



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF IOWA

BOARD 2014-15:

President:

Bonnie Pitz

dbpitz@iowatelecom.net

Vice President:

Deborah Turner M.D. J.D.

lwvdmetro@hotmail.com

Secretary:

Mary Rae Bragg

Treasurer:

Pat Harper

Directors:

E.J. Gallagher

Sue Wilson

Dianne Bystrom

Polly Horton

Tina Pace

Mary Ann Nelson

Terese Grant

Admin Assistant:

Karen Person

LWVkaren@yahoo.com

Lobbyists:

Amy Campbell

amy@ialobby.com

Craig Patterson

craig@ialobby.com

Website:

www.lwvia.org

LWVIA Capitol Day

Wednesday, February 25, 2015

Agenda

10:00 Meet in Room 15 in the State Capitol

Update from Amy & Craig

11:00 Meet with Legislators or attend Hearings

12:00 Lunch on your own in Capitol Cafeteria

Ask your Local Legislators to join you

12:30 -2:00 Lobbying Legislators or attend Hearings

2:00 Wrap Up

**Visit the League Table on First Floor Rotunda
with LWVIA Priorities and Talking Points**

Topics for 2015:

Water Quality & Online Voter Registration

Topics may change as legislation progresses

Register with Administrative Assistant Karen Person

lwvkaren@yahoo.com

No charge, but send name & Local League

LWVIA CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS:

February 25, 10 am, LWVIA Capitol Day, Des Moines, IA

March 28, 10 am, LWVIA Board Meeting, Iowa City Downtown Library

May 16, 10 am, LWVIA Board Meeting, Waterloo, IA

June 6, 9 am LWVIA Convention, Des Moines, University, Des Moines, IA

Contact Bonnie if needing details: #(641) 275-1712

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from Bonnie Pitz, LWVIA President

January, 2015: Happy New Year to our League Members!

The New Year has arrived- 2015- and we look forward to a fabulous convention in Des Moines on June 5-6, 2015. We will be meeting at Des Moines University and the Des Moines Metro League has chosen the theme, "Look How Far We Have Come!" We are awaiting confirmation from a famous League Leader to be our keynote speaker.



What did we accomplish in 2014? League made quite the effort to improve water quality in Iowa, we talked and wrote to Legislators, attended meetings and hearings, held tons of programs and made quite an impression on the Environmental Community that League is serious about working towards improving water quality in our state. LWVIA State Board member Sue Wilson has taken a leadership role with Dubuque and Linn County Leagues to move toward an Interstate Organization of Leagues to improve water quality for Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Local Leagues in Iowa will be hearing about this movement during this month of January.

Beginning in the summer of 2014 League collaborated with the Brennan Law Center and ACLU to bring Online Voter Registration to Iowa. We joined a coalition of groups to make sure Online Voter Registration is free, fair and accessible to all Iowa Citizens. The Secretary of State Office developed regulations to move OVR forward and the League joined ACLU to submit comments in regard to those regulations on November 3, 2014. The big emphasis was not to just have OVR for citizens with a driver's license but to work toward a regulation or legislation that encompassed all citizens, all students, minority populations, the elderly, those with disabilities and those with lower incomes.

A Voter Registration Commission Hearing was held on December 30, 2014 and we were there. I attended with Linda Murken, President, Ames LWV and Carolyn Klaus, Ames League member with extensive experience in voter registration. My testimony was centered on the overall necessity to include all citizens in the process. Linda spoke specifically about the ID requirement of college students when registering to vote. She said, "We found that the DOT will not allow somebody who holds an out-of-state driver's license to get an Iowa ID or Driver's license without relinquishing their out-of-state license. That would be a problem for those folks. It would be impossible for them to get an ID that would allow them to access the system."

Associated Press covered the hearing and the report was in the Des Moines Register. Also covering the hearing was TV Channel 13 with Dave Price. They had it as their lead story on the 6:00 news. My Des Moines area grandchildren were very surprised to see "Grammy" on TV.

We were able to meet newly elected Paul Pate to the Secretary of State office. His comments were, "My goal is, well before the next election cycle, we would have this in place on some level, and keep expanding as we have resources to do that."

