



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF McLEAN COUNTY

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League of Women Voters of  
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National [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

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# The Voter

of McLean County

Vol. 80 No. 3

November 2013

## Save the Date: LWV Programs 2013-14

### Getting Involved in Political Campaigns

Monday, November 11, 5:00-6:30 p.m.

- Baxter's American Grille, Bloomington
- Second event in our new Drinks & Dialogue series
- See page 3 for details

### Our State's Attorney Office: The Most Powerful Player in the Legal System?

Tuesday, November 19, 7:00 p.m.

- Normal Public Library Community Room
- Recently-elected McLean County State's Attorney Jason Chambers to participate
- See page 3 for more information

### ★ Holiday Wine Tasting & Fundraiser

Tuesday, December 3, 5:00-7:30 p.m.

- McLean County Arts Center, Bloomington ★
- Enjoy fine wine and delectable hors d'oeuvres from A. Renée
- Join friends and support your local League ★
- Purchase tickets from Board members or email [dd.willi@hotmail.com](mailto:dd.willi@hotmail.com)
- See page 6

### Upcoming December Programs

- **December 10 Drinks & Dialogue**
- Watch your email and the League calendar for details about December events
- Topics and venues TBA

## ***From the Desk of Our Co-President:***

During our recent Membership Event, we talked about two key initiatives the League hopes will be on the 2014 Illinois ballot: the Graduated Rate Income Tax (GRIT) and Redistricting. Our speakers talked at length about GRIT, and you'll be hearing more about that topic in months to come, but this month I'd like to talk about the League's position on congressional redistricting.

The Illinois State League of Women Voters has a program position on Redistricting, wherein we state that the League supports "a redistricting process which is timely, orderly and meets the basic criteria relating to population, compactness and contiguity and the requirements of the 1965 U.S. Voting Rights Act and subsequent amendments."

This position is based on a LWVIL Task Force report that was adopted by concurrence of delegates at the 1993 LWVIL Convention. The position enabled the League to comment on the proposed maps when state legislative districts were drawn in 2001 following the 2000 census. Unfortunately, the goal of achieving fair redistricting did not occur in 2001. Therefore, the League has continued to take action on this issue.

Here are some concrete steps the League has taken in Illinois:


- In order to be ready for 2011 redistricting, the League promoted a citizen initiative known as the *Fair Map Amendment* which would change Article IV of the Illinois Constitution on redistricting. Although the effort failed and the amendment was not on the 2010 ballot, the League succeeded in raising the awareness of the public and the media about redistricting and its impact on voting and governance.
- After the General Assembly drew maps for the Illinois House and Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives in 2011, *the League criticized the maps*. Beyond that, the LWVIL also *filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the maps for the U.S. House*. The challenge was dismissed.
- LWVIL worked in a coalition called the *Illinois Campaign for Accountable Redistricting* on the challenges to the maps. It continues to work with other groups to prepare for the next round of map drawing in 2021, including consideration of another citizens' initiative.


Locally, our League intends to do its part in advocating for a fairer redistricting process in Illinois. This activity started at our Membership Event where we publically stated our position on this issue and invited Peoria League member Pat Landes to comment on the redistricting petition drive League is supporting at the state and local levels. Our Board is currently discussing how we can best move this initiative forward in the weeks and months to come. We have some interesting ideas for how we can take action through membership involvement in this effort, and as they're finalized, we'll be reaching out to our membership to join us in this cause.


If any of you have suggestions for how we can move this initiative forward, please don't hesitate to contact me ([mokbg@comcast.net](mailto:mokbg@comcast.net)) or any Board member with your ideas; we are open to any and all suggestions for how we can best advocate and take action at the local level. So, more to come about this very important issue at upcoming League events and in upcoming editions of *The Voter*!


