



<http://www.lwvutah.org>

The League of Women Voters of Utah

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April 2015

61st Legislature Scores Wins and Losses



by Jenn Gonnely, LWVUT Co-president

The 61st General Session of the Utah Legislature is done and dusted. We had some wins and a couple of big losses. Your legislative Action Corps put in countless hours of work to make sure you were kept informed about all that was going on at the Capitol during the 45-day session. If you see one of our Action Corps members, take time to give her your thanks.

The Wins:

Utah's statewide anti-discrimination law brought nationwide attention to Utah for its coupling of LGBT protection in housing and employment with exemptions for religious organizations and the Boy Scouts. This is seen as a first-of-its-kind compromise. Whether it was due to this compromise or the Legislature just tiring of talking about it, a more stringent and oppressive Religious Freedoms Rights Act bill failed on the last night of the session.

We also managed to stave off any damage or delay to the Count My Vote compromise struck in the 2014 session with Senate Bill 54, which allows candidates to get on primary ballots by collecting signatures as well as via caucus and convention. Numerous bills were introduced that would either delay the implementation of the compromise or eliminate it all together. The arguments against the compromise centered around the GOP's ability to be ready for the changes before the 2016 election or the possibility of plurality results in selecting the party's candidate in a primary election. The bill that seemed most likely to pass was one that would have thrown out the primary election results and sent the decision back to the party caucus if one of many candidates did not receive at least 40 percent of all votes cast. I wonder if voters would allow this sort of procedure in a presidential primary? According to Ballotpedia.org, there are currently 12 Democrats and 18 Republicans considering a run for the the White House. That would certainly create some plurality.

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State School Board elections should also be considered a win, although not as big a win as we nearly got. Again there were many competing bills in this arena. Some would have chosen school board members by direct gubernatorial appointment if voters approved a constitutional amendment to allow that. Some called for partisan school board elections. And one bill that we had hoped might pass would have selected State School Board candidates by a non-partisan direct primary election. The non-partisan bill, HB446 by Rep. Francis Gibson R-Utah County, passed overwhelmingly in the House, but when it reached the Senate a bill was substituted for it that would have made school board elections partisan. Drama ensued on the last night of the session when the House refused to concur with the Senate substitution and after multiple conference committees decided to let the bill die. So for now the issue is up to the courts which have declared the current nomination by committee process unconstitutional.

The Losses:

Two big losses dominate my mind on this weekend after the session. First is a resolution that passed to call a Constitutional Convention for the purpose of passing a balanced budget amendment. The resolution makes Utah the 26th state to ask Congress to call for a Constitutional Convention, as allowed by Article V of the U.S. Constitution. Calls by 38 states are required to ask for a convention before Congress is required to act. Unfortunately there is no guarantee that amendments coming out of a Constitutional Convention would be limited to balancing the federal budget. I suppose we can hope good things come of a convention if it happens, such as marriage equality and passage of the equal rights amendment (which would have to be approved by three-fourths of the states, however). The League opposes a federal balanced budget amendment, citing the need for budget flexibility in times of recession, high unemployment and national security crises.

Healthy Utah is of course the biggest loss of the 2015 session. Healthy Utah passed the Senate and Utah Cares passed the House, but there was no agreed upon solution to the issue of expanding Medicaid to more poor Utahns by the time the session ended. Instead the ball was kicked down the road once again with the passage of a resolution that acknowledged “that doing nothing in regard to health care is not an option.” This resolution tasks the governor, lieutenant governor, House speaker and Senate president “to work to find a resolution to this difficult and critical issue by a target date of July 31, 2015.” It should be noted that this does not form a working committee that is subject to the Open and Public Meeting Act. It also has no representation from the minority party in either house. It is anticipated that the governor will call a special session, possibly in July, to pass legislation.

The Rest:

These issues don't even scratch the surface of the many actions taken during the whole session: A 5-cent increase in the gas tax and a formula to match future gas price inflation, plus local option sales taxes for transportation including transit; a 4 percent increase in the Weighted Pupil Unit for education; an overhaul of criminal justice practices to address substance abuse and mental health issues; a decision to give Utah more leeway in addressing our air pollution problems, legalized cow-sharing and a change in

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House rules that appears to punish the minority party for attempting to revive a failed bill come to mind. Forty-five days seemed too short a time to get everything done, yet sometimes altogether too long, allowing legislators too much time to tinker with issues like recovering federal lands and details of public education policy.