This last year we learned how to put VOTE411.org into place, a voter guide that is easy to use and very professional. This is the first electronic voter guide for Iowa and League is well known for providing nonpartisan information so that voters can make their best decisions. The Iowa League has had paper guides in past years. The great news we received from Google Analytics is that nearly 5,000 sessions were accessed in Iowa. (4,856 to be exact) The average time spent on the site was 7 seconds short of 5 minutes. We feel this was pretty good for the first time using this system. Terese Grant worked with me to get the site up and going. Terese was able to put all the local elections for Poweshiek on the VOTE411.org site. We activated this site just after Labor Day and have archived the information to help us as we set up future VOTE411.org voter guides. We used bookmarks with the VOTE411.org information to spread information to the public and public presentations helped to get the word out. **(continued on page 3)**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 2

The new 2015 Legislative session will be starting soon and we will again focus on our Legislative Priorities. A brand new website will be available to League members any day now and we will send out notice to all League members about this momentous achievement. Karen Person has worked extremely hard to get it together and going. It is beautiful!!!

We are going to have a fabulous 2015 and you will be hearing a great deal from the State League!

All the Best,

Bonnie

League Photos:



Above Left: Sister Simone Campbell with LWVIA President Bonnie Pitz at the "We the People, We the Voters" press conference and rally on October 31. Above: LWVIA member Jessie Hill joins Bonnie following the Nuns on the Bus press conference at the Polk County Elections Office. Left: Todd Pettys, Professor of Law at University of Iowa, spoke before the Ames League on the Evolution of Voting Rights.

A MUDDLED VICTORY FOR IOWA'S VOTERS

by Jennifer L. Clark, January 6, 2015

Reprinted from the Brennan Center for Justice 1/16/2015 Newsletter

Last week, the Iowa Voter Registration Commission (the “Commission”) held a public hearing on proposed regulations to establish online voter registration, signaling its intent to move forward with the rules after a formal vote in the coming weeks. Unfortunately, the Commission missed an opportunity by failing to pass a full online registration system and to make electronic registration at agencies mandatory. These advances, if adopted, would have benefitted more voters and resulted in even more cost savings for the state. The Iowa Legislature should pick up where the Commission left off, and promptly enact legislation to provide for a more expansive online registration system through a process that reflects the input of election officials, advocacy organizations, and the public.

The Commission’s new rule making will pave the way for the Iowa Department of Transportation (“DOT”) by mid-2016 to create an online voter registration portal that would be accessible only to those with an Iowa DOT-issued photo ID. While the Commission deserves credit for passing regulations to implement an online system, it should also be noted that the rule making did not have buy-in from the state’s county auditors or from Iowa civic engagement groups. Worse, the public was barely given an opportunity to respond to the rule making, as the public hearing was rushed and ill-timed.

The Brennan Center, along with allies including the League of Women Voters of Iowa and the ACLU of Iowa, submitted comments to the Commission in advance of the hearing, encouraging the panel to expand its rule making to maximize the benefits of online and electronic registration and save money for the state. The coalition sought online registration that would be available to all eligible voters, not just those with a DOT ID. According to the DOT itself, there are nearly 100,000 Iowans who are eligible to vote but lack an ID card issued by the DOT. Among those most likely to lack a driver’s license are seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Iowa, a state that rightfully prides itself on its history of democratic participation, deserves a modern voter registration system that is equally open to all eligible populations. Further, in order to fully realize the cost savings and increased voter roll accuracy that a modernized registration process offers, the state needs to make the program as robust as possible.

The Brennan Center also urged the Commission to require all agencies that conduct voter registration to electronically transmit these records to the voter registrar. Under current Iowa regulations, electronic registration is simply voluntary, and to-date no agencies are taking advantage of agency-based electronic registration, which has proven benefits:

- It increases registration rates because it provides a convenient option for citizens who are already interacting with a government agency to seamlessly integrate voter registration into the interaction.
- It saves money, by reducing the need for paper mailings and reducing the time and manpower needed to enter registration data.
- Finally, it boosts the accuracy of registration information by minimizing the mistakes inherent in human data entry. This creates more secure rolls and gives voters confidence that the information in the lists is correct.

Iowa’s 2015 legislative session begins on January 12. We strongly urge the legislature to act where the Voter Registration Commission did not by introducing and passing legislation to comprehensively modernize Iowa’s voter registration system. Such legislation should mandate electronic transmission of voter registration applications by agencies, and create an online registration system that is accessible to all eligible Iowans.

