

Winter 2013



League of Women  
Voters of Iowa

# THE VOTER

## Board 2012-13

**President:**

Bonnie Pitz

[dbpitz@iowatelecom.net](mailto:dbpitz@iowatelecom.net)

**Vice President:**

Deborah Turner M.D. J.D.

[lvwdmetro@hotmail.com](mailto:lvwdmetro@hotmail.com)

**Secretary:**

Carol Cooper

**Treasurer:**

Sherry Griggs

[sherry@dimensionsacctg.com](mailto:sherry@dimensionsacctg.com)

**Directors:**

E.J. Gallagher

Mary Rae Bragg

Lauris Olson

Dianne Bystrom

Fran Henderson

Tina Pace

Dawn Suter

Myrna Loehrlein

**Admin. Asst.:**

Melissa Cahalan

[melissacahalan@yahoo.com](mailto:melissacahalan@yahoo.com)

**Lobbyists:**

Amy Campbell

[amy@ialobby.com](mailto:amy@ialobby.com)

Craig Patterson

[craig@ialobby.com](mailto:craig@ialobby.com)

## Table of Contents

Page 2: President's Letter

Page 3: Save the Date

Secretive, Out of State Donors, Dominate Election

Page 4: Secretive, Out of State Donors, Dominate Election Cont.

Secretary of State Hearing

Page 5: Secretary of State Hearing Cont.

MLD Meeting

LWVUS provides exciting opportunities for Leaguers

Page 6: Lobby Day 2013: Making your voice heard!

Page 7: Lobby Day 2013: Making your voice heard! Cont.

Page 8: Public Hearing on Iowa Voter Purge Rule



"MLD Meeting", January 19, 2013, Cedar Rapids  
Pictured: Sue Johannsen, Bonnie Pitz, Susan Cory

# President's Letter

**2012-2013**--What an amazing year for League of Women Voters in Iowa. We have participated in three Secretary of State Hearings, written statewide newspaper articles on Voter Purge in Iowa, Restoration of Voting Rights, and Gun Safety. Our past President, Myrna Loehrlein, spoke on Iowa Public Radio on Voter Access. Also on the radio program was Secretary of State Schultz, Ben Stone of the ACLU and Renee Schulte, past State Representative. We participated in a Campaign Finance Reform Press Conference attended by League members from all over the State of Iowa. Last fall the League registered over 1,000 new voters and held 24 Candidate Forums across the State. On January 29, 2013, League joined 48 other organizations, including Iowa Hospital Association, AARP, and the Iowa Catholic Conference to support expansion of Medicaid. We are not done yet!

**Lobby Day, Advocacy Day, Capitol Day**--whatever you call our special day in Des Moines is was on February 12. Our list of Legislative Priorities is long but four areas were selected by the Advocacy Committee (Judie Hoffman, Dawn Suter, Jo Ann Finkenbinder, E.J. Gallagher, Deborah Turner) to commit to this year. At the top of the list is Voter Issues--from Voter ID to Secretary of State Rules--we are all impacted by the recent Voter Suppression going on nationwide and in our own state of Iowa. Mental Health -Disability Redesign affecting all Iowans and county organization is on our list. Affordable Care Act and expansion of Medicaid to make sure health insurance for the poor is available is included. Finally, Shackling of Pregnant Prisoners-Not and the funding of Community Based Corrections are the Justice Issues we are supporting.

Missing from the list is Gun Safety. The League very much wanted to put this on the top of our list to take action on. Our actual ability to make changes at the state level is just not feasible this year. League members are encouraged to contact their representatives at the National level to move toward protecting innocents from gun violence. When you need contact information go to our lobby website [www.ialobby.com](http://www.ialobby.com). There is an amazing amount of information and up to date bill tracker.

Have you attended Lobby Day before? If you have, you know it is a fascinating experience, you meet and talk to people you have only seen on TV before. The experts lined up by our lobbyists are amazing--to give you up to date reports on the issues affecting every Iowan. You will sit in on hearings and committee meetings if you wish and watch legislators and lobbyists at work. You will wear your League of Women Voter pin proudly and talk about the issues you find most compelling. Join us on February 12, 2013.

