for the On-line Voter Registration and In-Person Early Voting bills. We are planning to make this an annual event.

League Day at the State House on March 30 drew many League members, friends of the League, and legislators. Our topic focused on transparency in RI government and offered a panel of experts discussing RI's Access to Public Records Act, RI's Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act, a federal law. Panelists spoke on the importance of oversight at the local, state and national level to ensure the public's right to know. On April 5, the League testified on House bills H 7973 and H 7825 written by ACCESS/RI board members Steve Brown and John Marion, offering amendments to strengthen RI's Access to Public Records Act and the Open Meetings Act.

Meanwhile, Leagues around the state have also been busy. A very successful forum organized by the LWV Narragansett/South Kingstown (soon to be LWVRI South County) on March 29th offered League members, residents and local government officials a panel discussion on Access to Public Records. The event was front-page news the next day in *The Westerly Sun!*

LWV Newport made the front page of the *Newport Daily News* following its annual Legislator's Forum on April 2 for all legislators representing Newport County. There were questions prepared by the League on issues relating to ethics, education, improving voting procedures, women's health as well as many thoughtful questions from the audience on the education funding formula, gun safety, affordable housing, and aid for the disabled in Rhode Island.

LWV Providence and its co-sponsor the Lippitt House Museum, is offering three public "Conversations" in April on issues relating to voting, immigration and money in politics. Check out the story on page 1 for more information.

As we have in past election years, we will work with volunteers and our good government partners to insure voter confidence, privacy and a secure and comfortable voter experience. We hope you will help us at the polls as we gather voters' shared experiences. This work is helpful to us as we define our future goals. We hope you will join us in the fall.

Happy Spring.

In League,



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!!!

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island cannot survive without the support of its members and friends. This fiscal year (beginning July 1, 2015) to date, the generosity of thirty-nine members and friends of the League added \$2,377 to the operating budget of the LWVRI and \$380 to the LWVRI Education Foundation, for a total of \$2,757.

Donations to the LWVRI will be used to fund League activities such as keeping the state office running and supporting our lobbying efforts at the State House. Donations to the LWVRI Education Foundation will be used to support activities such as candidates' forums. The list includes all gifts received as of April 4, 2016. There's still time to give! Send your contribution to LWVRI, One Richmond Square, Suite A-W, Providence, RI 02906. 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.

Donors to the LWVRI

Joanne Devoe and Tom Padwa, Members-at-Large, Warren
Susan and Peter Escherich, Members-at-Large, Riverside
Beth Everett, LWV Newport County
Rosemary Forbes-Woodside, LWV Newport County
Kathleen and Carl Gallagher, LWV Newport County
Carolyn and Howard Goldman, LWV West Bay
D. Gregory, Barrington
Isabel Griffith, Newport
Mary Hazeltine, LWV Providence
Marie and John Hennedy, LWV West Bay
Bill & Linda Jenkins, LWV Newport County
Jill Kassis, LWV Newport County
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Richard and Jane Koster, LWV Newport County

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Elizabeth Morse, LWV Providence
Nancy Nadeau, East Providence
Elizabeth and Daniel Reardon, East Greenwich
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Derwent Riding, Member-at-Large, Bristol
Nina and Edward Rossomando,
LWV So. Kingston/Narragansett
Jane and Deming Sherman, LWV Providence
Mary Speare, LWV Providence
Susan and Roger Wells, LWV Newport County

Donors to the LWVRI Education Foundation

Pam Ancheta, LWV So. Kingston/Narragansett
Kim N. Clark, Warren
Linda Jenkins, LWV Newport County

Judy K. Jones, Newport
Bonnie W. Kniskern, LWV Newport County
Maureen Romans, LWV Providence

Legislators Cover Many Issues at LWV Newport County's Annual Forum



The LWV Newport County held its annual Legislators Forum on Saturday, April 2 in Newport. All the legislators from Newport County were invited. Attending were Senate Majority leader M. Teresa Paiva Weed (District 13), Senator Louis P. DiPalma (District 12), Senator John Pagliarini, Jr. (District 11), Representative Dennis Canario (District 71), Representative John Edwards (District 70), Representative Daniel Rielly (District 72), Representative Lauren Carson (District 75), and Representative Deborah Ruggiero, (District 74).

