

# The Rhode Island Voter

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



May 2011

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## Come to Convention 2011!

*LWVRI to Meet on June 4*

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island will hold its biennial convention on Saturday, June 4, 2011, in the Executive Cafeteria at Butler Hospital, 345 Blackstone Blvd., Providence. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m., and the first order of business will be League "business." Delegates will elect new board members, act on bylaws changes, pass the budget, and approve program. Once that is accomplished, LWVUS board member Judy Davis will present a discussion on communicating in today's environment. Today, there are many vehicles for spreading a message, but what is really the best way to get a

message out? Judy will discuss these tools, how to use them effectively and how to "speak" in a civil manner when using them. Following Judy's presentation, members will hear from Charolette "Lottie" Fox, Rhode Island's Membership Recruitment Initiative coach. Lottie is an LWVUS Shur Fellow and will be working closely with state leaders on an ongoing basis to strengthen membership recruitment efforts and leadership development. (See story on page 3).

The day will be a great opportunity for members from throughout the state to gather and meet one another

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## LWVRI to Cosponsor Meeting on Politics of Reproductive Health

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island along with the Women's Health & Education Fund ([www.whefri.org](http://www.whefri.org)) and 2 to 1: The Coalition to Preserve Choice will sponsor a community presentation on private health insurance, abortion coverage, and reproductive health politics in Rhode Island. The meeting will be held at the Knight Memorial Library, 275 Elmwood Ave., Providence, on Wednesday, May 11, 2011, from 6-7:30 P.M.

Rhode Island is one of several states that does not allow Medicaid funds to be used for abortion care (unless the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest, or when the life of the

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## Senator Reed to Speak at LWV West Bay Annual Meeting

On Monday morning, May 23, Senator Jack Reed will speak on "D.C.-R.I. Connections" at LWV West Bay's 2011 Annual Meeting. The meeting begins with a breakfast



Senator Reed



Governor Lincoln Chafee was the speaker at League Day at the State House. See story on page 2.

buffet at 8:30 a.m. at Chelo's Restaurant near the airport at 2225 Post Road in Warwick. Senator Reed will speak and answer questions from 9 to 10 a.m. All are then welcome to stay for West Bay's Annual Meeting to review its 2010-11 candidate forums and state education study work, and to plan 2011-12's budget, officers and program including a proposed local study of charter schools.

All League members and their friends are invited to attend. Cost is \$20 per person, to be mailed to Marie Henneidy at 56 Marion St., East Greenwich, RI 02818. For more information, call Marie at 884-3976 or download a reservation form at [www.lwvri.org](http://www.lwvri.org); reservations are due May 18.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# *A Busy End to my Presidency*

by *Joanne DeVoe*

Hello LWVRI Members,

I'm reaching the end of my two-year term as your President. It has been an amazing experience, both more encouraging and more frustrating than I had imagined when I agreed to do it. The League is an old, established organization which is both more set in its ways and more receptive to creative solutions than I had thought. There is usually a spirit of willingness to recognize problems and to cooperate in finding solutions. We teach each other constantly. Members try to figure out how to work together.

We have finished a complex study of public education finance in Rhode Island, thanks to our Education Committee and especially its chairman, Mickie Bonneau. We have conducted a League consensus process and have come to consensus on a series of questions which are serving as the basis for the writing of a consensus position; a writing committee is hard at work on this. We are planning to testify on the bills related to the formula that was passed by the General Assembly last year and the funding of which has been included in the Governor's budget. Keep tuned...

The LWVRI is working with the national League on a new Membership Recruitment Initiative, through which three state board members—Jill Kassis, Jane Koster, and Pam Ancheta—have been trained on proven strategies for growing the League. They each will work with several members of each local League who also will be trained by national League staff in an expenses paid weekend as part of the Quad State Conference to be held on October 14 and 15. Everyone, please start thinking about whether you want to be part of this effort.

Our Advocacy Committee has been working hard with our new lobbyist, Linda-Jean Briggs. Her name has already appeared in the *Providence Journal* following her testimony expressing the League's opposition to a bill that would



**LWVRI President Joanne DeVoe introducing Governor Lincoln Chafee at League Day at the State House.**

undermine the current mandate to provide public records throughout R.I. state government. The bill would add to the law the phrase, "make every reasonable effort to honor," a request for public documents.

League Day at the State House featured Governor Lincoln Chafee. Fifty League members and guests gathered in the beautiful Governor's Reception Room at the State House to hear the governor speak about his budget for the upcoming year. He asked for suggestions from our group and as you might imagine, there were many. Thank you to board member Susan Wells for organizing the dinner that followed.