In League,

*Bonnie Pitz*

President, League of Women Voters of Iowa

“2012-2013--What an amazing year for League of Women Voters in Iowa.”-  
Bonnie Pitz

# SAVE THE DATE!



## JUNE 1<sup>st</sup>

### State League Convention

When: Saturday, June 1, 2013

Where: The Memorial Union, Iowa State University, Ames

Cost: \$30

Register: [lwviald@mediacombb.net](mailto:lwviald@mediacombb.net)

**Additional Opportunity:** On May 31, from 2-5 p.m., the Carrie Chapman Catt Center will present training on Advocating an Issue as a segment of their 2013 Ready to Run training series. League members are welcome to attend. For more info, or to register, go to <http://cattcenter.las.iastate.edu/events/ready-to-run/>

**Hotel:** We have reserved several rooms at the Hotel Memorial Union for the convenience of those who want to stay over because they are attending Ready to Run or the State League Board meeting, or would rather travel the night before. Suites (at \$95) have two double beds, other rooms (at \$85) have 1 queen or full-size bed.

To reserve a room, call 800-433-3449 or 515-296-6848. Mention that you will be attending the Iowa League of Women Voters Convention. Our block of rooms will be released on April 30, so please make your reservation by then.

## Secretive, Out of State Donors, Dominate Election in Iowa

New Report Sheds Light on Dark Money Spent in Congressional Races

Press Release--January 16, 2013- Iowa PIRG

Des Moines- Over 96% of campaign donations for Iowa's Congressional races came from out of state funders, according to a report released today by the Iowa Public Interest Research Group (Iowa PIRG). The report, entitled "Billion Dollar Democracy: the Unprecedented Role of Money in the 2012 Elections," examined the deep pocket spending by Super PACs and other non-party entities in the 2012 campaign cycle. Results of Iowa PIRG's study confirm concerns that the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. FEC* would open the floodgates to dark, outside money in political campaigns.

"The fact that so much of Iowa's campaigns' spending came from groups outside the state is a perversion of the democratic process," said Kramer McLuckie, Field Associate with Iowa PIRG. "When shadowy, out-of-state donors control the campaign coffers, it warps the relationship between representatives and their constituents."

The report also revealed a lack of transparency in outside spending. About 37% of the outside spending in Iowa Congressional races came from groups who do not disclose their funders.

"Iowa is the first caucus state in the nation, and we should also be the best in the nation when it comes to campaign finance laws," said Senator Jeff Danielson of Cedar Falls, long time proponent of campaign finance disclosure reforms. "Democracy does not work in the dark, and there is way too much dark money in politics today. A little sunshine will go a long way."

(Cont. Pg. 4)



Other organizations such the League of Women Voters of Iowa and Move to Amend rallied behind this call for reform at the Capitol today as Iowa PIRG released their findings at a lobby event to “Reclaim Democracy” that emphasized the restoration of voice in democracy for voters as a patriotic endeavor.

Bonnie Pitz, President of the League of Women Voters of Iowa, said, “We believe that the methods of financing political campaigns should ensure the public’s right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidate to compete more equitably for public office and allow maximum citizens participation in the political process.”

“Late January marks the third anniversary of the Supreme Court’s disastrous decision,” said McLuckie. “It’s time Iowa joined the 11 other states and over 400 communities demanding our Congressional leaders overturn *Citizens United*.”

LWVIA joined Iowa PIRG and Move to Amend for a lobby Day activity, Rally for Democracy on January 16, 2013. A training session at noon had 50 people participate-about 20 of them League members. League had members attend from Sioux City, Ames, Metro Des Moines and Jasper County. At about 2:20 a Press Conference was held in the State Capitol Rotunda with Senator Danielson speaking on this issue, Kramer McLuckie releasing the results of their report on out of state donors impact on Iowa Congressional elections, Senator Pam Jochum speaking on her long involvement in Campaign Finance Reform and Bonnie Pitz speaking for the League of Women Voters of Iowa. Approximately 70 people attended the press conference with 8 news outlets covering the events.