---Maureen O'Keefe


## **Our League in Action**

 Laura Zimmerman led an insightful discussion of social responsibility at our first Drinks & Dialogue on October 16

 Camille Taylor provided a two-hour lecture on U.S. Voting at Heartland College

 New Member Meet & Greet hosted at Janine Toth's home, October 19

 Co-sponsored showing and discussion of *Miss Representation*, October 23

 Mental Health Study members conduct interviews throughout October and November

# Highlight on November Programs

## The Most Powerful Player in the Legal System? - November 19



The McLean County State's Attorney is one of our most important elected offices, yet it is not well understood by most voters.

Just how does the State's Attorney's office fit into our overall justice system? How much of what the State's Attorney does is defined by law, and how much discretion does he have? What are the priorities regarding how the office prosecutes different kinds of crime? How does plea bargaining work, and how does it affect our system of justice? How does the office work with the Public Defender's office? What administrative skills are the most

Important for the State's Attorney to have?

Come to our November program to gain a better understanding of this important office. "Our State's Attorney Office: The Most Powerful Player In The Legal System?" will be held on **Tuesday evening, November 19, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Normal Public Library.** Our distinguished panel includes:

- State's Attorney Jason Chambers
- Former State's Attorney and judge Ron Dozier
- Public Defender Kim Campbell
- Local criminal defense attorney Jeff Brown

See you there!

--Laurie Bergner

## Drinks and Dialogue - November 11

**On Monday, November 11th from 5:00-6:30 p.m. we will be meeting at Baxter's Bar and Grille** located next to the Holiday Inn Express at the Airport. League members Sally Rudolph and Gretchen Monti will be facilitating a discussion on "**Getting Involved in Political Campaigns.**"

2014 promises to be an interesting election year in McLean County and Illinois! Social media has changed the way candidates run for office. Candidates now have to use both social platforms and traditional techniques to reach voters. Leaguer Judy Buchanan will be attending to share her expertise. Instead of asking you read an article, we are asking you to share your election stories if you are a successful campaigner, and bring your questions if you are interested in being more involved in campaigns. Social networking at 5:00 – discussion begins at 5:30.

--Lacey MacLeod

*Interested in facilitating a discussion on a topic you are passionate about? Please contact Lacey MacLeod at [lacey.marie06@gmail.com](mailto:lacey.marie06@gmail.com).*



*The October Drinks & Dialogue is a great success. Among the 13 attendees are (l-r) Becky Hines, Lacey MacLeod, Charles Reynard, Judith Valente Reynard, and Mary Hansen*



*Laura Zimmerman (above) chairs first Drinks & Dialogue on social responsibility of businesses*

# Redistricting to Return Power to the People

## League Supports Amendment to Illinois Constitution

Because of the gerrymandering practice in Illinois, voters no longer have a choice in electing their representatives. Every ten years legislative districts are redrawn and technology has given politicians the ability to draw boundaries to control who will be elected, leaving voters without a voice. The politicians choose their voters!

A coalition called *Yes! For Independent Maps* is working to collect over 300,000 signatures to place an amendment on the November 2014 ballot that would take the drawing of districts out of the hands of legislators and give the power back to the people. The commission's criteria in drawing legislative maps would be: contiguous areas substantially equal in population; not diluting votes of racial or language minorities; putting cities and other local units in the same district when possible; not splitting up communities sharing common social and economic interests; not favoring a particular political party and not taking into account where politicians reside.

What is alarming is in two-thirds of the races for General Assembly last year, there was no

race at all because there was not a single challenger. The race was over before any voter got to the polls. This has to stop.

One of the top national Democratic strategists and pollsters, Cornell Belcher, and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel brought up the need for redistricting reform at a recent event in Chicago hosted by the host of NBC's "Meet the Press" David Gregory. Mayor Emanuel said "The redistricting system has to be fixed."

The Illinois League of Women Voters and the State Chamber of Commerce have endorsed the new amendment. Many in McLean County are already busy collecting signatures. **Petitions can be picked up, delivered and also notarized on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday mornings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room of the U.S. Bank, corner of Veterans' Parkway and Eastland Dr., 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. through the month of March.**

You can send an email for more petitions at: [illinoisredistrict@gmail.com](mailto:illinoisredistrict@gmail.com). We all need to get involved and create a strong grass roots movement for the success of this amendment. Please carry a petition and ask for signatures!

