



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CLEVELAND AREA

ISSUE: 1

VOLUME: 1

JANUARY-APRIL 2010

Serving the cities of Berea, Bratenahl, Brook Park, Cleveland, Euclid, Independence, Middleburg Heights, Olmsted Falls, Olmsted Township, and Strongsville

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a member.

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The League of Women Voters Through the Decades: 1920-2010

The Founding: From the spirit of the suffrage movement and the shock of the First World War came a great idea--that a nonpartisan civic organization could provide the education and experience the public needed to assure the success of democracy. On that idea, the League of Women Voters was founded, February 14, 1920.

The 1920's: Since the League had inherited its structure from the National American Women Suffrage Association, at its founding it was a federation of affiliated state Leagues, most of which had been in existence as state headquarters of the NAWSA.

The 1930's: The Great Depression and the onset of World War II brought far-reaching change to the League.

The 1940's: The 1944 convention made major changes in the basic structure of the League, proclaiming it an association of members and abolishing the departmental system of managing the various facets of the League program.

The 1950's: The witch hunt period of the early fifties inspired the League to undertake a two-year community education program focusing on the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution.

The 1960's: In response to the growing civil rights crisis, the League directed its energies to equality of opportunity and built a solid foundation of support for equal access to education, employment and housing.

The 1970's: The 1974 convention amended the bylaws to allow men to join the League as full voting members.

The 1980's: The League was in the forefront of the struggle to pass the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1982 and contributed significantly to enactment of the historic Tax Reform Act of 1986.

The 1990's: The League launched "Take Back the System," a voter campaign to reclaim government and elections, and also sponsored a presidential primary debate in 1992.

The 21st Century: The League was instrumental in the enactment of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 and the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 2002. The League also worked to renew the Voting Rights Act and filed a number of amicus briefs relating to campaign finance reform, racial bias in jury selection and Title IX.

Conclusion: While the League's programs, priorities and procedures have changed over the years to meet changing times, a 1919 League pamphlet describes with remarkable accuracy its basic aims today: "to foster education in citizenship, to promote forums and public discussion of civic reforms and to support needed legislation.

HAPPY 90TH ANNIVERSARY to LWV and to all LEAGUERS!