



<http://www.lwvutah.org>

The League of Women Voters of Utah

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April 2018

Foremost Activist Organization Continues Its Legacy

by Katharine Biele, LWV-SL President



At a recent Utah board meeting, a phrase that appeared on our website came up. Right below “Join the League,” it said: “Your Only Activist Organization.” The spirited discussion that followed made note of the multitude of other fine activist groups in Utah, many of which we have worked alongside. Recognizing their importance and the importance of coalition, we have changed the wording, which now reads: “Your Foremost Activist Organization.”

This is not to diminish the work of our partners, but to emphasize the League of Women Voters’ long history in nonpartisan politics. It all started 98 years ago, and continues today, ever more crucial to voters everywhere in our country.

This legislative session, some 20 stalwart Leaguers monitored bills of interest to the League. Many spoke in support of or opposition to proposed laws. The Inland Port, sadly signed into law by Gov. Gary Herbert, drew much League attention and action. If you attended Legislative Wrap-ups done for Salt Lake, Weber/Davis Counties, and Park City Leagues, you heard of many more bills that were impacted positively by the League.

LWVSL’s State of the Community Luncheon this year will feature a panel to explain the five voter initiatives Utah has been faced with this year. Leagues throughout the state, supporting the citizen’s right to vote, have been carrying petitions to get the redistricting initiative on the November ballot. All of these initiatives were the subject of much legislative angst.

Leaguers also marched with students and citizens in support of common sense gun laws during the March for Our Lives. We do not act on impulse

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or emotion, but rather after study and deliberation of issues on which we come to consensus. It is not an easy task, but it is one that makes our activism deep and sustainable.

The League of Women Voters has been led by a national team keeping a close eye on Washington during these volatile times. The words of our national president, Chris Carson, help and inspire us all to move forward.

“As usual, young people are leading the way in demanding change. From the [moving scene in Tallahassee today](#), where thousands rallied for common sense gun reforms (with League president Pam Goodman speaking), to the [many student walkouts being planned across the country](#) for March 14 and other dates, we are witnessing a profound national moment. Our young people are saying ‘enough’ and standing up for what’s right. We can help by doing what we do best - connecting our inspiring young people to the other ways they can make an impact, especially by voting.”

Weber League Holds Meeting On Public Lands

by Terri McCulloch, LWV-Weber County President



Federal lands, state lands, and trust/education lands. They are all public lands, the League of Women Voters of Weber County learned recently in a presentation by Laura Peterson of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

and Rep. Steve Handy, R-Layton. The meeting was quite lively and passionate.

Trust/education lands are allocated for educational facilities and fall under the direction of the State School Board. Federal lands are governed by federal policy and programs. Some people believe that the federal government does not have the ability to manage all of the federal lands in the United States effectively. Some believe the states could better manage these lands, which they think have not been properly maintained.

However, public lands are not owned by any government but rather by the American people, Rep. Handy said. If we own them, we should manage them. He also argued that national parks or wilderness areas are not considered part of any land program being moved to a state level of management, and that public land should be managed under the

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principles of highest value and best use of the land for the most people. The struggle to determine the best use of public lands in Utah is nothing new – it has been a continuous argument. Rep. Handy suggested that public school funding in Utah is insufficient, and State control of lands would allow more funds to be available to educate Utah’s children.

Public land ownership began to emerge in 1790, said SUWA’s Laura Peterson. Lands in the West were very hard to develop, so they remained under federal control. The U.S. Constitution’s Article IV, Section 3 states: “Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.” This established the use of federal lands. States taking over the governing of federal lands could be considered unconstitutional, she said.



Peterson sees no correlation between federal lands and quality schools, and thinks state management of public lands would be less effective as fewer resources are available at the state level. State management is not cost effective, and using federal money and policies provides an opportunity for states to have more services, she said.

The meeting definitely produced many questions and caused much thought on this powerful subject.

Initiatives Provide Direct Democracy

by Susan Lind, LWVSL State of the Community Luncheon Chair

Initiatives often occur in an election cycle when citizens become frustrated with their lawmakers who refuse to address or resolve a public policy. The initiative process empowers citizens to pass laws through the ballot box on such issues as taxes, education, and drug policy. This power is guaranteed by the Utah Constitution (Article VI, Sec 1).