Once again I need to say thank you to the many people who gave thousands of hours to make the League's coverage beyond compare in this legislative session. I also want to remind everyone that volunteers are what keep us going. If you think that something got missed or coverage wasn't as good as you wanted, no worries, there is time to jump in and help out for the 2016 session. Now is the time to start. Maybe think of throwing your own name in the hat for the nominating committee's slate for Legislative Action Co-Director for 2015 Convention.



Legislative Corps Looks at Recent Legislative Session

by Angie Abram and Nickie Nelson, LWVUT Legislative Co-Directors

The 2015 Utah Legislature finished their session Thursday, March 12 with many important bills resolved on the last day of the session. The League's Legislative Action Corps wants to thank everyone who participated in following legislation, acting on League Action Alerts and attending legislative rallies and meetings.

2015 was a pretty good session for League priorities, with one very large exception, which came as somewhat of a surprise to League members following the session. The session featured 833 bills, which was 47 more than in the 2014 Legislative session. There were many bills on topics the League identified in our 2015 legislative priorities.

Education

The Legislature approved measures increasing basic program funding and increasing equity in public education. Although the Legislature didn't increase funding as much as the governor had requested, Utah's public education did see a 4 percent increase in the Weighted Pupil Unit and \$75 million in new property tax funds which will increase equity across school districts in the coming years.

The Legislature didn't do much in the way of transparency or preschool funding this session. It also narrowly avoided creating partisan school board elections or trying to have the State School Board selected by the Governor. The League actively lobbied to keep school board elections non-partisan and keep the Utah Constitution identified separation between schools and the executive branch. Keep an eye on this topic as

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we go into interims, as legislation could still be passed to affect school board elections prior to the next election in 2016.

Voting

The League watched and advocated against several bills which were intended to roll back changes incorporated in last year's SB54 "Count my Vote" compromise. However, no substantial changes to last year's bill passed this session. Several smaller voting bills were passed, including HB321 Vote by Mail Revisions by Rep. John Westwood, R-Cedar City, which requires counties conducting vote-by-mail-only elections to provide a single voting location, and two bills by Rep. Rebecca Chavez-Houck, D-Salt Lake: HB219 Election Day Voter Registration which allows same day voter registration during early voting and HB220 which ensures provisional ballots are accepted if they are postmarked or received by Election Day.

Open Government

Several bills which would have increased transparency or limited campaign contributions were defeated this session. However, two bills ensured increased notice of public meetings by homeowner associations and smaller government entities: HB99 Association Open Meetings Amendments by Rep. Paul Ray, R-Clearfield and HB117 Public Meeting Notice Requirements by Rep. Jon Stanard, R-St. George. HB91 Campaign Contributions Amendments by Rep. Kraig Powell, R-Heber City requires candidates to divert anonymous campaign contributions over \$50 away from their campaigns. SB157 Government Records Amendments by Sen. Curtis Bramble, R-Provo opens to the public complaints filed through the Division of Consumer Protection.

Taxation

HB362 Transportation Infrastructure Funding by Rep. Johnny Anderson, R-Taylorsville supported League legislative priorities by increasing gas taxes and the ability of local entities to increase transit and transportation funding. HB421 Transportation Funding Modifications by Kay Christofferson, R-Lehi was defeated. It would have increased General Fund earmarks for transportation from 17 percent to 23 percent.

Health

This area was one of the most contentious and also the most notable failure of this Legislative session. The League was very active in promoting implementation of Medicaid expansion in Utah under the federal Affordable Care Act, including supporting a bill sponsored by Sen. Gene Davis, D-Salt Lake, for full Medicaid expansion and the "Healthy Utah" bill by Sen. Brian Shiozawa, R-Salt Lake. We opposed several less comprehensive bills such as the "Frail Utah" bill of Sen. Allen Christensen, R-North Ogden, and the "Utah Cares" bill of Rep. James Dunnigan, R-Taylorsville, which would provide Medicaid to fewer Utahns.

How do I ...set up an event?