## Secretary of State Hearing January 3, 2013

**Background:** In the summer of 2012 Secretary of State Matt Schultz adopted new emergency rules, without public or legislative input, in an effort to purge the voting rolls because of voter fraud. The unintended consequences of the rules were to intimidate eligible voters through letters questioning their citizenship status. In a further development from a hearing at a Legislative Rules Committee meeting on September 11, 2012, we became aware of the Secretary of State hiring DCI agents to investigate voter fraud. His intention was spend \$280,000 of HAVA money, Help America Vote Act money to investigate citizens of Iowa. HAVA money was allocated in 2002 to help states get up to date voting equipment, provisional balloting and other safeguards, improvements in voter registration systems and poll worker training and administration. Schultz’s actions were seemingly a misuse of HAVA funds.

The League of Women Voters of Iowa sent a letter to Senator Harkin and Grassley in regard to the use of HAVA funds. The letter was sent September 25, 2012. In October State Senator Thomas Courtney of Burlington filed a complaint with the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. Inspector General Curtis Crider sent a letter Dec. 5, 2012 asking Schultz’s Office to turn over records for his review. “We are in the process of reviewing this complaint and are in need of some information from your records to assist us in evaluating its merits,” Crider wrote in the letter. Warren Jenkins, Iowa’s chief deputy auditor, said his office was working with the inspector general to review the spending but cautioned it could take time to reach a conclusion. (DM Register 1-11-13)

Last August the League joined the ACLU of Iowa, League of Latin American Citizens, Interfaith Alliance of Iowa, American Friends Service Committee, National Association of Social Workers, Iowa Chapter, in filing our formal Comments against the two objectionable voting rules, (the purge rule and the complaint rule). Schultz granted a request for a hearing with the Secretary’s Office, setting it for 2-4 pm on January 3, 2013 across the state via ICN. League members across the state participated in the

hearing and spoke out against the rules and actions by the Secretary of State. Their statements were very eloquent and showed the strength of League. Speakers included Maria Rundquist from Sioux City, Karen Person from Metro Des Moines, Dawn Suter from Johnson County and Jo Rod with her husband Bob from Ames.

My remarks were brief and included the following:

“The League of Women Voters believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. Much of our work is focused on voter registration and voter education. Like the poll workers who just spoke we are finding it is all of a sudden a lot more complicated than in the past. We believe no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination. We believe it is important to involve the legislative process and not “short circuit” the process. We believe County Auditors should be involved, there were several newspaper stories that suggested they were not. We believe voter list changes should be transparent, accurate and legal. The League of Women Voters of Iowa wants to work toward assuring access to voting and ensuring the right to vote of the many rather than the persecution of the few.”

*Bonnie Pitz*

President, League of Women Voters of Iowa

## MLD Meeting

On Jan. 19th, 2013 twenty-two League of Women Voters members met in Cedar Rapids to discuss Membership, and Leadership Development. LWVIA President Bonnie Pitz gave opening remarks detailing the state League's recent activities on matters pertaining to the Secretary of State and voter suppression. Melissa Cahalan gave a presentation on setting up and administering a Facebook page and Tina Pace led a group review of the MLD best practices. Many great ideas were shared on engaging current members and recruiting new ones. It was announced that the LWVIA grew by 5.83% in 2012! Members from Ames, Dubuque, Linn Co, Johnson Co, Muscatine, Jasper Co, and Black Hawk-Bremer attended along with four members of the state board.



## LWVUS provides exciting opportunities for Leaguers

Are you ready for stimulating new growth experiences? Or do you know other Leaguers with exceptional leadership skills?

Your LWVUS nominating committee is beginning its outreach to local and state Leagues for the two-year 2014 slate of nominees for the national board as well as the nominating committee. This is the time to consider all that you and your colleagues have to offer our organization and our country and respond positively to our call! We live in interesting times and you can help shape the future.

We understand that some local and state Leagues are loathe to share the talented and capable Leaguers in their midst. But we want to assure you that when your members complete their work with LWVUS, they will return reinvigorated and with renewed dedication to our cause.