New Secretary of State Paul Pate has already expressed his interest in working with the legislature to bring Iowa’s voter registration process into the 21st century. The legislature now has the opportunity to make these changes the right way, by working with election officials, civic engagement groups, and the public.

FELON VOTER ENFRANCHISEMENT: WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

by Linda Murken, Ames LWV

Iowa Constitution, Article II, Section 5: Disqualified persons. A person judged mentally incompetent to vote or a person convicted of any infamous crime, shall not be entitled to the privilege of an elector.

Code of Iowa, Section 48A.6 Disqualified electors. The following persons are disqualified from registering to vote and from voting: 1. A person who has been convicted of a felony as defined in section 701.7, or convicted of an offense classified as a felony under federal law. If the person's rights are later restored by the governor, or by the president of the United States, the person may register to vote. . .

The Current Case

As you are probably aware, the ACLU of Iowa has filed suit in Polk County District Court seeking to restore the voting rights of Kelli Jo Griffin of Montrose. Mrs. Griffin lost her voting rights in 2008 when she was convicted of a nonviolent drug offense. Her attorney told the information that was accurate at that time that, under an executive order issued by Gov. Culver, her voting rights would be restored automatically when she completed probation.

However, when Terry Branstad became Governor in 2011, he immediately revoked Culver's Executive Order and instituted a lengthy, cumbersome application process for regaining the right to vote. Mrs. Griffin did not know this when she voted in a local election in November 2013. She brought her children with her to the polls to instill in them the importance of voting. Later DCI agents showed up at her house and she was arrested and prosecuted as part of the voter fraud investigation started by Iowa Secretary of State Matt Schultz. A jury acquitted her of voter fraud but she remains unable to vote.

The basis of *Griffin v. Branstad, Schultz, and Fraise* is that all felonies are not necessarily infamous crimes. In its decision in April in the *Chiodo* case, the Supreme Court ruled that aggravated misdemeanors such as OWI, second offense (which

on a federal level are considered felonies because they are punishable by more than one year in prison) are not infamous crimes and would not preclude someone running for public office. The court also suggested that some felonies may not be infamous crimes but did not specify which ones. Griffin's case has yet to be heard in Polk County but it will undoubtedly end up with the Iowa Supreme Court regardless of the verdict.

A National Perspective

Iowa is one of only three states in which the right to vote is not automatically restored to many if not all citizens convicted of a felony offense once that citizen has completed incarceration or correctional supervision. A map showing how all states stack up on this issue can be found at <https://www.aclu.org/maps/map-state-criminal-disfranchisement-laws>

At the 2014 Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States, the membership voted to concur with a position adopted by the LWV of Clackamas County, Oregon, to "Strongly advocate for passage of legislation that restores voting rights in federal elections to citizens with felony convictions who have been released from prison or who have been paroled or placed on probation."

Why this case is important

According to Rita Bettis, Legal Director of the ACLU of Iowa, "The widespread denial of voting rights on the basis of a felony conviction is the single biggest denial of voting rights in Iowa. It has kept thousands of Iowans from voting." Over 14,000 felons have been discharged from correctional supervision since 2011 when Branstad revoked Vilsack's 2005 voting restoration executive order. Only forty (40) Iowans have had their rights restored through the application process he instituted.

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FELON VOTER ENFRANCHISEMENT

by **Linda Murken**

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There are three ways to achieve automatic restoration of felons' right to vote:

1. Executive Order by Governor: as we have seen, this is dependent upon the philosophy of each Governor, and we have seen the results of inconsistency.
2. Constitutional Amendment: requires passage of a bill by two subsequent Iowa Legislators, then goes on the ballot for voter approval. A bill was introduced last year in the Iowa Senate but did not make it to the floor.
3. A decision by the Iowa Supreme Court interpreting the Iowa Constitution as not including some felonies as "infamous crimes" which disqualify a person from voting.