New this year: We now have an "Events Checklist." This is exciting because the guess work and tracking have been taken out of event planning for you. If you have been assigned to head an event stop by the office or email us and we will give you a simple one page checklist that can be used to organize the event from Invites to Thank You!

— *Beatrix "Trixi" Sieger*

At the very end of the session, HCR12 Concurrent Resolution on Healthcare by Rep Dunnigan passed. It provides for Gov. Gary Herbert, Lt. Gov. Spencer J. Cox, Senate President Wayne L. Niederhauser and House Speaker Gregory H. Hughes to work to find a resolution by July 31. If they reach agreement a special session may be called.

Corrections

The Legislature, through its passage of HB348 Criminal Justice Programs and Amendments by Rep. Eric Hutchings, R-Kearns enacted a substantial change to the way Utah Corrections operates. This bill had 52 co-sponsors, half of the Utah Legislature. The new law lowers the penalties for many offenses, particularly drug possession, and increases funding for parole/probation and substance abuse and mental health treatment of offenders. The lack of expansion of Medicaid funding would hamper implementation of this landmark reform bill.

Natural Resources

The session was less than successful for the League, with many air quality bills languishing. However, HB226 Air Quality Revisions by Rebecca Edwards, R-Woods Cross finally passed after being considered for three years, and allows Utah to have different standards than the EPA. This will allow the state to require Tier 3 gasoline, which is much less polluting. SB 216, High Cost Infrastructure Tax Credits, by Senator Ralph Okerlund, R-Monroe, amended to include tax incentives for refinery infrastructure needed to convert to Tier 3 production, also passed..

Social Policy

The League was active in supporting SB296 Antidiscrimination and Religious Freedom Amendments Sen. Stephen Urquhart, R-St. George and opposing two bills which would have allowed government officials to opt out of performing civil marriage ceremonies selectively based on religious liberty arguments.

Overall, this was a session that felt like we dodged some very bad legislation, ended up with some reasonable compromises in many areas and had some very large issues addressed. It was interesting as always.

Glad You Asked

Jenn Gonnely, Co-President, League of Women Voters of Utah

This month's "Glad You Asked" comes from a email received from a legislator following the League's Action Alert regarding Utah Cares on March 11.

How to Submit an Article

When submitting articles to the Utah Voter, please:

- use a specific subject line, like "Tax Study," not "Voter Article"
- be sure to add your name and LWV position title
- submit photos separately
- do not format your article
 - send to

votermaterials@gmail.com

"If LWV is nonpartisan, why are your policy positions always so liberal? I have never seen a conservative position from you."

My response to the representative:

Representative,

I appreciate your dedication to public service and also appreciate that you take the time to read the emails that we send out.

As you know, the League is a non-partisan organization that neither supports nor opposes any political candidate. We are a position-based organization that reaches all of our positions by the process of consensus of our members. As you know, consensus is not easy or quick. Members discuss the pros and cons until it becomes apparent that consensus has or has not been reached on each question. A committee will analyze the consensus responses, look for areas of member understanding and agreement and, using this information, will create a position statement.

The League's position on health care was reached in 1993 after an exhaustive two-part study on the state of health care in the United States. While some may say that this position is strictly liberal, it was not adopted based on any party ideology. Instead we pride ourselves on taking the time to evaluate all available information from many different sources.

I encourage you to read one of our studies. For instance, take a look at our recent study "[UNDERSTANDING UTAH'S TAX SYSTEM](#)" While we may not reach the same conclusions on the study, I hope you will appreciate the deliberative process we take.

Thank you for your feedback,

Remember that we may not be on the same side, but we can always be polite and do our best to educate.

Make Plans for the 2015 Convention Now

by Lola Britton, Utah League Co-President
Attention, all League members!

Do plan to attend the LWVUT 2015 Convention on May 15-16 in Moab. Convention is a must for information, input and interaction.

Friday evening will start with a social hour with hor d'oeuvres at 6 p.m. followed by the panel at 7 at the Grand Center, 182 N. 500 West in

Register Now for Convention

Everyone is welcome to attend the state convention. It's a great way to be involved in planning the future program of the League in Utah.

Each local League is allowed 15 voting delegates. The names of those attending as voting delegates need to be submitted to the state League by April 30.

