



<http://www.lwvutah.org>

The League of Women Voters of Utah

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November 2017

League Conducts Studies to Take Positions



by Peggy Carrico, LWV of Utah Co-President

As you probably know, the League of Women Voters is nonpartisan but political. Nonpartisan means we do not support or oppose any political parties and we do not support or oppose any candidates for office. However, we are political because we do take positions on local, state and national issues. We support or oppose bills in our interest areas that are being considered by Congress, our legislature in Utah, and local governments. We also take positions on local and state ballot proposals.

How does the League arrive at its positions on issues? Do we call a meeting and take a vote? No, actually the League has a carefully prescribed procedure. It's time-consuming and a lot of work, but we end up with a position that reflects the views of our membership.

First, a group of League members does an intensive amount of research and collects as much information as possible. This information is presented to the membership in one or more meetings. Research documents are made available for members to read. After reading the materials, listening to the reports, and discussing the information, the members vote on the answers to consensus questions, which lead to the statement of a new position, or they vote on a concurrence statement, showing they concur with an already existing position taken by another League.

The adopted Statement of Position then becomes the basis and justification for supporting or opposing specific issues at the local, state or national level. We use a national position to lobby at any level, we use a state position to lobby on any position within the state, and we use a local position to lobby within that local area.

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Here are examples of how it has worked in Utah at each level:

- National Position: A group promoting National Popular Vote approached us asking for our support. The National League (LWVUS) position states that we believe that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the president and vice president is essential to representative government. This gives us a position that allows us to work with National Popular Vote and testify in support if the issue comes before the Legislature.
- State Position: We knew that a bill was being introduced regarding end-of-life options, and that there was support among membership for the bill. There is no national position on end-of-life options. LWV Utah voted to complete a consensus study in 2015. A committee of League volunteers across the state completed the study and it was approved by the LWVUT Board along with consensus questions. Local leagues held meetings to review the study and discuss the consensus questions. We reached consensus on two points: 1) we support state laws granting an option for a terminally ill person to request medical assistance to end their life, and 2) we support safeguards within the legislation. This consensus position gave us words for our testimony on behalf of the bill when it was introduced.
- Local Position: The Salt Lake League has studied and has a position on the I-15 corridor and light rail system, which have a direct impact on their county services. Their chapter's position allows them to testify to any local or state committee that addresses this specific topic.

What happens when there is no position?

We have an example from the 2016 legislative session that speaks to this question. SB78 called for partisan Utah State Board of Education elections instead of our current non-partisan elections. It didn't feel right to Legislative Action Corps observers, and there was a push for us to testify. We first looked through established positions. The National League has a position on the idea of "one person, one vote," but that broad principle does not apply specifically to this issue. The state League does not have a position. Interestingly, Salt Lake has a position supporting non-partisan local elections, but it does not apply to state positions. We did not testify because we did not have a consensus position from the League. To avoid this in the future, we need to look ahead to topics of interest where a League position will be needed, find someone who wants to lead a study, and select members to work on the study.

Studies and positions are core strengths of the League of Women Voters.



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Look for more articles to explain how we work that will hopefully get you interested enough to lead or participate in a study.

Have a question about a specific issue? Contact your local board members or the Legislative Corps at lwvutah@gmail.com. You can also access positions and most studies on the League websites at lwv.org and lwvutah.org.

State Releases Annual Intergenerational Poverty Report

by *Vicki Samuelson, LWV of Utah Co-Director, Legislative Action*

[Utah's 6th annual report on intergenerational poverty](#) is out and contains some very interesting information.

The Utah Intergenerational Welfare Reform Commission has created a set of online tools to provide easy access to data analysis, listing ways to track progress on each of the five- and 10-year plan goals. As the data provided in previous reports continue to be used to identify policy and resource gaps, the dashboards will continue to evolve to include data from programs designed to close those gaps.

The commission's clear direction led policymakers at the state and local levels to begin implementing policies that are data-informed and research-based. During the 2017 General Session of the Utah Legislature, new laws were enacted and resources were made available, leading to positive outcomes for children experiencing intergenerational poverty. In addition, under the leadership of Lt. Governor Spencer J. Cox, leaders in 11 rural counties and two urban counties were engaged to develop local plans that align with the commission's goals to reduce poverty among Utah children and their families. This focus on local solutions recognizes the strengths and unique challenges that exist within communities to address barriers confronting families experiencing intergenerational poverty.