The LWVRI's Biennial Convention will be held Saturday, June 4, 9:30 A.M., at Butler Hospital in Providence. Bylaw changes will be considered, a budget passed, and new board members will be elected. We will have two presentations by representatives from the LWVUS—one on communicating effectively in today's media environment and one on the new League Membership Recruitment Initiative. I hope you will join us.

## *Governor Seeks Advice*

### **League Day Speech Focused on the State Budget**

Governor Lincoln Chafee addressed about fifty members of the League and their guests at the annual League Day at the State House on March 30. The Governor spoke about his plans for the upcoming budget year. He pointed to the grandeur of the Governor's Reception Room and how it reflected on the optimism and prosperity of the early part of the last century in Rhode Island. He asked for suggestions regarding the budget and the audience responded. There were questions about pensions, housing, intellectual property and the sales tax. Following the governor's talk and Q&A, League Lobbyist Linda-Jean Briggs addressed the group.

### **The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island**

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Patty MacLeish, *Voter* Editor Jane Marchi, Copy Reader

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.

The Rhode Island *Voter* is published four times a year: August, October, January and May. Periodic postage paid at Providence, R.I. and additional mailing offices. ©2011 LWVRI

## Joan Christman Arnold (1930 -2011)

LWVRI Board member Joan C. Arnold of Middletown died on Tuesday, February 15, 2011. Born in New York City, Joan was a proud graduate of Cornell University-New York Hospital with a B.S. in nursing. Until she retired in 1992 she worked at the Newport County Visiting Nurse Association.

Joan was active in both the LWVRI and the LWV of Newport County. She was responsible for the local League's rebirth after it had disbanded. She later served as president of the LWV Newport County and was treasurer of that League until the time of her death. Joan served on the state board as treasurer for almost 20 years, and was most recently that board's membership chairwoman. She was also a member of the LWVRI's Education Fund Board. For many years, Joan managed the "poll running" for the League, organizing members to report election results which brought in much needed income for the League as well as connections with many community members.

She was active in many other community organizations on Aquidneck Island including local historical societies and the Museum of Newport Irish History. She also served on the Middletown Charter Commission and was treasurer of the Visiting Nurses and Health Professionals. Joan with her husband Vince sponsored more than thirty international students from the Naval War College during the past fifteen years.

Joan is survived by her husband of 57 years and daughters Kathleen Gallagher, Ann May, and Karen Ellsworth, sons William, James and David, and foster daughter Kathleen Fryer.



Linda Jenkins (left) and her friend Joan Arnold at the League's 90th Anniversary Celebration at Marble House in August.

## LWV Newport County Plans New Award to Honor Joan Arnold

### *Event scheduled to kick-off new award*

The LWV Newport County invites all League members to an early evening gathering with hors d'oeuvres wine tasting at the home of Roger and Susan Wells at 229 Gibbs Avenue on Wednesday June 15 from 5:30-7:30. The League plans to announce at the event the creation of the Joan C. Arnold Civic Participation Award. The award will honor a resident of Newport County who exemplifies the same commitment to the civic life of her community as Joan did.

"Joan was always busy, whether with the League, the Museum of Newport Irish History, Meals on Wheels--she was involved in the life of our community," notes LWV Newport County President Susan Wells. "She served on the Middletown's charter committee and certainly was a force in our local and state Leagues. She was not, however, a person in the spotlight. She worked behind the scenes to get done the job of making this a good place to live."

Recognizing that many people have this quiet commitment to their communities, the LWV Newport believes this award will be

an excellent way to remember Joan. The proceeds from the event will be used to support the award going forward and to carry out the work of the League.

Tickets are \$20 each or \$30 a couple (bring a friend!). Use the form below to reserve your place or download one from the LWVRI Web site ([www.lwvri.org](http://www.lwvri.org)).

### Kickoff the Joan C. Arnold Civic Participation Award with the LWVRI

Yes, I plan to attend the event. Enclosed is a check in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ for (number of) \_\_\_\_\_ tickets.

I cannot attend, but enclosed is a donation of \_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please RSVP by June 6, 2011, to Susan Wells, 229 Gibbs Ave., Newport, RI 02840 or call 846-9547.

# LWVRI Team Fired Up After League Membership Workshop

“Imagine if EVERY League was as welcoming as it was respected? EVERY League had its own coach for support? EVERY League leader had training/mentoring before leading?” These were the questions that opened up the kick-off of the membership and leadership growth program in 12 new states, including Rhode Island. Over the course of the three-day training, which was held in Warwick, R.I. in late March, LWVUS Board members and staff laid out the long-term vision for the League, which includes turning these “dreams” into a reality. And, soon, League leaders in Rhode Island will have an opportunity to experience this first-hand.

Rhode Island’s coaches, Jill Kassis and Jane Koster both of LWV Newport County and Pam Ancheta of LWV South Kingstown/Narragansett, were joined by some 30 others coaches from the 12 states at the training. During the training, the coaches were introduced to the components of the membership and leadership growth program. These include best practices in marketing and visibility, ideas and resources for working with the media and allied groups, and planned leadership development.