Register and pay for the Annual Utah Convention on the LWVUT website, <http://lwwutah.org/AnnualConvention/2015.html>

Moab. Convention will be held at The MARC (Moab Arts and Recreation Center) at 111 E. 100 North on Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Admission price for Friday's program is \$40. Lunch on Saturday will be \$25.

Hotel suggestions were published in last month's *Voter*, <http://bit.ly/1BF5r6z>. If you haven't already made your reservations you should do so soon as May is an extremely busy time for Moab.

Grand County League Invites You to Moab in May

by Elizabeth Gore, Grand County Co-president

The League of Women Voters of Grand County welcomes Utah's League of Women Voters to Moab for our annual convention in May! Come for the convention and stay to enjoy Utah's world famous vacation and recreation destination!

The convention will begin on Friday, May 15 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Grand Center, 182 N. 500 West, with a presentation on public land issues, appreciation, conservation, and legislation *Honoring the Legacy of Our Public Lands Through Partnerships – Past, Present & Future!* by Jen Jackson, author of *Blow Sand In His Soul; Bates Wilson, the Heart of Canyonlands*, Ashley Korenblat, Founder & Director, Public Land Solutions, and Sara Baldwin Auck, Clean Energy Policy & Partnership Expert. The panel will be preceded by a social hour with appetizers by Kaye Davis & The Farmacy. The cost is \$40.

Convention will be held at The MARC (Moab Arts and Recreation Center) at 111 E. 100 North on Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lunch will be catered by Kaye Davis & The Farmacy and will cost \$25.

Women's History Month Focused on Female Senator

by Laurie West, Voter Services Director

On Friday, March 13, the League of Women Voters of Utah joined KUED and Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) to host a celebration of Women's History Month. This well-attended event was held in the wonderful new Arts & Media Center at SLCC South Campus. KUED graciously offered us the screening of their documentary on Martha Hughes Cannon, the first female state Senator in the country. The 57-minute video described her youth, how she eventually graduated and practiced as a medical doctor, the difficulties of her plural marriage, and how she was elected as the first female state Senator.



Hinckley Forums

are held in Orson Spencer Hall, Room 255, at the University of Utah. All forums are free and open to the public and are sponsored by the Hinckley Institute of Politics and The Sam Rich Program in International Politics.

<http://www.hinckley.utah.edu/events/forums/index.html>

The screening was followed by a Q&A with documentarian Nancy Green. She explained how after working on several Utah history documentaries that centered on important males, she knew she wanted to do one on an important Utah female. Research on Martha Hughes Cannon was difficult because Martha burned all of her own journals. One of the discoveries for Nancy was that Utah women in the late 1800s had greater political power/possibilities than did Utah women 100 years later.

Light refreshments were served courtesy of Alice and Kevin Steiner. Free DVD copies of the documentary were made available by KUED. Committee members include Rachelle Anderson (KUED), Gigi Brandt, Lola Britton, Aaron Bryant, Sean Crossland (SLCC), Jenn Gonnely, and Laurie West.

Conservation Garden Park Tour Coming Up

Monday May 11

Tour Times: 10:30 a.m. or 1 p.m.

“Bring your own” Brown Bag lunch: Noon



Join the Salt Lake League for a tour of the Jordan Valley Water Conservation Garden Park.

Learn how to conserve water in landscaping through efficient irrigation and use of water-wise plants. Enjoy this beautiful garden, a lovely place to have

lunch, and a great place to learn ways that we can preserve our beautiful Utah! Invite a friend.

Located on the grounds of Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, the Garden Park address is 8275 S. 1300 West, West Jordan.

Choose your Tour Time (Limited to 20 people each tour). RSVP to Twila Norton at twinorton@hotmail.com or (801) 568-0017.

– Jill Lesh, *Water Study Co-chair*

Upcoming Salt Lake League Meetings

Thursday, May 7: General Meeting for Program Planning – If you have ideas or suggestions for programs for next year, this is the time to discuss them. We can also consider new studies but you have to be willing to work on the study you propose. Studies from the national League and from other organizations in Utah would make good topics as well. Consider whether your topic would be right for a general meeting and/or for unit meetings. If you cannot make it to the program planning

Weber Annual Meeting

Who: Everyone

When: Monday, April 13 @ 6 p.m.