Now is the time for reflection on your future League plans and/or those of the other talented Leaguers you know. We would be delighted to hear from you with any questions that you might have regarding the process.

We will send out the official call for nominations in a few months, at which time you can nominate yourself or others you see as potential national leaders.

# Lobby Day 2013: Making your voice heard!

Twenty LWVIA members met at the State Historical Society in Des Moines on Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>. The members were updated on where our 2013 priorities stood in the legislative process and we discussed strategy determining which legislators to talk to on a given issue and what points to raise. President Bonnie Pitz, lobbyists Amy Campbell and Craig Patterson, Linda Murken, Ames League President and members of the State Advocacy Committee did a great job preparing for the day.

The Advocacy Committee and State Board, with input from our lobbyists, decided to focus on four topics on Lobby Day:

1. Voting Rights, both the bill requiring photo ID and the proposed Secretary of State's rules on purging voter rolls.
  - a. Myrna Loehrlein, LWVIA and Rita Bettis, ACLU Iowa
2. Women's Health, which was addressed by discussing Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act.
  - a. Linda Murken, LWVIA
3. Mental Health Redistricting and Reform
  - a. Amy Campbell, Campbell/Patterson and Teresa Bomhoff, LWVIA
4. Justice issues including appropriations for Domestic Violence reform, shackling pregnant prisoners and others. The sub-committee on justice issues had been at the legislature on February 6<sup>th</sup> and was back at work on lobby day.
  - a. Laurie Shipper, Executive Director, Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence

We had discussed the idea of introducing a bill on gun control. The League's positions on gun control, mental health, and other areas provided the comprehensive approach needed on this issue. After talking to a couple key legislators we decided not to pursue this as state government is waiting for the federal government to take action. We will continue to monitor any bills introduced.

Voting rights came to the fore because of emergency rule changes introduced by Secretary of State (SOS) Matt Schultz in 2012 and the introduction of a Voter ID bill in the house. The Voter ID bill will not pass the Senate so we did not focus on that with legislators. Its introduction does create an opportunity for voter education as we are fairly certain it will be introduced again. Myrna Loehrlein will spearhead this effort using the League of Minnesota's successful model.

The implementation of emergency rules, largely dealing with purging voter rolls, can be affected by advocacy this year. The League has joined the ACLU and other groups to protest these rule changes since their introduction. These rules were introduced by the SOS and are not legislation, so the body that decides their future is the Administrative Rules Review Committee (ARRC). We lobbied members of that committee to block these rules. Rep. Dave Jacoby, who serves on the committee, suggested it would be impactful to have constituents write their legislator who serves on the committee. And that's where you come in. Later this week we are going to ask those members to *take direct action* and write their legislator serving on the ARRC. We will send you background information, talking points and sample letters. Please make your voice heard to ensure free and fair elections continue in Iowa.

Women's Health was discussed in the context of the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. "Governor Terry Branstad has said he will not consider a Medicaid expansion because the federal government is not a dependable partner financially and because Medicaid has done little to improve the health status of Iowans."<sup>1</sup> We hope to change his mind.

The affordable Care Act (ACA) includes an expansion of Medicaid which includes increasing eligibility from 133% of the federal poverty level to 138% or \$14,856. The ACA pays 100% of the cost of Medicaid expansion for the first three years, declining successively each year to 2020 where states would pay 10%. Currently states pay 33% to 40% of Medicaid costs. Importantly, the expansion covers around 150,000 Iowans. Estimates are that approximately 70,000 of those people are covered by Iowa Cares, the Iowa Medicaid enterprise<sup>2</sup>. The remaining 80,000 people are currently uninsured. Many of them women who work part time and are not eligible for benefits, are between the ages of 54-66 who have no coverage once their husbands' move from employer based coverage to Medicare and those who cannot afford currently offered individual plans. Approximately 17,204 Iowans who are uninsured are between the ages of 50 and 64.<sup>3</sup>

We talked to several legislators on this issue. Some, like Representative Linda Miller favors improving Iowa Care. The program "is a health care program that provides limited services for people who are not otherwise eligible for Medicaid". The Governor proposes revamping and expanding this program in lieu of Medicaid expansion under ACA. The estimated cost of doing this is \$54.9 million dollars over the next three years<sup>5</sup>.