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To get on the ballot, an initiative in the state of Utah must collect the signatures of 10 percent of those who voted in the most recent presidential election, which to date amounts to 113,143 voters statewide. This 10 percent of presidential voters requirement also applies to each of at least 26 of Utah's 29 Senate districts. Initiative promoters work with state agencies and the Lieutenant Governor's office to ensure initiatives are constitutional and practical. The Lieutenant Governor's office reviews initiative-requested budgets to make sure funds can be appropriated for the various measures as needed. Also, initiative promoters must attend town meetings around the state to obtain feedback from the public.

Some Utah citizens have become frustrated as they have seen the Legislature table important yet controversial bills or send them back for further study. As a result, various citizen groups have organized their supporters to gather signatures and are now exerting their energy and time to make sure their proposals meet Utah's requirements to be on the ballot in November 2018. This gives citizens a measure of direct democracy by allowing every voter the right to support or oppose a proposed public policy.

This is often not popular with the Legislature. Some legislators believe the initiative process gives citizens too much power over their elected officials. Some legislators believe they have a greater knowledge of the issues facing Utah than their constituents. Recently, the new representative from St. George, Travis Seegmiller, introduced a bill, HB471, called the "Pause Button" bill. It did not pass, but would have delayed the effective date of any successful initiative to give the Legislature the opportunity to tweak it.

Under current law, initiatives approved by voters generally take effect five days after an election canvass certifies results – essentially, the end of November. In a press release in the Salt Lake Tribune, Gov. Gary Herbert indicated that he might veto Rep. Seegmiller's bill if it passed. "I'm very reluctant to have anything be contrary to what the voice of the people say. I don't think we need to set things aside and delay the implementation. ... I think it's contrary to the initiative petition process."

The initiative for the Utah Decides Healthcare Act was evidently noticed by legislators, who busily worked on expanding Medicaid through HB472, which passed but is not a complete Medicaid expansion, although it will cover 60,000 more people than the current system. The initiative that citizen activists have been working on, on the other hand, calls for a full expansion that would cover all people up to 138 percent of the poverty line, or approximately 120,000 Utahns.

To dilute or head off the Our Schools Now initiative, the Legislature crafted a last-minute bill to boost school spending through higher property taxes as home values rise over the next five years. On the final day of the session the compromise bill was passed to freeze property tax rates for

Harassment Resources Available

The Utah Women & Leadership Project continues to produce great research with Utah specific information. A timely release this month is [Sexual Harassment: What Utahns Need to Know](#). You can also find links to [articles and documents](#) that have tips or guidelines for organizations on this topic.

five years leading to \$125 million more for education spending. Legislators also passed a bill that will allow voters a non-binding vote on paying 10 cents per gallon more for gas to fund education.

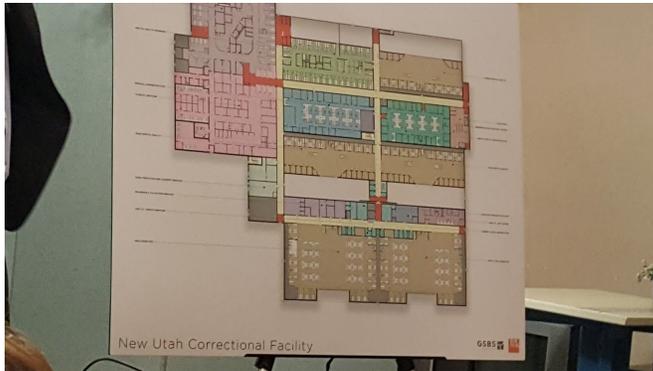
All of the above and more will be discussed by real ballot initiative experts on Wednesday, April 18 at Little America at our State of the Community Luncheon. [Reserve here now!](#) Mailed invitations will be out after March 18. Some delicious lunch options will be available. It should prove to be a memorable occasion, as all our luncheons have been in the past. After you receive an invitation, if you have any questions call Judi Short at (801) 487-7387 or email her at judi@lwvsl.org. Or, if you see a committee member (Nancy Young, Nancy Melling, Nancy Wingelaar, Linda Johnson, Lynda Sayge, or myself), we may be able to answer your queries.