Reasons we are supportive of a change

1. **The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.** (*Statement of Position on Citizen's Right to Vote, as Announced by National Board, March 1982*)
2. Prohibiting citizens who have been convicted of a felony from voting has nothing to do with public safety, the competence of these individuals to vote or the integrity of the voting process. It is merely a punitive withholding of a basic right granted to all other citizens deemed competent to vote.
3. The inclusion in Iowa's constitution of the prohibition is a holdover from the time when persons convicted of a crime were considered to have no rights at all under the concept of "civil

death." In the U.S., this began changing in the 1960s with the prisoners' rights movement.

4. Because of the disproportional impact of Iowa criminal statutes and of sentencing practices, the percentage of minority citizens incarcerated in Iowa far exceeds the percentage of minorities in the state. Iowa is second in the nation in this shameful statistic (Wisconsin just overtook us.) Thus, Iowa is permanently disenfranchising a substantial percentage of its minority citizenry.

What we can do:

1. Educate the public and legislators. Even though the court will make its decision based on the merit of the case alone, public and legislator acceptance and understanding will be important to build on a good decision.
2. Continue to educate ourselves. On Tuesday, January 6, the Metro Des Moines League's meeting subject is "A Civil Death" (Felon Disenfranchisement).
3. If the ACLU wins, there will be a big job to do to help people with convictions on their record register to vote and reengage in civic life.

Sources of Information:

"ACLU Files Lawsuit for Iowa Mom Arrested for Voting," The Defender, Newsletter of the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa, Vol. 4/No. 3, December 2014.

"ACLU files lawsuit challenging Iowa felon-voting laws," The Des Moines Register, November 8, 2014.

"Bisignano can be on ballot, Iowa Supreme Court rules," The Des Moines Register, April 15, 2014
The American Civil Liberties Union:
www.aclu.org, www.aclu-ia.org

The Brennan Center for Justice <http://www.brennancenter.org/issues/restoring-voting-rights>



EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) IN IOWA: LWVIA STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT

by Linda L. Meloy, Muscatine League of Women Voters, December 2014

General Information: Current Iowa Law does not require any governmental entity (county, city, or township) to provide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) as it does for fire and police protection, thus EMS is not labeled an essential service in this state. The Law does allow fire departments to provide EMS. Various chapters of the Iowa Code do permit limited taxing to support EMS.

The Bureau of Emergency Medical Services, within the Iowa Department of Public Health, is responsible for regulatory oversight of individual EMS providers, which can be volunteer units, private providers, personnel within fire departments, or as part of another public entity.

Currently there are approximately 780 authorized EMS groups in Iowa and 12,000 individual providers. Of this latter total, about 74% work on an ambulance or as a first responder with an EMS agency. Fifty-seven percent of those agencies are fire departments; 16% private providers; 14% other public services; and 13% hospitals. Attachment A (Authorized IA EMS Agencies) shows the locations of Fire and EMS providers within the state, color-coded as to whether the provider is paid, paid plus volunteer hours, volunteer, or privately owned. Counties across the state vary widely, as does the population, to numbers of EMS providers, from one in Chickasaw, Davis, Humboldt, Osceola, and Palo Alto counties to nearly 20 in Linn and Polk Counties. Sixty-four percent of EMS providers are volunteers, which translates to two-thirds of those responding to emergencies in our state not being compensated; 30% are career EMS providers.

There are four “levels” of EMS providers that can be certified in the state: **Emergency Medical Responders** (EMR) who have 48-60 clock hours of training in first aid procedures; the **EMT-Technician (EMT-Basic)** who has 150-190 clock hours of training with at least 12 of those hours in an Emergency Room and eight on an ambulance; the **Advanced EMT** who has the EMT training plus training in IVs and other basic medical procedures that total 150-250 clock hours; and **Paramedic**, with the prerequisite EMT certification plus 1000-3000 clock hours of additional training (250-300 hours of clinical time and 350-500 hours in an ambulance, i.e. competency-based). Each type of EMS provider also has to maintain a schedule of continuing education in order to

maintain certification, ranging from 12 credits/hours for the EMR to 60 credits/hours for Paramedics. Some of this continuing education is provided without cost, but other courses carry a fee.