Many legislators we talked to thought it was hopeless; Medicaid expansion will not happen in Iowa this year. Others held out hope and encouraged advocacy. They suggested that with enough public pressure, minds could be changed. The Governor is meeting with Secretary Sebelius this weekend so it's important we reach him before that visit.

That's why later this week we will provide you with information on Medicaid expansion in Iowa and ask you to write the Governor. Start thinking about how this expansion affects you, your family, friends and neighbors so you can personalize your letter. In this age of digital communication, a personal letter still packs the greatest punch, so get ready to WRITE!

Laurie Schipper, Executive Director of the Iowa Coalition against Domestic Violence (ICADV) gave us an update on the reorganization of ICADV and the Iowa Coalition against Sexual Assault (Iowa Casa). The Iowa Attorney General's office, Crime Victims Assistance Division currently administers the Federal and state funds to domestic violence and sexual assault programs on a grant basis. Federal funds have accounted for 50-65% of all victim services dollars in Iowa<sup>6</sup>. The legislature's inadequate appropriations had been augmented by the transfer of funds from the Crime Victim Compensation Fund until 2009, when that fund was depleted<sup>7</sup>. The reorganization was driven by the recognition that the current system for providing services wasn't financially sustainable and was not serving the victims as effectively as newer models successful in other states. ICADV and Iowa CASA along with their members reorganized from 28 community based centers to 6 regional centers, changed their program delivery model and streamlined expenses. What they need now is the appropriations to fund the reorganization and ensure ongoing sustainable services. The Attorney General has asked for a total of \$9 million dollars, representing an increase over their current funding of \$6 million dollars. League members lobbied several representatives to vote in favor of the appropriation. League members are following up with Rep. Chip Baltimore and Senator Liz Mathis to provide them information that will convince them fewer shelters does not equate to less service. The new model allows for more cost effective and flexible shelter alternatives.

We also talked to legislators about shackling of pregnant prisoners. Subsequently President Bonnie Pitz has already sent requests to members in Johnson County to contact Senator Dvorsky, a deciding voice in this legislation.

Finally, we advocated for full funding for the Mental Health and Disability Services Redesign. The redesign includes regionalizing the system where counties join together to deliver services. The state will pay the non federal share of Medicaid services and for services to people that do not qualify for Medicaid. The redesign shifted that responsibility from the Counties to the state beginning 7/1/2012. There are three funding streams included in the redesign. Two manage the cost of paying for non Medicaid services. First, there is the transition fund. This fund covers the cost counties incur from 7/1/12 to 1/1/2014 in providing non Medicaid services and several months of Medicaid bills received after 7/1/12. The amount appropriated for this fund has varied as has the determination of which counties need the funds. Amounts have ranged from \$1.5 million under one scenario developed by DHS to \$20 million, originally recommended by the legislature. Secondly, the regional services fund provides block grants to counties for non-Medicaid services beginning in FY 14. The current proposed appropriation is 13.4 million. The third fund is the Equalization fund which is based on the new per capita equalization formula that requires counties to spend \$47.28 per person on their mental health and disability services. The 55 counties whose property tax levy resulted in less than this amount will receive an "equalization payment." The appropriation discussed for this fund is \$20 million.

While the appropriations will change as the legislature delves into issues of equity and priorities, the League will continue to support full funding for this important redesign.

We also stated our support for ensuring Core Services are comprehensive and not whittled away to meet the current lowest common denominator.