Where: Harley and Buck's – 2432 Washington Blvd.

What: Elect New Officers, Approve Last Year's Minutes, and Give Input on Program for Next Year

Please plan on attending and bringing idea about topics you would like us to become involved in next year. The material you will need is attached.

meeting, send ideas to Kathy Fitzgerald (klrfitzgerald@gmail.com) or Janice Gygi (Janice.gygi@uvu.edu).

Place: Girl Scout Offices, 445 E. 4500 South

Time: 6 p.m.: Social; 6:30: Planning Meeting

Friday, May 15 and Saturday, May 16: LWVUtah Convention –

Information about the convention is elsewhere in this issue of the *Voter*.

The Salt Lake League can send 15 voting delegates, but everyone is invited to attend. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are planning to attend to represent LWVSL. Contact Janice Gygi at Janice.gygi@uvu.edu or 801-550-3585.

Tuesday, June 2: LWVSL Annual Meeting – The program includes election of new officers, approval of the budget, and approval of the program for the coming year. This is also an opportunity to socialize with friends from the league.

Place: Girl Scout Offices, 445 E. 4500 South

Time: 6 p.m.: Potluck dinner; 6:30: Planning Meeting

— *Janice Gygi, Co-President, Salt Lake League*

What Will We Do?

Program Planning for LWVSL for 2015-2016

Kathryn Fitzgerald, VP for Program

Do you have a passion for a particular topic you would like League to address in 2015-2015? Do any of the following get your blood pumping:

Water shortages?

Climate change?

Human trafficking?

Implementation of the legislature's criminal justice reforms?

Population growth in SL County?

Are there kinds of meetings you would like to see more or less of? Unit discussion meetings? Lunch meetings? General meetings? Other?

Come to the May 7 Program Planning meeting and make your voice heard! The League is a grassroots organization. Every year members get together to decide what topics we will consider the following year. Be part of the conversation!

State of the Community Luncheon Not to be Missed

by Sue Lind, Luncheon Chairman

The annual State of the Community Luncheon will be Tuesday, April 28 in the Salt Lake Marriott University Park ballroom. Social time will begin at 11:30 a.m., followed by lunch and programming.

SL Program Planning General Meeting

Thursday, May 7

Girl Scout Offices, 445 E.

4500 South

6 p.m.

Light refreshments will be served

The Most Rev. John C. Wester, Catholic bishop of the Salt Lake Diocese will address "Immigration Policy and The American Dream." Stan



Lockhart will receive the Making Democracy Work for his late wife, Rebecca Lockhart, the first woman to become speaker of the Utah House of Representatives. Granite Technical Institute will receive the Community Service award for their outstanding educational service to the students of the Granite School District.

We will have baskets for auction. Opportunity tickets at \$5/ticket or five for \$20.00 will be available at the luncheon. Baskets this year will contain an array of local products from The Market at Park City, Wasatch Front Farmers Market, and Salt Lake Brewing company. There will also be items from Overstock.com. It should be fun.

The University Park Marriott is at 480 Wakara Dr. in Research Park by the University of Utah. We encourage all those who can to carpool as public transportation is not readily available. We also invite members to invite friends who might lack transportation.

Look for your luncheon invitation in the mail. If you haven't received one, please call Judi Short at 801-487-7387 or Sue Lind at 801-266-9044. This luncheon is a good place to meet old friends or make new ones. Cost is kept reasonable at \$50 per person.

Tax Questions Brought Consensus



by Ann Johnson, LWV-Davis Publicity Chairman
While tax policy is a complex topic, the Davis County League was able to reach consensus on most questions. Marilyn O'Dell, study chairman for "Understanding Utah's Tax System," led the discussion at the January 22 consensus meeting.

At this meeting, hosted by Nickie Nelson and John Logan, we welcomed Meagan Lang who recently moved to Davis County and transferred her membership to our chapter. Two potential members also attended to meet LWV-Davis members and observe the consensus process.

LWV-Davis hosted a Utah Tax Policy Panel Discussion at Bountiful City Hall February 19 to further explore Utah tax policy, proposed changes by

Member Orientation April 21

Plan to attend a delightful social and orientation meeting Tuesday, April 21 at 5 p.m.