LWV Newport County member Erin Dollard was the moderator, fielding questions from the thirty-plus people who attended. Topics included school funding, treatment of citizens with disabilities, affordable housing, and ethics.

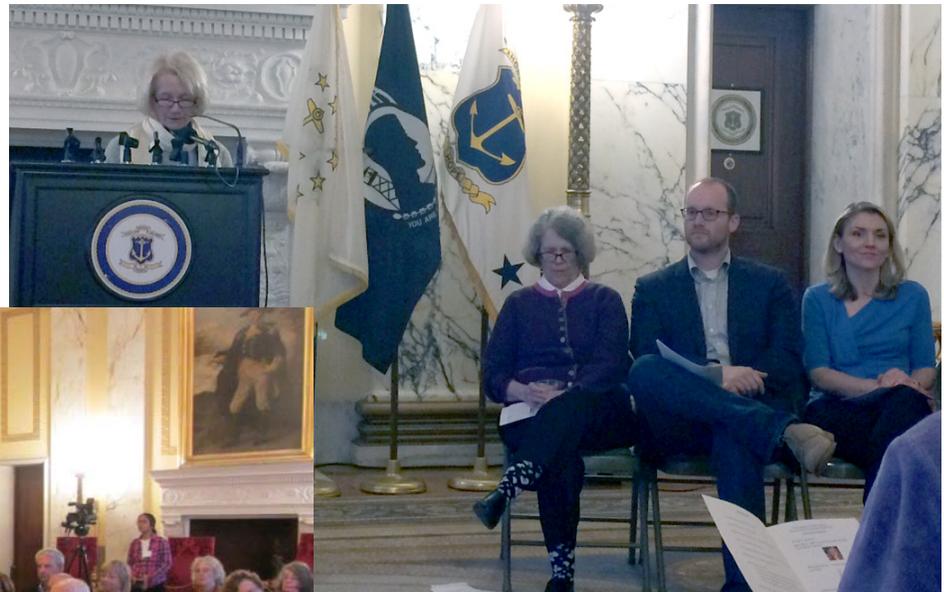
At left, LWV Newport County President Susan Wells welcomes participants at the annual Legislators Forum. Pictured are Senator DiPalma, Sen. Pagliarini, Senator Paiva Weed, Rep. Lauren Carson, and Rep Deborah Ruggiero.

League Day at the State House

More than thirty League members and friends gathered in the elegant Governor's Reception Room for the 2016 League Day at the State House on March 30. The meeting featured reports from LWVRI committees, the LWVRI Education Foundation and Rhode Island local Leagues and a panel discussion, "Good Government: the Long View." Moderated by Linda Levin, president, ACCESS RI, the panelists provided background the Access to Public Records Act, Open Meetings Act, and amendments to these laws that are currently under consideration by the legislature. Thanks also to Katie Davis, Channel 10's investigative reporter; John Marion, executive director Common Cause RI; and Philip Eil, freelance journalist, for their insights.



A small display of historic League items was on display at League Day. Above are buttons and bumper stickers. At left, Diane Russell and her friend, LWVRI Board member Marian Styles-McClintock examine some scrapbooks from the League files.



At left, top, Linda Bongiolatti, president of the LWV So. Kingston/Narrangansett presenting the report for her League. Above, LWVRI President Jane W. Koster introducing the panelist. Shown are Linda Levin, Richard Eil, and Katie Davis. Left, the audience in the Governor's Reception room.