UPAN Provides Update On New Prison

by Vickie Samuelson, LWV-UT Legislative Action Corps Co-Director
Prison construction is underway. I had an opportunity to attend a Utah Prisoner Advocate Network new prison update meeting on 3/12/18.

As of now, they are just about done with hauling in tons of dirt to the site, according to Steve Turley from the Department of Corrections and Kevin Miller, the prison's architect. This is due to wrap up in the next month or so. The plan is to break ground in August. The new building will be a large

rectangular structure rather than several smaller buildings, and each new cell will allow for more privacy than in the past and will be larger. There will be ample natural lighting, which case study evidence shows produces better outcomes for inmates.



With recent budget cuts, the Utah Prisoner Advocate Network (UPAN) was concerned that funding for programming would be cut but Turley has worked with those involved to ensure that this doesn't happen. There has been a reduction in the number of inmates to be housed, from 4,000 to 3,600. The new facility will house both women and men, separated into different areas. Programming for men will be pretty much the same as that for women.

The goal of the new prison is to create a more normal atmosphere. The hope is that transitioning out won't be overwhelming for inmates as they move to different levels. Each level will have to be earned through the completion of programming and by avoiding behavior problems.

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:

Roberta Gidden,
Community Foundation
of Utah
Barbara Jensen
Ruth Brown
Lola Britton
Kirk Dath, Crook and the
Bluff
Evelyn Bertilson
Mary Williams
Lydia Joseph
Andrew Nelson
Luli Josephson

--Kathryn Fitzgerald

Some people at the meeting were worried about moving around the prison to get to the visiting areas. The prison, however, will have ways to safely shuttle people around. For women inmates who give birth, there will be four nurseries set up to allow mothers and babies to be together. There has still been no answer provided regarding the question of how long new mothers and babies will be allowed to stay together after birth.

The Serving Time Café, staffed by inmates, will be located at the front entrance of the prison.

Utah League Issues Call to 2018 Convention

by Catherine Weller, LWVUT Co-president

The League of Women Voters of Utah and League of Women Voters of Salt Lake invite you to participate in the 2018 Convention, to be held May 11 and 12 in Salt Lake City. Please [reserve here](#).

At the convention, business will include the adoption of a statewide program and any statewide studies for 2018-2019, a review of the state League's budget for the upcoming year, elections for the state board's incoming officers, and reports from the state's local League leaders. We will be joined this year by Utah's liaison to the national League board and Vice-President of LWV-US, Karen Nicholson from Texas.

On Friday, May 11 at 5:30 p.m., the Salt Lake League will host an evening at the Peery Hotel with former KUTV Channel 2 reporter Rod Decker. There will be a cash bar followed by dinner. Tickets are \$36.

Following that, on Saturday, May 12 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., the Convention will meet in the Utah State Capitol Board Room. Continental breakfast will be provided by the Salt Lake League. The \$27 fee for convention includes a box lunch. Hard copies of the program will be available for order for \$5.

The Salt Lake League has secured a room rate of \$109 (plus tax) at the historic Peery Hotel. Email Noel Namuco (nnamuco@hotelpros.biz) with your name and date of stay to arrange reservations.

We encourage members from throughout the state to attend. There is no limit on the number of delegates who may attend. If you'd like to be a voting delegate, consult your local League leadership. Convention is a chance to meet and connect with League members from around the state. We look forward to seeing you there!

Legislative Action Corps Made a Difference

More than 20 LWV observers packed the halls of the Utah Legislature this year. Take a look at the impact we had, and what we still have to work on. <http://lwwutah.org/get-informed/legislative-advocacy>

Salt Lake League Rises

The League of Women Voters of Salt Lake now has a domain that brings you directly to their webpage. If you type in lwvsl.org in the address bar, voila! LWVSL is still part of the Utah League website, which we encourage you to investigate. Getting right to LWVSL, though, brings you to the latest happenings in our local league — unit meetings, the planned 5-K fun run, our legislative wrap-up, and our State of the Community Luncheon. Try it when you get a chance.