### YOUR VOICE CREATES THE WORLD YOU WANT TO LIVE IN!

A special thank you to Rita Bettis, ACLU Iowa, for her partnership and leadership on many of these issues and to Linda Murken and Deb Turner who put together talking points for members on several of our priorities. I reference that work in this article. —Dawn Suter Johnson County LWV

#### Footnotes

*I referenced talking point handouts from Linda Murken and Dr. Deb Turner throughout this article. They are available by request.*

1. Amy Campbell and Craig Patterson, *The Capitol Report*, 11 Feb. 2013
2. Iowa Public Radio, *River to River*, 2 Feb 2013
3. Ann Black, *The Campaign begins for Medicaid expansion*, [http://States.AARP.org/the\\_campaign\\_begins\\_for\\_Medicaid\\_expansion](http://States.AARP.org/the_campaign_begins_for_Medicaid_expansion), 29 Jan 2013
4. Iowa Department of Human Services, *Iowa Care, Medicaid enterprise*, [www.ime.state.ia.us/iowacare](http://www.ime.state.ia.us/iowacare)
5. Iowa Public Radio, *River to River*, 2 Feb 2013
6. Scott, Rachael, *Modernizing Iowa's System of Services to Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault*. Undated handout. Produced by Iowa Coalition against Domestic Violence and Iowa Coalition against sexual assault. [www.icadv.org](http://www.icadv.org)

# Public Hearing on Iowa Voter Purge Rule

Civil Liberties Union of Iowa, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the American Friends of Service Committee, Citizens for Community Improvement, and experienced poll workers were also represented. The purpose of the hearing was to express views regarding the Iowa Voter Purge Rule which requires that the Secretary of State:

- Periodically obtain lists of foreign national who are residing in Iowa, from a federal or state agency.
- Match names against voter registration records.
- Turn over a list of likely matches to the appropriate Iowa agency to determine whether the registrant has obtained citizenship.
- Notify the voter that he/she may not be a citizen and that registering illegally is a class D felony.
- Encourage the voter to cancel his/her registration or provide proof of citizenship.

Approximately 40 people spoke; about one-fourth identified themselves as naturalized citizens. Common themes included:

1. The Secretary of State is not authorized to make the rule and should work with legislators and auditors.
2. Voter fraud in Iowa is a problem that has been invented. There is a lack of evidence to support the allegation.
3. Money should be spent more wisely. HAVA (Help America Voter Act) funds are being misdirected.
4. The rule targets immigrants, and American born citizens with Hispanic names, as well. It implies that people are guilty/criminalizes people who are not criminals. People are intimidated, especially by words like "felony". Poll workers report increased fear among voters in the last two years.
5. Not enough time is allowed for people to prove citizenship and it can be expensive to get copies of documentation.
6. There are flaws in the lists.
7. The only states that are tightening rules are swing states and tightening rules is associated with a drop in voter participation.
8. The duty of the office of the Secretary of State is to protect democracy. The rule is undemocratic. Voting should be made easier. Participation should not be stifled. The rights of the many should be preserved rather than the persecution of the few.
9. Iowa has always been ahead of the curve in civil protections.

A hearing before the Administrative Rules Committee, a legislative panel, will determine whether the rule can be formally adopted. If it clears that committee, it could take effect in March. —Ruth Campbell Jasper County LWV

*Ed. Note: The rules did clear the Administrative Rules Committee, and the rules could take effect in March.*

## The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is Under Attack

By Karen Person, League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Des Moines

League's history is all about voting, so it is no surprise that LWVUS is at the forefront in upholding the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965, the landmark legislation that outlawed discriminatory voting practices. On Wednesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, the Supreme Court with review *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder*, a case that questions the constitutionality of Section 5 of the VRA. LWVUS has signed onto an amicus brief to signify our support for Section 5, and to ask the Court to uphold the lower court's ruling. Elisabeth MacNamara, LWVUS President, stated, "The thought that the Supreme Court might overrule Congress and take away voting rights should send a chill down the spine of every American. Without Section 5, we can expect to see states consider a range of restrictions on voting . . . unparalleled since the days of Jim Crow."

More information is available at the LWVUS website, <http://www.lwv.org/content/get-involved-supporting-voting-rights-act>

Additionally you can link to the article, "The Vote Is the Emblem of Equality – And Now It is Under Attack" by Elisabeth MacNamara, LWVUS President, by clicking: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elisabeth-macnamara/the-vote-is-the-emblem-of\\_b\\_2663663.html?](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elisabeth-macnamara/the-vote-is-the-emblem-of_b_2663663.html?)