About 15 percent of adults experiencing intergenerational poverty in 2015 had moved out of that designation by 2016. The rate of parents who lacked jobs decreased from 21 percent to 18 percent. The average annual wage for adults in intergenerational poverty increased between 2013 and 2016 from \$10,701 to \$12,621.

Children's healthcare is a significant factor for those trying to break the poverty cycle. Many children have health insurance through the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), but that could end in December if federal funding does not come through. Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch has introduced a bill that would fund CHIP for five years, but it has not passed yet.

The commission's annual report points out that intergenerational poverty does not just affect children. It concerns parents as well, so education and healthcare are important for them also. A large number of parents in

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poverty lack a high school education or equivalent, and that can contribute to a lifetime of poverty. Scholarships were created to enroll children in early childhood education, but there was low enrollment, and the commission determined that information about these scholarships did not reach everyone that it needed to. The commission is therefore creating a committee to look at how to better inform people regarding these scholarships.

A positive trend that the data showed is that high school graduation rates were up for all Utah students. For students not in intergenerational poverty, the rate rose from 78 percent in 2013 to 85 percent in 2016, and for students in intergenerational poverty, it rose from 50 percent in 2013 to 63 percent in 2016.

Utah's Department of Health is very concerned about drug abuse in our state and warns that if the problem is not addressed, an increasing number of children in Utah will wind up in state care.

The commission's next meeting is November 9.

Local Governments May Hold Answer to Money in Politics

by Gigi Brandt, LWV of Utah Co-Vice President, Programs

After the U.S. Supreme Court issued its opinion in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, which allowed corporations and unions to make unlimited independent political expenditures, the amount of money in politics (including funds from undisclosed donors, or "dark money") increased dramatically. As of the 2016 election, the country is learning more about disguised foreign expenditures and influence. In Utah's 3rd Congressional District primary last month, \$853,000 was donated to candidates, much of it from out-of-state Political Action Committees (PACs). We can expect a great deal more money to be spent in the general election.

Although many citizens are upset about the influence of money in politics, few expect that change will come from national legislation. Some observers have looked to local and state governments to begin effectively limiting PAC expenditures.

According to the Center for Public Integrity, bills in 18 state legislatures have been introduced to limit the amount of money people can give to politicians. Some have tried to raise the limits on individual contributions in order to keep pace with the unlimited amount that corporations and unions can give. Other states have tried to scale back such limits and increase the amount individuals can give. Two initiatives have passed, and two have been vetoed. The Center for Public Integrity via Moyers and Company [has more information](#) on state-level efforts.

In Florida, the St. Petersburg City Council became the first municipality since the Citizens United decision to abolish so-called Super PACs (a type

Donors Honor Roll

The League of Women Voters of Utah expresses its deepest gratitude to all of our loyal donors. Our amazing work is accomplished by hundreds of hours of volunteer labor with the invaluable help of our part time office manager, but we depend on our generous donors to pay office expenses like phone, computers, office rent and salary. Thank you to this month's donors:

Sally Aulackh
Joan Gough
Norma Matheson
Sharon Walkington
Jennifer Claesgens
Catherine Crawford
Kathryn and Gene
Fitzgerald
Susan Lind
Marilyn Oberg

of political action committee that can raise unlimited funds) and limit foreign corporate spending in local elections. This was the result of efforts by a coalition spearheaded by the St. Petersburg-area League of Women Voters and nearly 30 local, state and national organizations, all of whom worked together on the effort for over a year. At the local level, many efforts to curb political donations are bipartisan.

The Salt Lake League is part of a coalition led by the local chapter of Move to Amend that was successful in 2015 in increasing limits on financial contributions to municipal candidates for mayor and City Council. This group continues to work to decrease the influence of money on local elections. If you are interested in joining this effort, contact Gigi Brandt at gigibrandt@xmission.com.



Salt Lake League Hosts Fall Orientation

by Anne Zeigler, LWV of Salt Lake Membership Chair

The Salt Lake League of Women Voters Membership Committee hosted a fall orientation at the new Cottonwood Heights city building. Debbie Larson provided a beautiful array of appetizers with the help of Carol Beers, both of whom are new members. Sally Jo Fuller and Sue McNeil welcomed people at the registration table.

Salt Lake League President Kathy Biele welcomed everyone and introduced the board: Trixi Sieger Office Manager; Peggy Carrico, State Co-President; Carol Jenson, Program Director; Miriam Aiazzi, City and County Government Director; Luana Chillelli and Jan

Brock, Voter Services Co-Directors; Ann O'Connell, Natural Resources Director; Vicki Samuelson, Health and Human Services Director and Co-Director of the State Legislative Action Corps, and Jane Nelson, Naturalization. Jeanine Kuhn-Coker and Tina Hose assembled and distributed information packets, and Jill Lesh invited board members to explain their individual sections. Special thanks to Tina and Jeanine for their work on the orientation materials.