Funding: The Iowa Code allows for public funding of EMS in varying, but limited methods, across townships, counties, and cities. A township may levy an annual property tax not exceeding \$0.405 per \$1000 of assessed value of the taxable property (AVTP) in the township, excluding property within a benefited fire district or within city limits. If such a levy is insufficient, the trustees may levy an additional annual property tax not exceeding \$0.2025 per \$1,000 of AVTP for a total of \$0.6075 per AVTP. A higher rate may be levied if the trustees have an agreement with a special charter city having a paid fire department, or if the township is located within a county that has a population of 300,000 or more. Less than 20% of the 1,594 townships in the state levy at the maximum rate; 13% are at a levy rate between \$0.55 and \$0.60749. Township trustees may divide their township into tax districts for the purpose of providing fire protection and EMS if they choose, levying a different tax rate in each district for the authorized or required services, but neither can exceed the tax levy limitations for that township. Attachment B shows the FY 2014 township tax levies and revenues by county.

A **township** can enter into an Iowa Code Chapter 28E agreement with a city or another township for fire protection with or without EMS. The County Board of Supervisors is then required to certify taxes for levy in the township in amounts sufficient to meet the financial obligations associated with the agreement.

Counties can assume the powers and duties of township trustees related to fire protection and EMS for any township located in an unincorporated area of the county (Iowa Code section 331.385). If a county so chooses, they may certify taxes for levy in the township not to exceed the amounts authorized by law for the township, paid from the county EMS Fund funded through an annual tax levy. Counties, with voter approval, may generate local funds in the form of a local income surtax, local property tax, or a combination of both for EMS within a county (Iowa Code chapter 422D), with a

EMS Study - continued on page 8

LWVIA EMS STUDY REPORT

by **Linda Maloy, December 2014**

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maximum income surtax not to exceed 1.0% for EMS funding, which is deposited into an EMS Fund created by the county. This Fund is used for EMS purposes and can be used to match federal and State funds for education and training related to EMS. Currently, only Appanoose County has approved the use of an income surtax to fund EMS, which in tax year of 2011 generated \$64,978 (mean \$65,124/median \$64,980 across the past five years).

In 2008, the General Assembly authorized the creation of Emergency Response Districts for counties with a population of at least 16,925 but not more than 16,950. Subject to the approval of the County Board of Supervisors, the levy rate cannot exceed \$1.6075 per \$1,000 AVTP of all taxable property within the district. This action was taken to enable a five-year project in Crawford County as a new governance structure at the county level to facilitate the delivery of and funding for fire protection and EMS. Currently this pilot project has not yet been established.

Cities in Iowa may certify taxes to be levied by the county on all taxable property within the city limits, for all city governmental purposes, which can include EMS. A city's tax levy for the city general fund cannot exceed \$8.10 per \$1,000 AVTP. In 1994, the General Assembly authorized the creation of City EMS Districts to provide EMS to all incorporated areas of a city shown to have a need for such services, except property assessed as agricultural land or centrally assessed property. Subject to voter approval, a city council may levy a tax of not more than \$1.00 per \$1,000 AVTP. The EMS district is only allowed to raise the amount needed from the tax and the tax receipts may be used to purchase or rent EMS apparatus, equipment, or materials, or employ EMS and other personnel. The city council may take other steps as deemed necessary to properly maintain and operate the district. Currently there are just the City of Riceville and the City of Sheffield using the City EMS tax levy. Riceville assessed at \$0.18652, raising \$3,000 in FY 2014 (if they levied at the maximum allowable they could secure \$13,000 additional funds); Sheffield levied \$0.3795, generating \$11,105 for FTY 2014 (if they levied at the maximum allowable they could secure \$18,000 additional funds).

Regulatory Body: The Emergency Medical Services Bureau in the Department of Public Health regulates EMS by authorizing services, certifying providers, authorizing EMS training programs (17 currently dispersed throughout the state; 11 with up to paramedic level training and six with non-paramedic levels of training), and verifying trauma care facilities. They are also charged with providing technical assistance to all EMS entities, providing grants for training and system development when such grants are made available

from funding sources, and providing education and equipment through the EMS for Children Program.

FY 2014 funding sources for the \$1,657,008 Budget were as follows:

- 36% Public Health General Fund Appropriation;
- 27% General Fund Allocation for System Development Grants
[Monies can be used for EMS training/education, as well as for equipment, the latter being grants for \$5,000 or more and matched by the local EMS provider; noncompetitive beginning in 2014 and based on rural population and county square miles; declining amounts since 2009 except for 2012, from \$620,172 to the current amount of \$454,700 – mean across six years of \$495,695.];
- 19% Public Health and Human Services Federal Block Grants;
- 7% Love our Kids (license plate fees);
- 7% Federal EMS for Children; and
- 4% Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau Federal Grant.