**League of Women Voters of Rhode Island
2015-2016 Budget and 2016-2017 Proposed Budget**

	Adopted Budget 2015/16	Proposed Budget 2016/17		Adopted Budget 2015/16	Proposed Budget 2016/17
INCOME			EXPENSES		
Memberships			Office Expenses		
PMP	\$1,157	\$1,190	Rent	\$4,140	\$4,800
MAL Dues	700	700	Electric	150	300*
Membership Total	\$1,857	\$1,890	Telephone/Fax	600	100**
Ed Fund			Insurance	700	700
Support for Office			Office Total	\$5,650	\$5,900
Rent	\$2,070	\$2,400	Administrative Expenses		
Utilities (electric)	295	150	Voter Publishing/Mailing	\$1,700	\$1,200
Insurance	350	350	Printing	100	250
Ed Fund Total	\$2,715	\$2,900	Administrative (including postage)	100	400
Fund Raising (including local League gifts)			State Council/Convention	200	200
Annual Appeal Letter	\$2,500	\$2,500	Nation Council/Convention	500	500
Event(s)	1,000	450	Administrative Total	\$2,600	\$2,550
Local League Donations	200	700	League Functions		
State Council/Convention	400	400	Program Support	\$300	300
LWV Day/State House	500	400	Membership	150	50
Donations	750	700	PMP/MAL	434	480
Fund Raising Total	\$5,350	\$5,150	Fund Raising: Annual Letter	100	200
Miscellaneous			Fund Raising: Event	400	100
Interest (Bank)	\$2	\$1	League Day/State House	500	250
Misc/Sales	32	200	Web Site	12	12
Poll Running	0	1,050	Miscellaneous/Other		51
Miscellaneous Total	\$34	\$1,251	PayPal***	10	10
Carry forward from prior year	\$1,200		League Functions Total	\$1,906	\$1,741
Total Income	\$11,156	\$11,191	Advocacy Expenses	\$1,000	\$1,000
			Operating Expenses	\$11,156	\$11,191
			Income Less Expenses	\$0	\$0

* There is a flat charge of \$25 for electric service at the new office at One Richmond Square. **The LWVRI switched from a land line to a cell phone. ***These costs are for fees assessed by Paypal for use of its service.

LWVRI NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT 2016

The LWVRI will hold elections for members of the Board of Directors at its Biennial Council, scheduled to take place on Thursday, May 5, 2016. The Nominating Committee of LWVRI offers the following nominations for the Board of Directors to serve for a two-year term, 2016 through 2018:

Second Vice President: Susan Wells,
LWV Newport County
Treasurer: Rosemary Forbes-Woodside,
LWV Newport County
Director: Pam Ancheta, LWV So. Kingston/Narragansett
Director: Marion Styles-McClintock, LWV Providence
Director: Open

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,

The following persons remain on the Board of Directors through 2017:

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

“Stay in the Know” on the Issues

Rhode Island legislators are entering the end of the 2015-16 session and will be busier than ever. How can you keep up what’s happening on Smith Hill? Look to the League. We’ve worked out a way for you to stay in the know about politics and understanding the issues, while still saving sometime for reading, being with your family, and gearing up for summer. It’s simple.

Begin by liking us on **Facebook**. We try to post two to four times a week linking you to articles on important issues and the latest postings on our blog. “Like” us and you’ll receive regular automatic updates, or you can just visit, www.facebook.com/lwvrhodeisland to view our postings. If you like what we post, remember to share the post with friends.

Next, visit our blog, “**LWVRI in Action** (lwvriaction.blogspot.com)” where we post the latest information on pending legislation. The blog will also link you directly to the RI Legislature’s web page where you can follow a bill or connect with your representatives.