Following the talks, attendees were encouraged to meet with the board members to ask questions and learn more about their specific roles. Special thanks to David and Susan Zangrilli who helped set up and take down tables and chairs. The amount of time and effort contributed to the League of Women Voters is incredible, as Catherine Weller eloquently wrote in "Why We Do What We Do" in [last month's Voter](#).

Many thanks to all who participated. We look forward to getting to know our new members!

2017 LWV Voters Guide Available

Be sure to check out the League of Women Voters of Utah's [2017 Voters Guide](#). Included are the candidates for Utah's 3rd Congressional District.

Our thanks to Jane Harrison for compiling the 2017 Voters Guide.

[The Voters Guide is available here.](#)



Redistricting Update For November 2017

by Gigi Brandt, LWV of Utah Co-Vice President, Programs

Many League members have taken signature-gathering training for the redistricting initiative. Better Boundaries tells us that signature gathering is going well. The goal is to gather 113,143 certified signatures by April 15, 2018. For those who are volunteering, upon filling a book with signatures, please let Gigi Brandt know (gigibrandt@xmission.com) so that the League can track our progress.

The signature-gathering experience this time has been different from previous League members' experiences. To gather signatures, volunteers must complete training by Grassroots Utah and provide proof of Utah residency. Training dates will be provided on the League website. Grassroots Utah will be expanding their training sessions soon to areas outside of the Wasatch Front.

For those of you who don't want to carry a petition, there are other ways to help the effort. If a family member is employed somewhere, perhaps they are amenable to having a signature gatherer come to the workplace. Have a neighborhood gathering and ask a League signature gatherer to attend. Notify the League of events that signature gatherers might attend. Contribute to Better Boundaries. Remember that the League website [features redistricting on its first page](#).

If you are interested in joining a League Google Group where we will share current information, tips on gathering signatures and experiences, contact Kathy Biele at howze@xmission.com.

Thanks and congratulations to Kathy Biele, Jeanine Kuhn, Jill Lesh, and Carole Straughn, all of whom have already completed one booklet!

Ranked Choice Voting Study Available

The League of Women Voters of Utah has been studying Ranked Choice Voting (also called Instant-runoff voting) as local Leagues attempt to come to consensus on the issue. Check out the study on [our website](#) for further information. Additional resources are available on the Salt Lake website under Unit Meetings.

Weber County League Hosts Climate Change Talk

by Terri McCulloch, LWV of Weber County President



There are five truths about global warming: it's real, it's caused by humans, it's bad, there is scientific consensus on the subject, and it's not too late. That was the message from Dr. Dan Bedford, who spoke during a Weber County League presentation, "Global Warming, Climate Change, and Their Effect on Utah" on October 11.

Many people think that global warming and climate change are

synonymous. But Dr. Bedford of Weber State University, said global warming causes climate change. Each year the temperatures top records, and the pattern seems to be continuing.

"It's real" is evidenced by melting ice and a decrease in land mass that has happened over recent time. "It's us" causing the problem due to the increasing human population and technology, both of which have contributed to rising atmospheric carbon levels – and carbon helps trap heat. The fact that "it is bad" is demonstrated by the fact that the average global temperature has increased, and scientists predict it may increase by as much as four degrees Celsius by the end of the century. Changing temperatures have brought more rain than snow in Utah in the past few years and an increase in the strength and number of hurricanes globally. About 97 percent of scientists agree that humans are the primary cause of these changes.

The good news is that it's not too late to rein in our contributions to carbon emissions. Electric cars, solar panels, and being aware of our "carbon footprint" (the amount we contribute to emissions) are good places to start. During the presentation, Dr. Bedford said that the most important thing we can do as Utah citizens is to winterize our homes so that heat isn't wasted.

League Looks To Expand County Corps

by Miriam Aiazzi, LWV of Salt Lake County Government Director

The creation of a Salt Lake County Observer Corps is a new phenomenon, the main purpose of which is to assemble a body of volunteers willing and able to attend city and township meetings and report back to the director of County Government (yours truly) on any issues or topics of interest to the League. These issues may include transportation, the environment, health, or education; to name a few. The main aim is for individuals to become

League Speaks Out Against White House Order

National League of Women Voters president Chris Carson issued a statement in response to the White House executive order to end health care subsidies in the Affordable Care Act.