You'll also find that our board members have position-specific emails now. For instance, you can reach both Kathy and Carole at president@lwvsl.org

Redistricting Petition Deadline Approaches

by Gigi Brandt, LWV-UT Program Vice President

April 17 is the day on which the redistricting petition, as well as all other petitions, will be required to submit 113,143 verified signatures to be placed on the 2018 ballot. If the signature drive is successful, work on the project will enter a new phase: educating voters to vote “yes” on the initiative. Better Boundaries has worked hard in reaching this goal, and the next phase will be even harder. Politicians do not want to give up their power without a fight, and will be aided by groups that like the status quo.

I think that the group which is overseeing the signature gathering has been pleasantly surprised by the commitment and work of our volunteers. Thank you to all League volunteers for the support and hard work.

The legislative session is over and now it's time to turn our attention to the Utah League's priorities for 2018-2019. Since the League is a grassroots organization, member input is always solicited to shape these priorities. After suggestions from local League boards and members, the Utah board, at its Tuesday, April 10 meeting, will come up with a proposed program which will be voted on at Convention on Saturday, May 12.

Some League members may think that the programming process is primarily concerned with adopting new studies. Actually, the League's program is a reflection of member priorities and is not solely concerned with the Utah Legislature. The League has many positions which, although some were reached several years ago, are relevant today. The board looks forward to hearing your concerns.

Currently, many citizens are concerned about the role of money in politics but it can be difficult to know what to do about the issue. The role money plays in politics is one of the cornerstones of the national League's Campaign for Democracy. Utah is one of 11 states which places no limits on individual contributions to candidates. A [recent article](#) in the Salt Lake Tribune noted that special interests provided 92 percent of all money raised by lawmakers last year.

Money and politics are addressed in the documentary “Dark Money,” which premiered at Sundance this winter. “Dark Money” has been purchased by PBS and is scheduled to be aired in the fall. The film looks at campaign finance reform through the lens of efforts to address the problem since the “controversial and game –changing” *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision in 2010, which declared that campaign donations are a form of speech. The filmmaker returns to her native Montana to see what effects the decision has had as citizens try to promote transparency.

For more information on this topic, a recent *Atlantic Monthly* article, “ ‘Corporations Are People’ Is Built on an Incredible 19th Century Lie,” can

Salt Lake League To Hold Spring Orientation

If anyone has not attended one of our Orientations, we hope you will join us, along with new and prospective members. It will be held April 5 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at the beautiful new Cottonwood Heights City Building on [2277 East Bengal Blvd.](#), just southeast of Brighton High School. Light refreshments will be served.

Our life changes over time and if you feel this is a good time in your life to get involved, but are not sure whom to contact or what you can do, this is a great opportunity to get an overview of what is happening with the Salt Lake League. We would love to have you join us!

-[Anne Zeigler](#),
Membership Chair

be found [here](#). Also, a report from the Brennan Center on nonprofits established by political candidates after elections (a practice which allows them to skirt campaign finance rules) can be found [here](#).

Better Boundaries Has Some Good News

“Since the beginning of the campaign, we have collected over 155,000 signatures. Utah voters of all political stripes have come together to build this movement- but we are coming up short in a few places. Because of the geographic requirements to get on the ballot, we still need to collect signatures in certain areas like Logan, Park City, Riverton and Magna. We are so close to qualifying for the ballot and we need your help to to make it over this last hurdle.”

If you can help, please let them know: Jackie: 801-413-4832 or jackie@betterboundaries.org.

Protecting Agricultural Land Provides Value, Beauty

by Jan Striefel, LWV-UT Agriculture Study member

The preservation of agricultural land in Utah is an important issue to Utah residents for many reasons. The viability of Utah’s agricultural economy is dependent on good land on which to grow crops, graze animals, and produce food, but there are also other reasons that Utah residents value agricultural land. Agricultural land preserves a “rural quality” in our



communities, and provides open space, wildlife habitat, and beautiful vistas and views. It also provides a place to escape city life and congestion. These are important qualities that add value to property and to people’s lives, and such things should be

preserved.

In spite of these concerns and values, there are few legal protections for agricultural land in Utah, and of those available, most require the purchase of easements or the out-right purchase of property. In some cases, land-use controls like planning and zoning are used, but have been largely ineffective at curbing overdevelopment. There are, however, tools available to those who wish to preserve agricultural land in their



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.

community.