Finally, check your emails from the LWVRI (and forward them to friends). The LWVRI is sending weekly e-mails to members about what is coming up each week in the Legislature. The **Action Alert** will give you a brief description of all the im-

LWVRI Member Featured at Book Club



On April 7, 2016, the RI League Book Club discussed member Marian Styles-McClintock’s book, *But Isn’t That What We’re Supposed to Do?* In writing the book, Marian (on left) interviewed elderly black women in several Southern communities about their roles in mentoring the children in the community. The mutual concern of the elders gave the children the opportunity to to be educated and a chance to rise in the world. The women interviewed viewed their concern and active roles in the community as “What we’re supposed to do.” The book discusses the advantages of a small homogeneous community where everyone knows everyone else and feel responsibility towards them.

Pictured with Marian are Mary Speare (center) and Liz Head (right).

PHOTO: SUSAN ESCHERICH

portant upcoming hearings and votes with links to the LWVRI in Action blog where you will find details of the legislation and handy links to committee members emails. Share the email with others who may be interested in the topic. If you are not getting messages from us, 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 e-mails for a message from the “LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS RHODE ISLAND and then add us to your contact lists. If you have problems, e-mail Patty MacLeish, at pmacleish@verizon.net.

It’s easy to keep track of the issues that are nearest and dearest to you.

Call for Applications— Susan B. Wilson Civic Education Merit Awards

The League of Women Voters of South County is pleased to announce the ninth annual Susan B. Wilson Civic Education Merit Awards, which honor Rhode Island’s innovative teachers and their exceptional work in civic education. The award is funded through the generosity of the LWVRI Education Fund.

Three prizes will be awarded. The Grand Prize award is \$1,000, the Jury Prize \$500 and the Honorable Mention Prize is \$250. The Wilson Awards committee is currently accepting nominations for the award. Get details and apply online at www.lwvri.org/wilsonaward.htm. Deadline is April 30.

Since 2007, this annual award has been given to three individual teachers or teams of teachers for work that has already been accomplished and whose impact has already been assessed. So please consider nominating a worthy teacher currently teaching in any Rhode Island school (preK – Grade 12) or forward the website link to colleagues and friends.

Voting continued from 1

discussion will feature Rhode Island’s Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea, and Wendy Schiller, Professor of Political Science, International & Public Affairs, Brown University. The topic is “Every Voice Counts: Voter Participation & Engagement.” There are only a small number of citizens eligible to vote. Some of the questions that will be considered are, “What impact does voter ID have on voter turn-out?” and “What changes might increase voter turnout?”

The final discussion is set for Tuesday, April 19. The topic is “Money in Politics.” During Presidential election years the impact of money on our political process is clear. The speakers will consider the role of PACs and other big donors play in the electoral process and whether the current campaign finance reform efforts make a difference. The speakers will be Stephen Erickson, Commissioner, Rhode Island Board of Elections & Richard Arenberg, Visiting Lecturer in Political Science, International & Public Affairs, Brown University

LWVUS Adopts New Position on Constitutional Conventions under Article V of the U.S. Constitution

Following the January 2016 meeting, the League of Women Voters United States board announced a new position calling for safeguards to govern the constitutional convention process. State Leagues can use this new position, as well as the new position outlining considerations for evaluating constitutional amendment proposals, to address the ongoing debates in many legislatures regarding constitutional conventions, in particular as they related to a balanced budget amendment.

In 2014, there was an effort to call for a constitutional convention in Rhode Island. The LWVRI did not have a position does not have a position on conventions, but with this new LWVUS position, the picture changes. Should the issue

arise again in the state, the League's Advocacy Committee can review the LWVUS position and perhaps use it as a basis for action in Rhode Island. The new LWV position is reprinted below. If you would like to know what all the League's positions are, visit the LWV.org website and download "Impact on Issues" (<http://lww.org/files/Impact%20on%20Issues%202014-2016%20Full%20PDF.pdf>).

If you would like to learn more about this important topic, the reading materials used in the study are available on the LWV website (<http://forum.lww.org/member-resources/article/reading-guide-amending-constitution-convention>). Check it out!