One of the critical components of the program, which is resulting in net membership growth in the 21 states already involved, is the establishment of a coaching or mentoring program among the levels of League. This provides League leaders with a support network, and it has strengthened the ties among the levels of the organization. As such, the train-

ing in Warwick also included sessions on the best practices of coaching, team building and more.

The Rhode Island coaches networked with League leaders from across the region and met Charolette “Lottie” Fox, who is an LWVUS Ruth S. Shur Fellow and will be Rhode Island’s national coach. On Saturday, LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara joined the group for training sessions in the afternoon and gave an inspiring speech at the evening banquet about the upcoming 2012 election season to participants.

Shur Fellow Lottie Fox will join the LWVRI Convention on June 4. Regional training will be held at the Quad State Convention in Maine, October 15-16. RI state coaches will commence training with local leagues following the state training at Quad State in October. The Membership Recruitment Initiative program is supported by the LWV’s Leaders for Leadership Fund. For more information about the fund or to learn more about the program and how to participate, please contact Jill Kassis at 401-619-0377 or [jhkassis@gmail.com](mailto:jhkassis@gmail.com).

The next phase of the program is now all about YOU – local League members and leaders. Come to Convention on June 4 and find out what all the buzz is about and make plans to join other Rhode Island Leaguers at Quad State in October.

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

by Martha Frutchey, LWVRI Education Fund

Spring time is the 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 South County member of the League. 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. This year the League funded the purchase of books for the International Charter School in Pawtucket and curriculum materials for citizenship classes at the Providence Public Library; it helped Sophia Academy students participate at a civil rights performance; it contributed to Global Rhode Island; it underwrote programming on WRNI, and most recently, it supported Living Literature’s readings



from *The Unforgiving Minute: The Soldier’s Education* by Craig M. Mullaney, the Reading Across Rhode Island 2011 selection. For the last three years, the Education Fund has also sponsored the Susan B. Wilson Civic Education Merit Award (administered by the LWV South Kingstown-Narragansett) given to teachers who design interesting and intriguing classroom activities focusing on civic education. (To see the range of Education Fund grants visit [www.lwvri.org](http://www.lwvri.org). Under the Education Fund, click on Projects ) Susan B. Wilson planted the seed and all of Rhode Island has enjoyed the harvest.

We hope you would like to be a part of keeping this League legacy going. It is easy to do so by designating the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island Education Fund as a beneficiary in your will or trust. 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. For proper legal wording, see the suggestions at the Web site under Education Fund/Donations and Bequests.

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.

# Our Priorities! The League's Issues in 2011

The LWVRI Advocacy Committee has met and recommended a set of priorities for 2011 which was approved by the LWVRI Board of Directors, March 14, 2011. The priorities are: an open and accountable Legislature; open meetings and open records; ethics; elections; and separation of powers. What are legislative priorities? The League has positions on many issues, but its resources are finite. So each year, it looks at the issues on which it has positions, then determines which are the most pressing in the state and which are likely to be the subject of legislation. These issues become the priorities.

The League does not ignore the other issues on which it has positions, but rather, puts them on a legislative "watch list." The watch list includes several kinds of issues—those issue that the League has no position on but is currently studying (such as funding education in Rhode Island); those issues that move from a study commission to legislation (such as redistricting); or those issues for which a legislative opportunity arises that requires immediate action. If the League feels that it can have an impact, it will move forward. The watch list for this year include: education funding (pending adoption of position), redistricting, civil rights fair elections, reproductive choice, immigration, and initiative and referendum.

The Advocacy Committee and League lobbyist Linda Jean Briggs discussed many issues as well as member suggestion of legislative priorities. The decisions were made based on what issues are likely to come before the 2011 Rhode Island Legis-

lature, the opportunities to make an impact, program decisions made at Convention, member interest, and resources available to manage these priorities effectively. The Advocacy Committee will review these priorities throughout the legislative session, proposing changes, if warranted, or adding emerging issues to the priority list. Note: other issues can be brought to the attention of the Advocacy Committee for consideration during the session.

The LWVRI is a member of several coalitions and task forces and the League will work with them on some of these priorities. The legislative agenda of Citi-



**Members of the LWVRI's Advocacy Committee met in March at the home of Susan Escherich to organize and set the state League's priorities for 2011. From left are (seated) Susan, Hollie Courage, Derry Riding and LWVRI Lobbyist Linda-Jean Briggs. Standing are Joanne DeVoe, Marie Hennedy, and Mary Chace.**

zens for an Accountable Legislature, to which the League belongs promotes a more open and transparent legislature by posting of both floor and committee votes on-line, removal of the "master lever" on ballots, and other specific issues. The CAL will also monitor separation of powers issues. The LWVRI's Representative to this coalition is Joanne DeVoe. Access/Rhode Island is a broad-based, non-profit freedom of information coalition dedicated to improving citizen access to the records and processes of government in Rhode Island. The LWVRI representative is Mary-Alyce Gasbarro. Now that the 2010 census complete, Rhode Island will need to implement redistricting. Jane Koster and Susan Escherich represent the LWVRI on this coalition.