A conservation easement, for example, is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land to protect its value to conservation. It allows the owner to continue to own and use the land and to sell it or pass it on to heirs, with the restrictions intact. Granting an easement to a conservation organization can yield income and estate tax savings, and allows landowners to receive some compensation by relinquishing future development rights.

Another way to act is to [get in touch](#) with the LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund, which is an incentive program that provides grants to encourage communities and landowners to work together to preserve critical lands. The fund targets agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, watershed protection areas, and other culturally or historically unique landscapes. Funding is available to Utah counties, cities, towns, the Utah Departments of Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Food, and to charitable organizations that qualify as tax-exempt. The Fund provides up to 50 percent of a project's total cost; the remaining 50 percent to be matching funds. In 2017, \$500,000 was available. However in the past funding has been sporadic and sometimes unavailable.

The Farmland Assessment Act can also help. It provides a means of taxing agricultural land based on the value the land has for agricultural purposes, not on its development potential or zoning. The Act is specifically targeted at agricultural lands near urban and developing areas. Parcels must be a minimum of five acres in size and actively devoted to agricultural use. Similarly, the Urban Farming Assessment Act applies to smaller parcels between two to five acres and is administered by each County's Assessor.

For more information about how to act in your community to preserve agricultural land, contact your local League.

League Responds to New Census Question

From LWVUS President Chris Carson

"Including a question about citizenship in the 2020 Census will damage the chances for an accurate count of our country's population. This unprecedented change to the way we count the number of people living in the United States is a betrayal of the idea that in America, every person counts.

"Make no mistake: this decision isn't about improving demographic data on citizenship. It's designed to frighten immigrants—citizens and noncitizens alike—so they won't participate in the Census."

Read [her complete statement here](#).

How do I...set up an event?

We have an "Events Checklist" This is exciting because the guesswork 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 Yous!

How do I...submit photos I took at LWV events?

For photos to be used in the "Voter" newsletter or online, you will need to include the event title, location and identity of individuals pictured.

Please send them to the office by email.

office@lwwutah.org

—Trixi Sieger

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Subject

TOWN CLUB UNIT – Wednesday, April 11 – 11:00 A.M.

Town Club - 1081 East South Temple

Unit Leader – Alice Steiner – 801-363-9193

tc-unit@lwvsl.org

GIRL SCOUT UNIT – Monday, April 23 – 11 A.M.–12:30 P.M.

Girl Scout Headquarters, 445 East, 4500 South

Unit Leader: Anne Zeigler 801-944-4163

gs-unit@lwvsl.org

NITE OWLS – Monday, April 23 – 7:30 P.M.

Unit Leader: Judi Short – 801-487-7387

Please call for location in Sugar House area

nite-owls@lwvsl.org

BENCH BUNCH – Wednesday, April 25 – 10:00 A.M.

Holladay Library – 2150 East Murray-Holladay Road – 4730 South

Unit Leader: Nancy Melling 801-277-9118

bench-bunch@lwvsl.org

WEST SIDE UNIT – Wednesday, April 25 – 6 to 8 P.M.

Hunter Village Club House, 3440 So. Bambrugh Way (6845 W.)

West Valley City 84128

Unit Leader – Vickie Samuelson – 801-250-9210

westside-unit@lwvsl.org

SANDY UNIT – Thursday, April 26 – 10:00– 11:30 A.M.

Sandy Senior Citizens Center – 9310 So. 1300 East

Unit Leader - Janice Gygi - 801-550-3585

sandy-unit@lwvsl.org

LIBRARY UNIT – Thursday, April 26 – 12:30 P.M.

Anderson-Foothill Library - 1135 So. 2100 East

Unit Leaders – Kathy Fitzgerald – 801-521-5790; Carole Straughn – 801-664-5897

library-unit@lwvsl.org

PARK CITY UNIT – Tuesday, April 24 – 11:00 A.M.

Park City Public Library, 1255 Park Avenue, Park City

Unit Leader – Jill Lesh – 435-655-1965

pc-unit@lwvsl.org

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