



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

League of Women Voters of the Cleveland Area *and*
League of Women Voters of Cleveland Educational Fund

THE CLEVELAND AREA VOTER

SERVING THE CITIES OF CLEVELAND, INDEPENDENCE, BRATENAHL, BEREA, BROOK PARK, MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS, OL MSTED FALLS, OL MSTED TOWNSHIP AND STRONGSVILLE

Volume IV Issue II

April/May/June 2005

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Though famous for its tireless efforts to guarantee the right to vote for all citizens, the League of Women Voters is also an action-based organization. For 85 years, League has conducted careful, informed study of issues and garnered consensus of its members to develop program positions on the local, state and national level. With these positions, League then testifies, lobbies, issues Action Alerts, and more--all to carry out part of its mission: to influence "public policy through education and advocacy."

This quarterly "Voter" is largely devoted to the issues being tracked by the all-volunteer LWV Ohio Lobby Corps in Columbus: TABOR, TEL, DMA, HB1/SB1, HB66, HB3/SB3, HJR4. The Lobbyists' Reports on pages 6-7 highlight Ohio's "estimated structural deficit" for the next budget cycle to be \$4-5 billion! House Bill 66 is Governor Taft's FY06-07 proposed budget. The Governor's proposals for tax reform (HB1/SB1) would decrease state revenues by another \$800 million, creating "a bleak situation for human service agencies, libraries, local governments and most other government programs." Also at risk is Disability Medical Assistance (DMA), which currently provides health care and prescription drugs for very poor people earning less than 33% of the federal poverty level.

Add to this "dreadful mix" the proposed constitutional amendment (HJR4) that caps state government spending, called the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR), or Tax and Expenditure Limitation (TEL). Says the Report, "Ohio need only look to Colorado to see the crippling effect of such an amendment."

What are concerned citizens and Leaguers to do? For starters, let's all become better informed. Read the Lobbyists' Reports in these pages. Join the Cleveland Area League if you're not already a member (see page 8). Visit our website at lwvcef.org. Subscribe to the LWVO Legislative Update, emailed bi-monthly during the legislative session, and learn about Ohio's election reform bill (HB3/SB3). And finally, get involved with League in whatever way you can, from contacting Senators DeWine and Voinovich to voice your opposition to Social Security privatization (page 4) to watching over the quality and financial needs of your local school district (pages 3-4) to volunteering at the League office a few hours a month to ... the opportunities are practically endless. Thank you for your continued support.

In League,
Barbara Sones

LWVC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

216-781-8375 for RSVP or more info

Saturday, April 23: Heidi Pruess, Environmental Manager at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport, will talk about how she and her co-workers try to be pro-active environmentally. Come and find out what happens to all those pop cans, where the stormwater goes, what happens to the de-icing material, whether birds and wildlife are a problem, and more. Meeting at the League office, 10 a.m. continental breakfast, 10:30-noon program. RSVP.

Saturday, June 4: Report on the Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Port Authority by the LWVC Port Authority Committee. Learn about what the Port Authority is and what it does, how it gets and spends its money, and how accountable it is to the voters. This meeting will be the first step in the process of League consensus and possible adoption of a new LWVC program position. Other local Leagues in the county will be invited to attend since the Port Authority operates on the city/ county level. Join us at the League office at 10 a.m. for a continental breakfast, then 10:30-noon program. RSVP.

Thursday, June 16: Annual meeting/potluck at the League office, 5:30 p.m. arrival, potluck 6:00, meeting 6:30 with election of officers, program and budget approval. NEW this year is our first annual "Trash to Treasure" fundraiser; please consider regifting an item for the event .

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, August 27 - The Belle Sherwin Democracy in Action Awards Brunch, 10:00 a.m. at Windows on the River.

Other League Meetings/Events:

Tuesday, April 12: "Casino Gambling in Cleveland... What's at Stake?" with Gerald Austin, Rev. Marvin McMickle, and Ohio Auditor of State Betty Montgomery. Free and open to the public, at the Cleveland Athletic Club Building, 1118 Euclid Avenue, 7th floor, Sterling Room, 5:30-7:00 p.m. Call the office at 216-781-8375 for reservations.

Sunday, April 17: Earth Day at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. LWVC will have a booth and will conduct voter registration, promote the Dike 14 Nature Preserve and inform zoo-goers about League's environmental positions. Stop by and say hello. If you are willing to help at the booth, call Elva Edger at 440-236-9681 so as to get in free.

Tuesday, May 3: Special Election Day.

Friday-Sunday, May 13-15: LWVO Convention in Columbus.

