



# THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF IOWA

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## LWVIA Leadership Training

**Saturday, August 29, 2015**

**10:00 am - 2:00 pm**

**Marshalltown Community College**

**Registration:** Email Sue Wilson:

[wilsonsue@mchsi.com](mailto:wilsonsue@mchsi.com)

with your name and local league

**Agenda Topics Include:**

Website development - Website promotion - Report on  
LWVUS Council - Membership/Leadership/Development -  
Raising Funds for Local Leagues - LWVIA State Issues

**\$10 Registration fee includes lunch!**

Pay at the door. Let Sue know when you register if  
you have special dietary needs.

**Directions:** Marshalltown Community College is south of the  
Hwy 30 & Hwy 14 Intersection on Hwy 14. Enter South  
Driveway. Meeting is in Rooms 608-610.

## LWVIA CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS:

**August 15, 10 - 2, LWVIA Board Meeting**, Drake Comm Library,  
930 Park Street, Grinnell, IA

**August 26, Women's Equality Day**

**August 29, 10 - 2, LWVIA Leadership Training**, Marshalltown Com College

**September 8, Iowa School Board Election Day**

**September 19, Issues Briefing**, Marshalltown Public Library,

105 W Boone Street, Marshalltown

**September 22, National Voter Registration Day**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from Dr. Deborah Ann Turner, LWVIA Co-President



It has been a very good year for LWVIA. It culminated with a successful state convention where we had the honor of having as our guest speaker, Elisabeth MacNamara, LWVUS national president. She provide the keynote address on *"How Far We've Come!"* Not only did she enjoy visiting Iowa, she was still singing LWVIA praises at National Council two weeks later.

Now it is time for us to reflect upon *how far we have come* during the past year. League, as we all know, is an advocacy organization and spends much of it's time and effort advocating for the issues it supports everywhere from the big hill in Washington, D.C., to the little - but no less important - hill in Iowa. As an advocacy group, we measure our successes by the passage of bills we support in the legislature.

When you take a moment to read the excellent 2015 LWVIA Capitol Report #5 (Final Session Review) written by our lobbyist Craig and Amy, you will realize we had some major wins. These 2015 session victories include increased environmental funding for nutrient reduction efforts, stabilization of REAP funding, expansion of the Human Trafficking legislation, blocking the NRA initiative for children using handguns, and no new restrictions on reproductive rights.

Online voter registration, one of our major legislative priorities, did not make it through the House. However, we got a good start working positively on this issue with the new Secretary Of State Paul Pate and we will be back at it next legislative session. The rest of the legislative wins and losses can be reviewed in the Capitol Report.

League success is measured not only by our legislative gains and losses – we are an organization that has the capacity to engage many other organizations and voices from multiple aspects of our society who are “In League” with the same positions. Therefore, a large portion of League success is measured in its “engagements”. This was one of the leading messages from National at the National Council meeting in June. It was also clearly evidenced by the number of organizations represented at our state convention and the number of hits we get on our web pages that Iowa's Leagues are engaging. Keep it up!

Finally, hat's off to Bonnie Pitz who has led our League well through change and engagement to the new LWVIA. I look forward to working with Bonnie and all of you during the coming year – it is going to be busy, exciting, and engaging!

***In League, Deb***

*Thanks to everyone who helped make Convention a success!*



## PHOTOS FROM LWVIA CONVENTION 2015:



*Save the Date: LWVIA Capitol Day  
Thursday, March 10, 2016*

# LWVUS COUNCIL 2015

by **Polly Horton**

*"Celebrating Our Past, Embracing the Future"* was the theme for Council in June 2015. I found it to be an energizing experience that provided an opportunity to compare our State and Local challenges with others. (I met and/or conversed with 22/42 State delegates.)

The delegation was engaged in sharing information in new and different ways. We used Poll Everywhere application on our laptops or smart phones to respond to questions (voting). There were large group plenary sessions, and small group "breakout" sessions.

LWVUS issues were featured in plenary presentations. Erin O'Brien, U Mass Boston presented "Why States Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies and the Promising State-Level Reforms that Increase Voter Turnout". Matt Leighninger, NCDD, and Emily Shaw, Sunlight Foundation, presented "The New Civic Engagement Environment and Increasing Our Impact." Dan Tokaji, OSU, presented "The New Soft Money" (campaign finance).



**Polly Horton with Deb Turner at LWVUS Council in Leesburg, VA. Horton and Turner were two of 110 delegates to Council which celebrated the 95th anniversary of LWVUS.**

LWVUS speakers directed us to "embrace the future", providing ideas on what change can and should look like. ("Change and Flexibility in the New Environment") The construct is engagement (relationship of mutual attraction) versus recruitment (finding people to meet needs of institution). Think of the League as a community attractive to future members. People like our message. People give us money: remember money is speech.