A 2012 report on Trauma and EMS Policy in the States by the National Conference on State Legislatures (NCSL) provided information on state funding mechanisms for EMS, with our neighbor states of particular interest. Along with nine other states, MN collects fees on moving and motor vehicle violations as a method to partially fund EMS. They, along with SD and WI, use general fund appropriations as we do in IA and 14 other states, while IL has an ambulance or EMT Operations Fee as do seven other states. Nebraska, along with five other states, noted funding mechanisms under the "Other" category.

Professional EMS Organization: All 12,000 providers of EMS in the state are represented by the Iowa Emergency Services Association. This professional organization was founded in 1987 and has a 23-member Board of Directors. They have been involved in initiating and supporting EMS legislation; representing its members on task forces, advisory groups, and boards addressing issues that affect EMS; and facilitating communication across the state between not just members of the organization but all EMS providers. They recently did an online survey of their official membership of 1,200, with a 75% response rate from a representative sample of the state EMS providers. The top concerns noted from this survey: Staffing/recruitment/retention; EMS not an essential service in this state; inadequate funding; and inadequate reimbursement from payees.

Staffing/recruitment/retention relates to the decreasing numbers of volunteers since over one-half of the providers in the state are volunteers or volunteering part of the time and being compensated for some of their time. The current \$100 tax credit for volunteer EMS providers is insufficient to attract volunteers who have significant expenses for training and in some cases equipment that is not provided by the

LWVIA EMS STUDY REPORT

by Linda Maloy, December 2014

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service they volunteer with. Further, the required continual training to maintain the various levels of certification can be costly to an individual. The initial costs for EMR level training are about \$400; \$1,300-\$1,800 for EMT-Basic; Advanced EMT and additional \$1,400 beyond EMT-Basic; and for paramedic, approximately \$6,00-\$12,000 after lower levels of certification. These trainings can involve more than just the cost of a course since many EMS providers must travel to/from the offering that may be distant from their homes, incurring not only travel expenses but child care and other expenses to be able to attend. In addition to cost, the IEMSA survey indicated the average respondent spends 59 hours engaged in EMS training/year while also receiving 44 hours of continuing education/year, time that may need to be taken away from employment for volunteer EMS providers.

EMS not being an essential service is problematic from a funding standpoint as well as from a public recognition standpoint. Funding is fragmented and difficult to obtain at levels needed to maintain the best equipment and to adequately compensate providers for their time and for their continuing education. It is hypothesized that the average Iowan believes the EMS in this state is similar to what is portrayed in the media, i.e. highly qualified paramedics at the scene within short response times with state-of-the-art equipment. Such is simply not the case in many parts of Iowa where services are by volunteers which can increase response time* and where lower population bases impact levels of funding for equipment, hiring of staff with higher levels of EMS training, and the ever-present continuing education costs for all levels of EMS staff.

Inadequate funding is related to the issue of essential service. The average volunteer EMS provider spends 31 hours/year in fundraising at such activities as soup suppers, bake sales, and raffles – funding streams dissimilar to police and fire protection personnel in services considered essential. Also, medical equipment that can save lives is continually improving and desirable to have available for all citizens of a state and is costly. The use of technology is ever increasing in all fields, and particularly in medicine. And, such technology usually comes with high price tags which will continue to burden the present system of funding EMS provision. And lastly, the numbers of volunteers handling nearly two-thirds of the emergencies in the state may dry up in the foreseeable future leaving EMS providers with the need to move to services that compensate their staffs.