## How do you fit in?

Setting Legislative priorities is only the first stop. Lobbyist Linda-Jean Briggs will be representing the League at hearings, but as important as her efforts are, we need YOU! Make sure we have your e-mail address, so we can send you action alerts. Contact the League if one of these issues is dear to your heart and we will keep you up to date. Rhode Island is a small state, and it doesn't take too many calls from constituents for a legislator to feel a groundswell of support or opposition to a piece of legislation.

Finally, consider joining the Advocacy Committee? You get to pursue your passion and share your knowledge. Contact Derry Riding, Advocacy Committee chair and she can fill you in (DRiding@doa.ri.gov or 222-3949).

## *Reproductive Health continued from page 5*

woman is at risk). Today, the cost of an abortion procedure starts at about \$500 and increases as a woman's pregnancy progresses. Come learn about specific policies, laws, and regulations related to access to reproductive health care in Rhode Island and how the state compares nationally.

The Women's Health & Education Fund of Rhode Island ("WHEF") is a 501(c)(3) organization that provides financial assistance to low-income Rhode Island women to access the reproductive health services of their choice. WHEF works with area clinics to fund services for women including abortions, contraceptives, gynecological exams, and pregnancy tests. WHEF works other health and advocacy organizations to advance the status of reproductive health rights in the state. The League has worked in coalition with 2 to 1 in the past. The group is committed to preserving reproductive choice in Rhode Island.

## Proposed Changes to the LWVRI Bylaws

Following are the proposed changes to the LWVRI Bylaws. The complete bylaws may be found on the LWVRI Web site. Sections with amendments suggested to Bylaws Committee, text to be added is in bold, text to be deleted is crossed out.

### ARTICLE III Membership Section 2 TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

#### *Amendment 1 due to change in LWVUS bylaws*

##### Section 2 (a) (3) TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

(a) Voting Members. Citizens at least 18 years of age residing within the United States, a territory, or an associated commonwealth who join the League, shall be voting members of local Leagues, state League and the LWVUS.

(3) those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be ~~honorary~~ life members, excused from the payment of dues.

### ARTICLE IV Officers Section 3 THE VICE-PRESIDENTS

#### *Amendment 1, proposed by Joan Arnold:*

Section 3. THE VICE-PRESIDENTS There shall be two vice-presidents: the first vice-president and the second vice-president. **The first vice-president shall perform such duties as the president and board shall designate. The second vice-president shall act as corresponding secretary under direction of the president and do such other duties designated by the president and the board.** ~~The vice-presidents shall perform such duties as the president and board may designate.~~ In the event of a vacancy in the office of president, the board shall designate one of the vice-presidents to succeed to the presidency and to hold that office until the next election. The vice presidents, in order of their rank, shall preside in the absence of the president.

#### *Amendment 2, proposed by Caroline Stouffer and Joanne DeVoe*

Section 3. THE VICE-PRESIDENTS There shall be two vice-presidents: the first vice-president and the second vice-president. **The first vice-president shall perform such duties as the president and board shall designate. The second vice-president shall act as corresponding secretary under direction of the president and do such other duties designated by the president and the board. In the case of a temporary inability of the president to carry out the duties of the office, the 1st vice president shall be immediately authorized to do so.** ~~The vice-presidents shall perform such duties as the president and board may designate.~~ In the event of a vacancy in the office of president, the board shall designate one of the vice-presidents to succeed to the presidency and to hold that office until the next election. The vice presidents, in order of their rank, shall preside in the absence of the president.

### ARTICLE IV Officers Section 5 THE TREASURER

#### *Amendment 1, proposed by Joan Arnold:*

Section 5 THE TREASURER The treasurer shall collect and receive all monies due and shall be the custodian of the monies; depositing them in a bank designated by the board of directors. The treasurer shall present periodic statements to the board at its regular meetings and an annual report to the Convention or Council. The books of the treasurer shall be reviewed ~~by someone other than a board member~~ at the conclusion of each fiscal year **by**

**a committee consisting of a newly appointed budget committee and at least one other League member who is not a board member. The treasurer shall sit ex officio on this committee. Subject to that review, the committee shall arrange for an independent review of the books.**