"President Trump's executive order to end health care subsidies for insurance companies will raise premiums and leave more Americans without meaningful health insurance. These subsidies were put in place deliberately to keep costs down for everyday Americans. Removing them now is a dangerous step toward unraveling a fragile system."

[Read more of her statement here:](#)

involved with their local governments, get to know their council members, and stay informed about the issues affecting their immediate community.

Many of the issues debated at the federal level started somewhere in a small town or city at the grassroots level. Unless we have an informed and involved citizenry that is aware of the issues and their subsequent impact on the community at large, we run the risk of an out-of-touch bureaucracy that does not meet the needs of citizens.

My own experience started with a development slated to go up adjacent to my residential subdivision. The neighbors were up in arms because of the obstruction to their view and the nuisance of additional traffic. I took it upon myself to look at traffic studies that had been conducted and educated myself. I became aware that our intersection had been determined unsafe. We were then able to speak to the Cottonwood Heights Planning Commission and to the City Council, and on both occasions we were met with great praise for having a well-researched and articulate presentation that not only highlighted the problems, but offered solutions as well. We were invited to attend a work session, and the development was halted while the city developed a solution that met our community's needs. Ultimately, we were able to negotiate with the developer, and they agreed to pay for the installation of traffic mitigating measures before the project was completed. We managed to address the situation in advance instead of waiting for it to become a problem. My involvement left me with a strong desire to take a more active role in local matters and to encourage others to also get involved and speak up.

I encourage anyone that has an interest in becoming involved in the League to volunteer to either listen to their city/county council meetings online or attend in person. If you have a passion for the environment, or education, or other issues that affect your community, a, the League would welcome you to get involved.

If this sounds good to you, reach out to me at maiazzi@graystonemortgage.com .



Real Women Run To Host Fall Social

Tuesday, November 14
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Log Haven
[6451 Millcreek Canyon Road](https://www.google.com/maps/place/6451+Millcreek+Canyon+Road,+Salt+Lake+City,+UT+84109)
[Salt Lake City, UT 84109](https://www.google.com/maps/place/6451+Millcreek+Canyon+Road,+Salt+Lake+City,+UT+84109)

Join us for a discussion with Senator Deidre Henderson (District 7) and Salt Lake County Sheriff Rosie Rivera, hosted by Lara Jones, KRCL Executive Producer and host of RadioActive! [Click here to register.](#)

League Responds to Opt-Out Order on Birth Control

"This administration's decision to dismantle vital health care coverage for nearly 62 million women is misguided and discriminatory.

"Eliminating employer-covered birth control coverage, a requirement under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), is a direct assault on a woman's right to make her own health care choices.

"The provision included in the ACA has saved women an estimated \$1.4 billion in out of pocket costs for contraception coverage. Nine out of 10 women use birth control at some point in their lives for family planning or other medical reasons. Birth control is critical for effective family planning and preventing unwanted pregnancies, which we know opens up more opportunities for women and increases lifetime earnings."

[Read more ...](#)

Real Women Run is a collaborative nonpartisan initiative that helps empower women to participate more fully in public life and civic leadership. RWR helps women seek elected office at all levels, prepare for appointments to boards and commissions, participate in campaigns, and generally engage in the political system. The League of Women Voters of Utah is a proud partner and board member of Real Women Run.

Local Leagues Host ‘Meet the Candidates’ Events

Local leagues have been active in providing candidate debates and forum services in their counties. These activities provide excellent services for the candidates and good publicity for the League.

Davis County League *by Ann Johnson, Davis County Co-President*

In June, we emailed county recorders in all Davis County cities with upcoming mayoral and city council elections and offered our services in sponsoring “Meet the Candidates” events in their cities. Eight cities requested our help. Two cities wanted to host forums for summer primaries as well as for general elections.

Having only nine active members, and three of them are new enough that they hadn’t attended a “Meet the Candidates” evening yet, presented a challenge. Nelda Bishop, who has long been involved with these events, leveraged her knowledge to create a detailed list of instructions on how to conduct them. We asked each board member to be responsible for one or two cities – to arrange a location, inform the candidates, select topics, field questions from city officials and candidates’ staff, provide name cards for candidates, and a myriad of other details. Our publicity chair, Emily Walsh, did an outstanding job of using press releases, social media, and city and chamber of commerce newsletters to get the word out. The Weber and Salt Lake Leagues also provided help. Marilyn O’Dell and Jane Harrison served as moderators at two events.