Deb Turner, LWVIA co-president, and I created an Action Plan to expand on the IOWA.411.org to be used at the state and local level (11 local leagues). We will share more specifics once the LWVIA Board evaluates the plan.

## Sign up for National Voter Registration Day: September 22, 2015

Voter Registration season is coming! The League is once again signed on as an official partner for National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) 2015. This was a wildly successful event for nearly 400 Leagues in 2014. Don't miss out! Sign up your League to participate by hosting registration drives in your community on **Tuesday, September 22, 2015** by visiting the NVRD registration page:

<http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/partner-sign>





Actress Trixie Friganza between other suffragettes in New York in 1908.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

## AFTER 95 YEARS, League of Women Voters' role unchanged

**T**he League of Women Voters is 95 years old, but its role of educating voters and encouraging civic participation has remained remarkably consistent.

In some ways, that's reassuring. In others, it's just depressing.

I spoke recently with Elisabeth MacNamara, national president of the league. She will be in Des Moines on June 6 to speak to the organization's state convention in Des Moines. MacNamara, an attorney from DeKalb County, Georgia, is in her fourth decade of work with the organization.

She said the mission of the organization has changed little since 1920.

"We are literally the living legacy of the fight to get women the right to vote in the last century," MacNamara said.

"And our founders realized that with approximately 23 million women suddenly becoming eligible to vote who had never had a reason to be involved in the political process before, that they needed a lot of information."

She said the league's founder, Carrie Chapman Catt, who was a school superintendent in Iowa and attended Iowa State University, originally thought the organization would exist only temporarily.

"And here we are 95 years later, because of course we quickly discovered that what 23 million women needed, every new voter needs and certainly most experienced voters," she said, which is a trusted source for non-partisan information. That mission remains un-

### ON POLITICS



KATHIE OBRADOVICH

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changed today, she said.

The league has changed some of its methods, adapted to changing demographics and adopted new technology. "But by and large, as long as there is a democracy ... there is a role for the League of Women Voters," she said.

Although the league is all about encouraging voter participation, MacNamara had no criticism for Iowa's caucuses, which tend to draw less than 20 percent of registered voters. There are some "common-sense" reasons for that, she said, but the larger issue is that the nomination process is underused in every state.

"I do think it's a huge missed opportunity," she said, noting that when people participate in the caucuses, their voice really matters in shaping the presidential race. The league is encouraging its Iowa chapters to take advantage of the caucuses as a forum to discuss local and national issues.

One of those issues, which MacNamara is expected to discuss in Iowa, is the influence of "dark money," which influences politics but does not have to be fully disclosed. MacNamara testified in February at a Federal Election Commission hearing on regulations dealing with the disclosure of independent ex-

penditures in politics.

"Super PACs raised and spent more than \$600 million in 2014 to elect or defeat candidates, and will continue to raise and spend unlimited amounts because they are supposedly 'independent' from the candidates when, in reality, there are many ways to coordinate," she told the FEC, according to testimony posted on the league's website.

Sadly, the influence of money in politics is older than the league.

"If you dial back 100 years there's no question that money was a huge problem at that point, too. In fact, money, in one form or another, has been a problem in our politics from the beginning," MacNamara said.

The league has encouraged the FEC to enact more disclosure regulations for super PACs, but the real solution gets back to a familiar theme: voter participation.

"We've got to not let ourselves get discouraged. Don't decide it doesn't matter — get mad and get out there and participate if you don't want all of that money influencing our elections," she said. "The only anecdote to a flood of money is a flood of votes."

The league was created to teach women how to take advantage of their new right to vote. Nearly a century later, one of the major political parties may nominate a woman to run for president for the first time. That's something a non-partisan organization like the league can cheer — in abstract.

"Everything we're going to be doing is completely even-handed, regardless of the gender or the ethnicity of the candidate who is running," she said. "On the other hand, obviously, I'd love to see way more diversity in who participates."

# IOWA'S SAFE AT HOME LAW

by **Linda Murken**

As we all know, victims of domestic violence, sexual violence and/or stalking are at great risk of future violence from their abusers. And an abuser will go to great lengths to find a victim who has fled.

The Safe at Home Act, passed by the Iowa Legislature this year, will help victims/survivors of personal violence protect themselves by providing a mechanism for them to keep their addresses private. Secretary of State Paul Pate and staff members held a roundtable discussion at the Ames Public Library on June 16 to explain the program. Attendees included representatives from ACCESS, the Story County Auditor's Office, the Story County Supervisors, the Story County Sheriff, the League of Women Voters and the media.

The bill came about through the commitment of Rep. Fischer from Marshall County. A constituent of his who moved to California, which is a Safe at Home state, contacted him to suggest that Iowa adopt this approach as well. Rep. Fischer then contacted Secretary Pate, and they worked together to shepherd the bill through the Legislature.