### ARTICLE V Board of Directors

#### *Amendment 1, proposed by Joan Arnold:*

**Section 6 DUTIES OF INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS Each member of the Board of Directors is expected to attend meetings on a regular basis, and to commit to working in an area of his/her interest: i.e., newsletter, membership, fund raising, voter service, website special events, budget, etc.**

(Sections 6 through 10 are renumbered as Sections 7 through 11)

### ARTICLE VII Financial Administration Section 2

#### FINANCIAL SUPPORT

#### *Amendment 1, proposed by Joan Arnold:*

Section 2 FINANCIAL SUPPORT Each local League and provisional League shall make annual per member payments directly to the LWVRI, the amount of such payment to be determined **by the State Board after being considered by the Board at a second consecutive Board meeting, and consultation with each local League.** ~~Convention by a majority vote of the Convention delegates.~~ Each member-at-large of the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island shall make annual payments directly to the LWVRI in the amount of the sum of the annual per member payment as determined by the Convention of the LWVUS, the annual per member payment as determined by the State Board Convention of the LWVRI, plus one dollar (\$1).

### ARTICLE VII Financial Administration Section 6 MEMBERS OF A COMMON HOUSEHOLD

#### *Amendment 1, proposed by Joan Arnold:*

Section 6 MEMBERS OF A COMMON HOUSEHOLD When multiple members reside at the same address in a common household, the local or provisional League shall make a payment determined **by the Board of Directors** ~~Convention~~ for the first member; a payment equal to one-half the per member payment shall be paid for each other member. When multiple members-at-large reside at the same address in a common household, payment for the first member-at-large shall be as determined by the Board of Directors ~~Convention~~; a payment equal to one-half the per-member payment shall be paid by each other member-at-large.

### ARTICLE VIII Convention Section 4 REPRESENTATION

#### *Amendment 1, proposed by Joan Arnold:*

Section 4 REPRESENTATION (b) Members-at-large in attendance shall caucus for the purpose of selecting a delegate or delegates eligible to register to vote. The members-at-large shall be entitled to register one delegate for every 10 members-at-large, or a major fraction thereof, belonging as of **February** ~~January~~ 1st of said year.

**Rhode Island League of Women Voters  
Proposed Budget April 15, 2011**

	Adopted Budget 2011	Proposed Budget 2012		Adopted Budget 2011	Proposed Budget 2012
<b>INCOME</b>			<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>Memberships</b>			<b>Building Expenses</b>		
PMP	1,271	1,443	Rent	4,140	4,140
MAL dues	440	485	Electric	85	85
<b>Membership Total</b>	<b>1,711</b>	<b>1,938</b>	Telephone/Fax	540	540
<b>Ed Fund</b>			Insurance	502	502
Rent	2,070	2,070	<b>Building Total</b>	<b>5,267</b>	<b>5,267</b>
Other (utilities)	270	270	<b>Office Expenses</b>		
Insurance	251	251	Voter Publishing/mailing	900	1,100
<b>Ed Fund Total</b>	<b>2,591</b>	<b>2,591</b>	Administrative (inc. postage)	450	225
<b>Fund Raising</b>			State Council/Convention	200	200
Letter	2,750	2,500	National Council/Convention	500	500
Event(s)	1,500	1,500	<b>Office Total</b>	<b>2,050</b>	<b>2,000</b>
Local Leagues	1,900	1,900	<b>League Functions</b>		
State Council/Convention	200	200	Program Support	300	300
LWV Day/State House	1,250	1,250	Membership	100	100
<b>Fund Raising Total</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>7,350</b>	PMP/MAL	298	298
<b>Miscellaneous</b>			Fund Raising -- letter	200	200
Interest (Bank)	7	7	League Day/State House	675	675
<b>Miscellaneous Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	Web Site	12	12
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$11,909</b>	<b>\$11,886</b>	Miscellaneous/Other	7	9
			League Functions Total	1,592	1,594
			Advocacy Expenses	3,000	3,000
			<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$11,909</b>	<b>\$11,886</b>
			<b>Income less Expenses</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Convention continued from page 7

and learn about MRI, the exciting new League membership program. The cost is \$20 and includes morning coffee and tea and lunch. Use the registration form found on page 7 or download one from [www.lwvri.org](http://www.lwvri.org).

All members of the League are invited to attend, but only delegates may vote. All LWVRI board members and local League presidents are delegates; in addition, each League may choose a number of delegates based on their membership. Members at Large may also caucus and choose delegates. For more information in choosing delegates, please contact your local League president.

The entrance to Butler Hospital is diagonally across from Rochambeau Avenue. Once you are on the Butler campus, continue on Butler Drive. Just past the Epoch Assisted Living Center, follow the signs to Main Entrance and Parking Lot A. Park in Parking Lot A and walk to the Main Entrance. Inside, signs will direct you to the Executive Cafeteria.