City officials and voters were very appreciative. We met a lot of people who were unfamiliar with the League and added many names to our email list. We learned that every city in our county has a Youth Council of very bright high school students who are willing to help greet guests, collect questions, lead the Pledge of Allegiance and serve as timekeepers. We also learned that one Davis County city live-streams their city council meetings. They live-streamed our Meet the Candidates session to YouTube and we put a link to it on our Facebook page. The response was so great that we started live-streaming our meetings in other cities and posting them to Facebook.

Salt Lake League *by Jan Brock, Salt Lake Voter Services*

This year the Salt Lake League was asked to organize and/or assist in six different debates and forums for local city offices. We had members who organized, moderated, performed as timekeepers, gathered questions, and



Thanks to the Girl Scouts of Utah for their generous in-kind donations to the League of Women Voters of Utah and the League of Women Voters of Salt Lake.

manned the League tables in Park City, Salt Lake City, South Jordan, South Salt Lake, and Sandy. The candidates were all well-prepared, and we had ample questions from citizens at each event. The Salt Lake League was advertised as one of the sponsors for each event, which is great publicity for the important services we provide during election season. Please consider participating with the League next year in providing these services and be sure to try to attend a debate or forum for yourself in the future if your own city hosts one! It is one of the best methods to learn about the candidates for office in your community.

Weber County League by *Terri McCulloch, Weber County President*

As reported in the September Voter, the Weber League held a very successful “Meet the Candidates” night in July, prior to the Ogden City Council primary election. We are currently planning additional forums for the general election on the evenings of October 25 and 26.



Speaker Suggests Electoral College Outdated

by *Sandy Peck, Executive Director Emeritus*

Controversy surrounding the 2016 presidential election has led many members of the League of Women Voters to wonder about the decision being up to the Electoral College and the constitutional powers of the President. What did the framers of the U.S. Constitution decide and why regarding the Electoral College, the President’s Power to Pardon, Impeachment grounds and procedures, Treason committed by the President, and prohibition of Presidential Emoluments?



Hinckley Forums

are held in the old College of Law Building, 332 South 1400 East, Bldg. 73 Room 101, in the Moot Courtroom, 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/calendar/>

University of Utah Professor Tim Chambless gave us a lot to think about on these topics and more at the League of Women Voters of Salt Lake general meeting, “What You Should Know about the Constitution” on October 19.

Electoral College. We were especially interested in the history of electing the president via the Electoral College vs. the popular vote because of the 2016 presidential election results: Electoral College: Donald Trump 306 and Hillary Clinton 232. Popular vote: Hillary Clinton 65,853,625 (48.0 percent) and Donald Trump 62,985,106 (45.9 percent)

The Constitutional Convention of 1787 considered several methods of electing the president: selection by Congress, by state governors, by state legislatures, by a special group of members of Congress chosen by lot, and by direct popular election.

The founders eventually voted 38-3 for an Electoral College because they feared direct election to the presidency would allow a tyrant to come to power by manipulating public opinion. Electors hold office temporarily, are neither U.S. officials nor members of Congress. They are chosen at the state level by political parties, usually at state conventions or by a party central committee. All but Maine and Nebraska use a winner-take-all count.

Could the Electoral College choose to go with the popular vote? Unless we amend the Constitution – a very difficult process - it’s up to the states. Electors are not required by the Constitution to vote for a particular candidate. However, some states and parties require their electors to pledge to vote for a candidate and may fine or replace electors who break their pledge. Colorado state law requires electors to vote for the winner of the state popular vote.

One option, National Popular Vote, would require electors in states that had joined a compact to vote for the winner of the popular vote nationwide. Legislatures in at least 18 states have voted to join the compact so far. The compact would not take effect until enough states signed on to provide the 270 Electoral College votes needed to elect the president.

Professor Chambless offered information on so many constitutional topics. You can check out the conversation on the Salt Lake League website or on our YouTube channel. Especially interesting was his support of Australia’s requirement that every citizen vote or be fined. What do you think?

He also strongly supported fairer redistricting, reasoning that elected officials are public servants, not masters, so should be chosen by voters not the other way around. Being from Texas, he says he believes in competition, but gerrymandering is not fair competition. He also believes in teamwork and never giving up – “Nevah,” as Winston Churchill famously growled before Parliament during World War II. Thanks, Professor!

The League’s Position On Electoral College

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the president and vice-president is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished.

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