Leaders from LWVSL and LWVUT will give energizing overviews of how the League works: studies, positions, lobbying, voter service, and the three-tiered organization.

Longtime members, please bring a prospective member. New members, please treat yourself to this invaluable introduction sponsored by the Salt Lake City League.

The social begins at 5 p.m., followed by the information session at 5:30, at Jeris Johnson's home, 6114 Heughs Canyon Way in Holladay. For more information contact Jeris Johnson 801-232-9083



the 2015 legislature, and the effects on cities, counties, public and charter schools, sales tax, and transportation. Panelists were Sheryl Allen, former state legislator, and former Davis School Board member; Gary Hill, Bountiful City Manager; Brett Millburn, Davis County Commissioner; and Jim Nielson, former state legislator. Davis League member Doug Macdonald, chief economist for the Utah State Tax Commission for three decades, moderated the discussion. Meagan Lang introduced the panel. Panelists enjoyed the opportunity to share their expertise and stayed after the meeting to talk with interested audience members.



Register Voters at Naturalization Ceremonies

Don't miss the chance to be part of something great. Register new voters at this year's naturalization ceremonies at the Federal Courthouse in Salt Lake City. We need two volunteers for each ceremony. Contact Jane Nelson or Luana Chilelli for more information.

Weber County Discusses Online Education

by Terri McCullough, LWV-Weber President

The Weber County League of Women Voters held their meeting for March to discuss online education. This is such a controversial topic and we had a hard time finding someone that was non-biased to speak so we decided to make the meeting an open forum. We identified some articles concerning online education and sent them to members. Group discussion was the format, and members discussed in a lively manner their opinions and thoughts on research done. We were a little hesitant trying this new format but we are now going to have one meeting a year organized in this style. It was exciting, and intelligent discussion followed comments made by members.

Statements from members included: Leah Murray, "I had a wonderful time last night at our meeting, we need to have free wheeling conversations like that more often! This was the sexiest meeting we have had all year." Roberta Glidden said, "I agree with Leah. Thinking about it: In my best educational experiences (few and far between re. "formal" version) I learned as much or more from other students during lively discussions, outings or just over coffee and that is what the folks staring at a screen alone certainly miss. Our meeting on Monday was an example of intensive learning as we all contributed, asked questions and defended our positions etc. in the best tradition of a college level honors seminar." This was definitely a success!

Jolene Junk

Ogden, Utah

jolene.junk@comcast.net

We are very fortunate to have a great new member among us. Jolene, formerly Jolene Wheeler, was born in Utah in 1937 and attended schools here and across the country. She married Duane Roylance and became the mother of four great kids. Every job she had Jolene did with gusto. She peeled tomatoes for a local canning factory, was a soda jerk, became a library page during high school, worked as a medical transcriber during college, and of course, was a mom. When her children had gone to school, Jolene worked as a librarian at the old Carnegie Free/Weber County Library. Her next journey involved real estate as she became a broker and owned the RE/MAX franchise in Ogden for 11 years. She then married Jack Junk, moved to Las Vegas, and opened a real estate office along with her husband's appraisal business. Jolene returned to Utah to help her mother, and became a medical transcriptionist. After retirement, she volunteered for both the Ethics in Government and Count My Vote campaigns. Jolene went back to school last year at the age of 76 and obtained another real estate license. We are very excited to have her expertise in our group.



We Think You're a Leader

by Marilyn O'Dell, Chair, LWWUT Nominating Committee

Annual Convention is approaching in May and with it an opportunity for League members to expand involvement in League activities. Each year at Convention we elect about half the members of the LWWUT Board. Positions span different kinds of activities and give every League member a chance to learn new skills while promoting the things that make you want to be part of the League.

What the League in Utah can accomplish is limited mainly by the time and effort expended by our members. Unfortunately, we tend to ask those we already know and who are already involved in leadership positions to fill another position. I'm convinced that there are members who are willing and able to contribute within the membership. We can't ask you if we don't know you. Even if you are a fairly new member there is a place for you to contribute and help accomplish our goals. If you are interested in serving on the LWWUT Board, please contact me at maodell2@gmail.com and let me know that you're available to help the League move to a higher level of accomplishment

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization
that encourages informed and active participation in government.