**Convention 2011 Registration**

To register, use this form or download one from the LWVRI Web site. If you plan to join us for lunch, please enclose a check in the amount of \$20 and return to Jane Koster, LWVRI Treasurer, 449 West Reach Dr., Jamestown, RI 02835. Please print clearly as we will use this for your name tag.

Will you be joining us for lunch?  Yes  No

Name \_\_\_\_\_

League \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

## LWVRI Advocacy Committee Proposed Action

The LWVRI Advocacy Committee submits the following program for adoption by the delegates at Convention 2011.

1. The approval of the position on Financing Education in Rhode Island. At the 2009 convention, delegates approved the study
2. The LWVRI position on Initiative and Referendum was adopted in 1978 and in 1998, it was reviewed and changes were made. The position sets out conditions, procedures and safeguards where the League supports the direct power to amend the constitution and initiate legislation. The one situation that the Advocacy committee felt that was not explicit in the position, but would reflect general League policy and positions was the area of individual civil rights. Therefore, the proposal to amend the existing language:  
 “The League believes any measure dealing with an individual person, town, city or corporation should be excluded from the initiative process, as should any question, which conflicts with the United State Constitution (such as: religion, religious practices, or

religious institutions).”

No other changes are proposed to the position. The Initiative & Referendum position be amended by adding the phrase “including civil rights of individuals” at the end of the 5th paragraph, the remainder of the position to be unchanged;

3. The Committee recommends that the remaining position statements be affirmed at the official positions of the LWVRI;

4. There are four positions related to elections be reviewed which the Advocacy Committee plans to review during the upcoming year for consideration for consolidation. The committee would like the convention to authorize the LWVRI board to approve the results of this review pending Council 2012 approval so the positions can be used during the 2012 legislative session, providing that no significant changes are made to the positions.

Derry J. Riding  
Advocacy Committee

### Financing Education in Rhode Island Position

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island calls for methods of financing public education that believes that education financing in our state should provide equality of opportunity for education through a system of taxation that is sufficient, equitable, flexible and coordinated among the different levels of government. The LWVRI believes that the best way to fund method for funding education in Rhode Island is to use a formula which provides funds for all public school children with the state paying at least 50% of divide the cost between and the localities paying the rest.. The League also believes that an equitable, flexible and coordinated standard to determine a locality’s capacity to pay for public education must include a combination of property and income wealth. The state should be responsible for at least 50 percent of core instructional costs. In determining its contribution, the state share for each city and town, the state should use a transparent formula that provides adequate funds for the children while being fair to those who pay local property taxes as well as both state income and sales taxes. and equitable funding for Rhode Island’s school children and takes into account community wealth and student poverty level. The state share of funding to public schools under a formula should be used for restricted to core instructional costs to include school personnel salaries, books and supplies, the cost of operating facilities, and teacher development. No state funds should be used to offset the cost of teacher and employee health benefit costs, which are negotiated at the local level.

The League believes that the enrollment used in the calculation of the amount of state funding under a formula should be based on each school’s enrollment averaged over a year. The League recognizes that students have different needs. To provide equality of opportunity, low income student enrollment should be given additional weight. “weighted” to reflect the poverty level of the students attending each school. The League supports using eligibility for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program (FRPLP) as a measure of poverty level and student need. The League also felt recommends that the use of poverty as an indicator of student need should be reassessed over time to assure that it does indeed reflect the requirements of the ESL (English as a second language) and other special needs student populations in an equitable manner.

When funding a regional school district, the state should calculate the wealth and enrollment of each participating town separately and then give the resulting state share to the town directly. The town would then be responsible for paying both the state and local shares of the formula to the regional school district. (RSD), the state will determine its share for the RSD and the distribution of funds back to the RSD by calculating the wealth and enrollment of each participating town separately. The League does not support a hold harmless position in any funding formula. Finally, the League believes that when funding charter schools in Rhode Island, the funding should “follow the student.”



# LWVUS Sets Out Plans for Two Studies—the Federal Role in Education and Government Privatization

At the LWVUS convention in 2010, delegates agreed to undertake two new studies—the role of the federal government in public education and the privatization of government services and functions.

## What is a Study?

The League only takes action on issues for which it has a position. Before the League can determine its position, it “studies” the issue. The study usually entails reading materials prepared by the League or others that are related to the topic. The study group meets regularly to discuss the progress of the study and the issue of concern. Following the study, the membership meets and answers a series of questions that will lead to the consensus or areas of agreement of the group.

These two studies are operating on a fairly short timetable, so there may only be a couple of meetings before consensus. Participating in a study is a great way to meet new people and to learn about a timely topic.