Inadequate reimbursement from payees relates in Iowa to two issues: Medicaid reimbursements for ambulance use and behavioral transports. In a 2014 comparison of Medicaid rates for states that border Iowa (IL, MN, MO, NE, ED, and WI)

and confirmed by the American Ambulance Association it was revealed that for the seven Service Categories (mileage, BLS Nonemerg., BLS Emerg., ALS, ALS Emerg., ALS2, and SCT/Crit.Care), Iowa's rate of Medicaid reimbursement was far below the average of the six neighboring states in all areas, as well as below the Medicare reimbursement rate in all categories. Reimbursement for mileage is currently \$2.38, when the average for our neighboring states is \$4.85 (range \$2.75 to \$6.97). Reimbursement for the other categories is as follows:

- Nonemergency average \$122.24 (range \$94.14 to \$206.33), with IA at \$76.98;
- BLS Emergency average \$178.19 (range \$94.14 to \$410.51), with IA at \$76.98;
- ALS average \$207.31 (range \$113.88 to \$326.55), with IA at \$124.52;
- ALS Emergency average \$277.98 (range \$176.11 to \$410.51), with IA at \$124.52;
- ALS2 average \$297.77 (range \$176.11 to \$573.13), with IA at \$124.52; and
- SCT/Critical Care average \$334.43 (range \$210.11 to \$670.62), with IA at \$124.52.

A second issue in regard to reimbursement has to do with behavioral transports which tax an EMS system. Behavioral transports are defined as non-medically needy transportation of individuals by ambulance, usually to distant destinations for mental health services that take up not only time but the cost for the use of an ambulance. Nearly 60% of the respondents to the IEMSA survey indicated that such transport strains their ability to adequately provide for medical emergencies within their service area. Exploration of other methods of providing this type of service is a community issue that needs addressing, perhaps like what is being done in our neighbor IL. In some areas in that state "secure cars" with trained personnel (who are not EMS staff) are providing such transport, with a reimbursement fee of 125% of the IL Medicare rate.

IA Legislature Interim Study Committee on EMS – Fall 2013: Five Senators and five Representatives served Fall 2013 on the Interim EMS Study Committee, co-chaired by Senator Mary Jo Wilhelm and Representative Ralph C. Watts. A Final Report of their work was published January 2014 by the Legislative Services Agency and is attached. Along with the presenters and discussions at the Committee's two days of meeting, this Report (pages nine and ten) includes issues that Legislators need to give consideration to:

- Making EMS an essential service and how to fund;**
- Behavioral transport requirements and reimbursement;**
- Increasing funding for EMS training across the state;**
- Increasing the income tax credit for volunteer providers; and**
- Increasing Medicaid payments to EMS providers.**

LWVIA EMS STUDY QUESTIONS:

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1. Are Iowans in all geographic areas of the state receiving effective emergency medical services?

Most probably not based on the over-reliance on volunteer providers in the state, lack of adequate funding for EMS, and the geographic realities in the western portion of the state.

2. Do the variety of federal and state laws and regulations and local ordinances that authorize and/or require the provision of emergency medical services ensure equitable and effective service [across the state]?

No, since emergency medical services are not considered essential services in the state as police and fire protection are. Therefore, there is considerable variability across the state in the quality and quantity of EMS primarily due to communities with higher population densities and thus more financial resources being able to provide higher quality EMS through various funding streams connected to fire protection.

3. Are emergency medical services that rely upon volunteers adequately staffed with volunteers willing to commit to continued participation?

Do leaders in these services anticipate being able to recruit new volunteers? Which, if any programs, policies, and incentives are best suited [for] maintaining existing ranks and recruiting new volunteers?

The current EMS delivery in many parts of the state is through volunteers who are not always trained at the EMT-Advanced or Paramedic levels and may also be stretched to the limit for adequate coverage of their service area due to too few personnel. Also, the cost of continuing education at one's level and advancement to higher levels of training can be prohibitive for many who wish to serve their communities.

Those closest to the issues regarding volunteerism and funding have suggested the following via the recent IEMSA survey:

- *Provide for a Volunteer Public Safety Property Tax Credit
- *Increase the Volunteer Income Tax Credit
- *Allow a sales tax exemption for equipment purchased by volunteer EMS
- *Allow a gas tax exemption for private EMS providers
- *Provide Capital Replacement Equipment Grants
- *Increase in Medicaid reimbursements to at least the neighboring state averages
- *Institute an improved, community-based method for handling behavioral transports such as the IL secure car approach.

From personal observation and discussions with EMS providers during this data-gathering activity, it is apparent that the average Iowan may not be aware of the emergency medical services provided in their own area, let alone in other parts of the state where they may be traveling or where family/friends may reside. It could be beneficial to provide information to the public in the form of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in regard to EMS in each sector of the state since what is provided, even by conscientious individuals, may not be sufficient to meet needs. Related to this public awareness of EMS across the state, publication of response time data would be helpful.