Iowa will be the 34<sup>th</sup> state to implement Safe at Home, which Pate says will be operational by January 1. The Secretary of State's Office (SOS) was chosen for the role of managing Iowa's program because (1) they run elections (voter registration lists are pretty public) and (2) they function as administrators.

SOS will set up protected Des Moines addresses for survivors who register with them. By using that address, a survivor's first-class mail will come to SOS office, then be forwarded to wherever address the survivor gives them. The person must notify the SOS of any address changes. If moving around to stay safe, the person can give an address of a relative or friend as long as she or he checks regularly for mail. The registrant has to be a "good citizen;" meaning she or he can't use Safe at

Home to hide from Courts or creditors. SOS will work with the DOT so a registrant can obtain a drivers' license with the protected address.

The actual addresses of the survivors will be highly protected within SOS office. As an example, the system will not be open to law enforcement because an abuser may be employed as an officer.

A person will be able to apply for the program online and will be eligible to be in the program for 4 years, with an option to renew.

Pate says that the states that have the best results are those with the best publicity programs and the best collaboration with other agencies. His office is reaching out to advocates to be point people. The website will also re-direct to the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV), to provide information on safety planning and local resources. His office is holding roundtable discussions throughout the state.

The SOS Office will handle voter registration (initial and address changes) for the registrants, who will vote absentee based on their physical address. SOS will request the needed ballots from the County Auditor – by precinct rather than voter name – and will assign an identifying number for ballot protection.

Pate mentioned several challenges in implementing Safe at Home: his office only received funding for one employee, they will need to scan mail to make sure nothing dangerous is forwarded on to registrants, how to send packages (such as Christmas presents) and the potential volume. The Crime Victim Assistance Program within the Attorney General's Office has helped with some funding. Regarding numbers, he said that Minnesota serves over 4,000 people per year, with over 2,000 in the program at any given time. Missouri's program serves around 1,200.

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## IOWA'S SAFE AT HOME LAW

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Pate stressed that in providing address confidentiality, Safe at Home is only one resource for the survivor, not the solution to personal violence. He referred back to his terms in the Senate in the early 1990s and said he is personally frustrated that we aren't further than we are in combatting domestic and sexual violence.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCES:

**Ia Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA)**

[iowacasa.org](http://iowacasa.org)

**IA Sexual Abuse Hotline:**

#1-800-284-7821

**Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV)**

[icadv.org](http://icadv.org)

**IA Domestic Violence Hotline:**

#1-800-942-0333

**Iowa Attorney General Office  
Victim Services Support Program**

[https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/for-crime-victims/victim-services-](https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/for-crime-victims/victim-services-support-program/)

[support-program/](https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/for-crime-victims/victim-services-support-program/)

#800-373-5044

**National Sexual Violence  
Resource Center**

## MORE ON LWVIA 2015 CONVENTION



### CONVENTION KEYNOTE BY LWVUS PRES ELISABETH MACNAMARA

"How Far We've Come" was the theme for MacNamara's address at the the LWVIA Convention in June. As president of LWVUS, Elisabeth stressed how the role of League has evolved from the time of Carrie Chapman Catt, but how the mission has remained true to that designated by our founding mothers. In the photo, left, MacNamara visits with Grinnell member Selva Lehman during a convention break.

*Save the Date: LWVIA Issues Briefing  
Saturday, September 19, 2015*



# TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) STUDY

by Gaylen Wobeter

Delegates to the Iowa League of Women Voters State Convention overwhelming approved the following program study: ***“A Study of Tax Increment Financing in Iowa including its purpose, uses, benefits, and costs to state and local governments.”*** This study was recommended by Pat Jensen on behalf of the Johnson County League.

Barbara Beaumont from Johnson County has agreed to chair the study. Linda Schreiber from Johnson County

also volunteered to be on the study committee. Several people expressed interest in serving on the TIF study committee at the time of the vote at state convention. Would League members in Iowa who are interested in serving on this committee please email Barbara Beaumont ASAP? Her email address is [bgbeaumont@juno.com](mailto:bgbeaumont@juno.com)

We are hoping to have a TIF study committee that is representative of the entire state.

## UPDATE ON NEW LWVUS MEMBERSHIP DATABASE:

After more than 15 years, LWVUS is moving to a new database system which will help them connect more effectively with LWV members. The former LWV Membership Database was temporarily locked on April 23, 2015, as they prepared for conversion to the new system. In preparation for the new membership database, each League must designate AT LEAST ONE PERSON to serve as Roster Manager. The individual(s) needs to be someone with great attention to detail and accuracy. The new system will allow Roster Managers to access the database using their email address and personal password, so no more hunting down the right credentials! ***Local League leadership will need to click this link to fill out the survey with the name(s) and email address of your local Roster Manager(s).***

<http://www.surveymoz.com/s3/2091040/RosterManager>

LWVIA

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