Position on Constitutional Conventions under Article V of the U.S. Constitution

Adopted January 2016

The League is concerned that there are many unresolved questions about the powers and processes of an Article V Constitutional Convention.

The League believes such a convention should be called only if the following conditions are in place:

a) The Constitutional Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret. The public has a right to know what is being debated and voted on;

b) Representation at the Constitutional Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote, and delegates should be elected rather than appointed. The delegates represent citizens, should be elected by them, and must be distributed by U.S. population;

c) Voting at the Constitutional Convention must be by delegate, not by state. Delegates from one state can have varying views and should be able to express them by indi-

vidual votes;

d) The Constitutional Convention must be limited to a specific topic. It is important to guard against a "runaway convention" which considers multiple issues or topics that were not initiated by the states;

e) Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Constitutional Convention should be called. Counting state requests by topic ensures that there is sufficient interest in a particular subject to call a Convention and enhances citizen interest and participation in the process; and

f) The validity of state calls for an Article V Constitutional Convention must be determined by the most recent action of the state. If a state has enacted a rescission of its call, that rescission must be respected by Congress.

LWV Newport County Sets Annual Meeting

The LWV Newport County will hold its annual meeting at a luncheon at Green Valley Country Club on Union St., Portsmouth, on April 26 at 11:30. The business meeting will be followed by lunch at noon. Members will elect officers and approve the annual budget.

The guest speaker is Dr. James Ludes, Vice President for Public Research and Initiatives and Executive Director of the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy at Salve Regina University. He will share current programs and activities of the Pell Center, including Leadership Matters, a unique program of public and social sector leadership development designed for Rhode Island leaders. A partnership between the Pell Center and the Public Sector Consortium, a Cambridge, Mass., Leadership Matters supports a new approach to democratic governance and sustain-

ability aimed at developing leaders to become armed with the knowledge and skills to support a new model of public leadership. Predicated on the belief that public leadership is a profession that requires skills that can be developed and learned, the program features skill-based classroom learning, the application of skills to an innovations project and sharing of best practices with other municipalities and organizations. Over its three years, Leadership Matters has delivered the program to two cohorts that include several municipalities, school administrations, state legislators, and universities with impressive results. The third cohort will commence in September, 2016.

LWV Newport member Jill Kassis, who organized the program, has been involved with Leadership Matters program for several years.

The League of Women Voters of RI
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Providence, RI 02906

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Coming Up—League Events

April 8-10

LWV New England Quad State Conference, Wells, Maine.

Monday, April 11, 10 A.M.

LWVRI Board Meeting, LWVRI office, One Richmond Square, Providence.

Tuesday, April 26

Rhode Island Presidential Preference Primary

Tuesday, April 26, 11:30 A.M.-1 P.M.

*LWV Newport County Annual Meeting. Green Valley Country Club.
Dr. James Ludes, Executive Director, Pell Center will speak.*

Wednesday, May 4, 9:30 A.M.

LWVProvidence Convener's Meeting, 603 Angell St., Providence

Thursday, May 5, 1 P.M.

*Book Group at Liz Head's House, Providence. Book: My Life On
the Road, by Gloria Steinem All are welcome. To learn more about the
Book Group, call Hollie Courage at 401-274-6173 or Linda Jenkins
at 401-816-0331.*

Thursday, May 5, 5:30-8 P.M.

LWVRI Biennial Council Jamestown Library.

June 16-19

LWVUS Convention Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, July 6, 9:30 A.M.

LWVProvidence Convener's Meeting, 603 Angell St., Providence

Tuesday, August 23. Registration Deadline for RI Primary Election

Wednesday, September 7, 9:30 A.M.

LWVProvidence Convener's Meeting, 603 Angell St., Providence

Tuesday, September 13

Rhode Island Primary

Tuesday, October 18. Registration Deadline for November Election

Tuesday, November 8

Election Day