The full EMS Study and Resources (not listed here due to space concerns) are available on the LWVIA website:

* * * * *



**Save the Date
June 6, 2015
LWVIA Convention
Des Moines University**

VOTER ID: STILL THREATENING THE VOTERS OF IOWA

by Myrna Loehrlein, League of Women Voters of Linn County

In the upcoming legislative session, it is likely that on-line voter registration will be introduced. LWV supports this sensible change in the way we register to vote. But it may not be that simple. Our new Secretary of State, Paul Pate, is as interested in voter photo ID (VPID) as Mr. Schultz was. It is not too far a stretch to wonder whether VPID will be linked to on-line registration.

VPID is a bad idea for the most basic reason. A recent report from Harvard Law School stated that “requiring government photo identification in order to exercise fundamental rights ... inverts the proper democratic relationship from consent of the governed to permission of the government to exercise the right to vote.” In other words, it is the government’s job to facilitate every citizen’s vote, it is NOT the government’s job to impede a citizen’s vote.

We must be watchful as League members. If VPID is included in the discussion about on-line registration, we may have a difficult situation. Even if they are not linked, support for VPID will not go away any time soon. It is on the top of the legislative list of some Iowa legislators. And it stays at the top every legislative session. It is not too early to write to your legislators to inform them on the facts about VPID.

Voter Photo ID is a bad idea because:

1. It has been found unconstitutional for one reason or another in Missouri, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Texas, and Pennsylvania. An appellate court is considering the question in Texas. A constitutional challenge in Wisconsin may soon be heard by the United States Supreme Court.

2. It is expensive. Current estimates for costs to the states, not including the cost to individuals, are:

- a. Indiana - \$1.3 million per year just for the cards
 - b. Texas – up to \$78 million for the full system
 - c. Pennsylvania – a low estimate of \$15.75 million
3. VPID guards only against voter impersonation. Even in the extensive and very expensive investigation that Mr. Schultz carried out, only 6 people (out of about 1 million voters) were convicted. None of these cases, were prosecuted on the basis of in-person voter impersonation.



Iowa has a large elderly population. VPID often hits them hard. Because they may no longer drive, they do not have drivers licenses and need to obtain state-issued IDs. Getting the paperwork to support the ID can be difficult and expensive, or even impossible for people who were born before our current methods of record keeping. In Texas, many of the witnesses in court were people who had voted for 40 years or more, and because they could not meet the requirements for a new state-issued ID, under the VPID law, they may never vote again.

Supporters of VPID have used a slogan which says that if even one person votes improperly, VPID is worth the expense and effort. We need to replace that kind of thinking with the idea that:

If even one eligible voter is denied the right to vote, our process is wrong.

“One vote denied is democracy denied.”

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**Check out League’s new and improved website:
LWVIA.org**

LWV-UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGION INTER LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

by Sue Wilson, League of Women Voters of Dubuque

For the last six months LWV members from Dubuque and Linn County, Jo Daviess Co. (IL) and LaCrosse (WI) have been meeting to develop a LWV-Upper Mississippi River Region Inter League Organization (LWV-UMRR ILO). The primary purpose of this ILO is to coordinate and strengthen the work the LWV does on natural resource issues within the five states of the Upper Mississippi River Basin. The state LWV boards of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin have voted to approve the development of this ILO and the decision is pending before the board of LWV-Missouri.

To become an official ILO-Inter League Organization, the LWVUS requires an ILO membership to include two thirds of the local League of Women Voters of each state to agree to participate in the ILO region. Each Local League will ask their members to vote for participation after reviewing video and information provided by Sue Wilson, LWVIA board member. Local League Presidents will receive the information and details for moving forward with Iowa's participation in the ILO. For further information about ILOs contact Sue Wilson, cell #563-543-3881 or email, wilsonsue@mchsi.com

Or copy and paste this link to view a great video: <http://youtu.be/8HAhuToAOKk>

League of Women Voters of Iowa

Karen Person, Administrative Assistant

4345 Grand Avenue, Unit 1

Des Moines, IA 50312