The education study—“The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education”—will focus on the federal role in pre-K through grade 12 public education and will be limited to issues of equity, funding and standards/assessment. The study will focus on the components of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which speak to the equity issues. It will address the Common Core Standards and the subsequent assessment issues. The LWVUS Board has approved the consensus questions for the

study. Supporting research information has been posted on the LWVUS Web site (or see the article below) and will be followed by a posting of the consensus questions, a leaders guide, and additional short papers. Study meetings to educate members and communities about the issue will be held in the fall culminating with consensus. This new study dovetails not only with the LWVRI’s recent study on Financing Education in Rhode Island, but with the current national debate on “No Child Left Behind.” For more information and updates visit [www.lwv.org/](http://www.lwv.org/). Click on “For Members” and chose “Programs and Projects.”

The Privatization Study will begin in fall 2011. The LWVUS Board has approved the scope for this study, namely, “The purpose of this study is to identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector. It will review the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers, and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability and preservation of the common good.”

With the current talk of budget deficits and the efforts of local and state governments to lower cost, this study could not be more timely. Does privatizing really save money? Are private entities more responsive to citizens?

The Study Committee will be developing resource materials and preparing consensus questions, to be available in late fall 2011. Local Leagues will have from late fall 2011

until early spring 2012 to complete their study and take consensus.

If you are interested in either (or both!) studies, contact your local League president, or LWVRI President Joanne DeVoe. Whether your local League or the state League becomes involved in these studies depends on individuals willing to lead.

## Role Of Federal Government in Public Education: Historical Perspectives

By Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins and Margaret Hawkins Hill

### Defining League Positions in Public Education

The League of Women Voters United States (LWVUS), through its positions on equality of opportunity, supports public education and a range of federal education programs. Areas where specific positions were developed are: integration, quality education, tuition tax credits, federal programs and education financing. Some programs are designed to meet the needs of special education students as well as the economically disadvantaged and ethnic minority students. The League worked for the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 that prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutes that receive federal aid. Historically, many state Leagues have their own positions that speak to equality, to funding, and to assessments and standards at the state level. Additionally the League, under its position on early intervention for children at-risk addresses issues related to the federal role in public education. To understand and reach consensus on the present and future role of the federal government in public education, it is important that we have some understanding of the history of the federal government’s role in education activities. This paper and the links provided on the LWVUS website ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) delineate the materials that support this study.

### Where Have We Been?

From the very beginning of our Republic, a well-educated citizenry was thought to be essential to protect liberty and the general welfare of the people. Even before the Constitution of the United States was established, the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 included responsibilities of the nation for an education system. Education has long been considered a national concern by the federal government. Through federal action, education has been encouraged

*continued page 10*

and financially supported from the first Northwest Ordinance in 1787 to the present. Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution granted Congress the power to lay and collect taxes to provide for the general welfare of the United States. It is under this “general welfare” clause that the federal government has assumed the power to initiate educational activity in its own right and to participate jointly with states, agencies and individuals in educational activities.

During the first century of the new nation, Congress granted more than 77 million acres of the public domain as an endowment for the support of schools through tracts ceded to the states for the support of public schools. In 1841, Congress passed an act that granted 500,000 acres to eight states and later increased grants to a total of 19 states. The federal government also granted money to states, such as distributions of surplus federal revenue and reimbursements for war expenses. Though Congress rarely prescribed that such funds be used only for schools, education continued to be one of the largest expenses for state and local governments, so the states used federal funds whenever possible.

Two Constitutional Amendments played an important role in public education. In 1791, the 10th Amendment stated, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” Public education was not mentioned as one of those federal powers, and so historically has been delegated to the local and state governments.

In 1868, the 14th Amendment guaranteed rights to all citizens by stating “all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens in the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law.”

From colonial times through the early 19th century, before common schools became an established part of society, children were educated in an assortment of institutions and arrangements mostly supported by local entities.

During the 19th century the federal government involvement in education included vocational training, land grants, and the establishment in 1867 of the Office of Education. The purpose of this office was to collect information on schools and teaching that would help states establish effective school systems. The passage of the Second Morrill Act in 1890 gave the Office of Education responsibility for administering support for the original system of land-grant colleges and universities. Vocational education became the next major area of federal aid to schools with the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act

followed by the 1946 George-Barden Act focusing on agriculture, industrial arts and home economics training for high school students.

World War II led to a significant expansion of federal support for education. The Lanham Act of 1941 and the Impact Aid laws of 1950 eased the burden on communities affected by the presence of military and other federal installations by making payments to school districts. In 1944 the GI Bill authorized post-secondary education assistance that would ultimately send nearly 8 million WWII veterans to college.

The Supreme Court handed down the landmark decision *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, declaring state laws that established separate public schools based on race unconstitutional. In 1958, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in response to the Soviet launch of Sputnik. This legislation included support to teachers through graduate fellowships to improve the teaching of science, mathematics and foreign languages.