--Jan Hood



## Time to Pay Your Dues!

If you have yet to send in your annual dues, please include this form and mail to: **Becky Hines, 517 Kreitzer Avenue, Bloomington, IL 61701**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make your check payable to the League of Women Voters of McLean County.**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 Individual member dues | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Second household member dues  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Full-time student dues | <input type="checkbox"/> Please send more information to me |

Email questions to [bec4523@aol.com](mailto:bec4523@aol.com).

## Other League News

### What is “GRIT” and Why We Need It in Illinois

The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports a Graduated Rate Income Tax or GRIT. This has been the position of the League for many decades, as we advocated for a graduated tax when our 1970 state Constitution was developed and adopted. The League believes that the flat tax now required in Illinois is regressive and must be changed.

The current Illinois Constitution states that income tax shall be at a flat rate. The only way Illinois can have a graduated income tax is through an amendment to the Constitution. Legislation (HJRCA33/ SJRCA40) is pending in Springfield allowing for higher rates on higher income and lower rates on lower incomes. If the General Assembly adopts these resolutions by May, 2014, the question will be put on the November 2014 ballot asking voters if they want to amend the 1970 Illinois Constitution to allow a graduated income tax. The LWV of Illinois believes that this would be a fairer tax as the tax burden would correspond to ability to pay.

**Please contact your legislators and ask them to vote for these resolutions and bring this vital question to the Illinois voters.**

--Sally Rudolph

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### From the U.S. League of Women Voters. . .

The following article appeared in the October 17, 2013 “Leader’s Letter” which is sent country-wide to local and state League officers by Elizabeth MacNamara, President of the U.S. League of Women Voters:

**Judge Admits He Erred when He Supported Indiana Voter Photo ID Law:** A federal appeals court judge said [he erred when writing a decision](#) which served as a key precursor to [the Supreme Court's 2008 ruling upholding the constitutionality of Indiana's voter ID law](#). Seventh Circuit Judge Richard Posner said his opinion finding the Indiana law constitutional was mistaken, due to the court not having sufficient information about how the law could be used to [prevent or discourage people from voting](#).

### What’s your passion... What’s your story?

We would like the Voter to become more of a **community forum** in which we hear regularly from you, our members, about the things that matter most to you. That means you can let us know about your own acts of civic engagement or you can use the Voter as a way to solicit others to join your cause!

Together, we can also use the Voter to build a stronger community within our membership by sharing our individual stories. Last month Leaguer Mary Broad recalled what it meant to her to have attended the 1963 March on Washington along with her husband Stu. Can you imagine what it must have been like to actually hear Martin Luther King Jr.’s “*I have a dream*” speech on that historic day, perched as Mary says, “on the grass under the trees very near the Lincoln Memorial?”

So, let’s make the Voter a forum all of us turn to in order to inform each other about what’s important to each of us, how we’re working to make our cities, county, or country better, and of course, as a place in which to share our stories...because the stories we tell each other will serve as the very foundation of our League community.

**Please send your articles, stories, or “calls to action” to: [bulletin@lwvmclean.org](mailto:bulletin@lwvmclean.org).**

--Maureen O’Keefe & Board



*Relax and unwind at a*  
**★ Fun ~ Fundraiser**



**WINE  
TASTING  
& Social**

**Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> ♦ 5:00-7:30 p.m.**

**McLean County Arts Center**

**601 N. East Street, Bloomington**

*Catered by*

***A. Renée Wine Café***

- ♦ Gift Basket Raffle ♦ 'Holiday Treasures' Art Show
- ♦ Purchase wine by the glass
- ♦ Enjoyable shopping for art and wine lovers

**Tickets - \$30**



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF McLEAN COUNTY**

Deadline for reservations is December 1<sup>st</sup>  
For reservations and information email [dd.willi@hotmail.com](mailto:dd.willi@hotmail.com)