The anti-poverty and civil rights laws of the 1960s and 1970s dramatically increased the role of the federal government in public education. Laws passed included Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibiting discrimination based on race, sex and disability.

### How Did We Get Here?

In 1965 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA Pub.I.89-1- Stat 27, 20 U.S.C. ch 70) launched a comprehensive set of programs including Title I program of federal aid to the disadvantaged. The Act funds primary and secondary education, while explicitly forbidding the establishment of a national curriculum. As mandated in the Act, the funds are authorized for professional development, instructional materials and resources to support educational programs and parental involvement promotion. The Act was originally authorized through 1970; however, the government has authorized the Act every five to ten years since its enactment. The current reauthorization of ESEA is called the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). NCLB also allows military recruiters to access 11th and 12th grade students’ names, addresses and telephone listings when requested.

In 1980, Congress established the Department of Education as a Cabinet level agency. Then, for the next 12 years under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, education was a priority issue. The religious and private sectors were involved as well, with introductions of tax credits, parental involvement and vouchers. Additionally, in 1982, twenty-five bills were introduced to improve math and science instruction, but all failed in Congress. The tuition tax-credit was proposed for mainly religious schools

**FROM THE VERY BEGINNING**  
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but broadened to private school tuition in 1983. This too, failed. In 1983, the publication of *A Nation At Risk* brought the competitive nature of education to the forefront, warning that the United States no longer held the education edge when compared to the rest of the world.

In 1989, President George H. W. Bush signaled public school choice to be a “high priority.” He also formed a task force to study Hispanic education and called for an “Indian education bill of rights” to help improve education for Native Americans. Drug education also came to the forefront during his Administration. In 1991, President Bush formed the National Education Goals Panel to create a national assessment system to measure progress toward the national education goals for 2000. In that same year, Congress passed a bill to create a national council on education standards and testing, the purpose of which would be to study the feasibility and desirability of creating national standards and a national examination system for students.

During President Bill Clinton’s administration, education achievement focused on the Goals 2000 competitive grants. School districts realized significant gains by using these funds. However, the grants were only awarded to those districts that had the resources to write the grants and study their implication.

President George W. Bush made education issues a priority. NCLB, as described above, was one of the first bills passed by Congress during his Administration.

### Where Are We Now?

The United States has changed dramatically since the early debates on the role of public schools and the role of the federal government in supporting and sustaining them. The importance of education for the common good has shifted from primarily local control to state and national control, with national attention from the Federal government and national organizations. Congress is currently embroiled in a debate and stalemate over the reauthorization of ESEA, the 2001 NCLB. Major issues include the purpose and role of the federal government in education, funding,

and the extent to which the federal government should play a role in public education. Areas for national debate involve school choice, accountability, teacher quality, goals, standards and above all, funding. Federal funding currently averages about 10 percent of local school budgets.

During the coming year, local and state Leagues across the United States will discuss the role of the federal government in public education with the goal of coming to consensus on a number of questions.

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### Authors

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## Coming Up—League Events

May 11

**Reproductive Health Politics** presentation co-sponsored by the Women's Health & Education Fund ([www.whefri.org](http://www.whefri.org)) and 2to1: The Coalition to Preserve Choice. The meeting will be held at the Knight Memorial Library, 275 Elmwood Ave., Providence, on Wednesday, May 11, 2011, from 6-7:30 P.M.

May 23

**LWV West Bay Annual meeting with guest speaker Senator Jack Reed.** Chelo's Restaurant, 2225 Post Road in Warwick Breakfast buffet at 8:30 a.m.; speaker at 9. Contact Marie Hennedy at 884-3976 or download a reservation form at [www.lwvri.org](http://www.lwvri.org) Reservations are due May 18.

May 26

**LWVRI Book Group.** *Cleopatra* by Stacy Schiff Meeting at the Gasbarro residence in Barrington at 1 p.m. Call 816-0331 for information.

June 4

**LWVRI Biennial Convention.** Butler Hospital, Providence. Contact Joanne DeVoe, 247-3004.

June 15

**Joan C. Arnold Civic Participation Kick-Off.** A summer evening's gathering at the home of Roger and Susan Wells in Newport to announce the new award in honor of Joan Arnold. See page 3 for details.

June 23

**LWVRI Book Group.** *Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese. Meeting at the Gasbarro residence in Barrington at 1 p.m. Call 816-0331 for information.



LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara, Pam Anchetta, LWV South Kingstown/Narragansett, Jane Koster and Jill Kassis, both LWV Newport County, and Ruth S. Shur Fellow Charolette "Lottie" Fox at the League's New England regional training on March 25-27. Come to convention 2011 on June 4 and meet Lottie and our state coaches.