Saturday, May 21: Dike 14 Nature Preserve Bird Walks and Hikes at Gordon State Park and Dike 14 from 7:30 a.m. to 12 noon, organized by the Dike 14 Environmental Education Collaborative and co-sponsored by the LWVC and the Dike 14 Nature Preserve Committee. Call Barbara Martin at 440-243-9070 for more information.

MEMBERS NEW AND RENEWED!

Colette Adams	Mrs. Mary G. Jones
Gretchen A. Anderson	Ruth Koenig
Susan Batal & David Besserglick	Elisabeth Kroepel
Margaret Bray	Christine Link
Sherece Brown-Gray	Elizabeth MacGowan
Joan Bush	& Robert Friedman
Carol Chapin	Gail Marredeth
Anda Cook	Karen Melton
Vivian Davis	Josalyn Murray
Elva Edger	Erwin Odeal
Sandra English (Shambley)	Sandra Pichette
Jane Farr	Jean Robejsek
Ed Hauser	Rachel Shepard
Stephanie Henderson	Cynthia Pierce
Barbara Hrdlicka	& Richard Sones
Meghan Hughes	Eric Stringfield
Jean Hutzler	Elizabeth Stumpf
Bertha S. Ingram	Dana Talley
& Chelsea E. McQueen	Debra Linn Talley
Jorianne Jernberg	Margaret Wong



Message for LWVC Members on the Internet: Lis Kroepel has generously agreed to compile a list of members with email addresses so that she can send electronic reminders about upcoming meetings. She currently has some 30 emails listed but asks that you contact her at ejk30@juno.com if you haven't yet given her this information or if your email address changes. Thanks, Lis, and thank you all for participating.



Don't Forget to Vote in the MAY 3RD, 2005 SPECIAL ELECTION

Municipal Tax Issues

VILLAGE OF GATES MILLS Shall Article VIII of the Charter of the Village of Gates Mills be amended to provide that Council may levy in each year for a period of ten years, an additional tax for the purpose of paying current operating expenses of the Municipality at a rate not exceeding 3.5 mills for each dollar of valuation, which amounts to 35 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006?

CITY OF WARRENSVILLE HEIGHTS A renewal of a tax for the benefit of the City of Warrensville Heights for the purpose of providing and maintaining motor vehicles, communications and other equipment used directly in the operation of the Police Department and the payment of salaries of permanent police personnel at a rate not exceeding one mill for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 10 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for five years, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

CITY OF WARRENSVILLE HEIGHTS A renewal of a tax for the benefit of the City of Warrensville Heights for the purpose of constructing, enlarging, improving and equipping municipal facilities and buildings and acquiring real estate therefore at a rate not exceeding 0.5 mill for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 5 cents for each one dollar of valuation, for five years, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

CITY OF WARRENSVILLE HEIGHTS Proposed Tax Levy (Renewal) (16 precincts) Resolution No. 2004-081

A renewal of a tax for the benefit of the City of Warrensville Heights for the purpose of providing and maintaining fire apparatus and the payment of permanent, part-time or volunteer firemen to operate the same at a rate not exceeding 1 mill for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 10 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for five years, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

School Issues

BEACHWOOD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT An additional tax for the benefit of the Beachwood City School District for the purpose of current expenses at a rate not exceeding 5.9 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 59 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a continuing period of time, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

BEREA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT An additional tax for the benefit of the Berea City School District for the purpose of current expenses at a rate not exceeding 5.9 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 59 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a continuing period of time, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

BROOKLYN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT A renewal of a tax for the benefit of the Brooklyn City School District for the purpose of current expenses at a rate not exceeding 6 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 60 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a period of five (5) years, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

CHAGRIN FALLS EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT Shall bonds be issued by the Chagrin Falls Exempted Village School District for the purpose of CONSTRUCTING, FURNISHING AND EQUIPPING A NEW AUDITORIUM, RENOVATING THE STADIUM, AND IMPROVING, RENOVATING, REMODELING, ADDING TO, FURNISHING AND EQUIPPING SCHOOL FACILITIES AND THEIR SITES in the principal amount of \$9,950,000, to be repaid annually over a maximum period of twenty-seven years, and an annual levy of property taxes be made outside the ten-mill limitation, estimated by the Cuyahoga County Auditor to average over the repayment period of the bond issue 1.4 mills for each one dollar of tax valuation, which amounts to 14 cents for each one hundred dollars of tax valuation, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006, to pay the annual debt charges on the bonds, and to pay debt charges on any notes issued in anticipation of those bonds?

EUCLID CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT An additional tax for the benefit of the Euclid City School District for the purpose of current expenses at a rate not exceeding 7.9 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 79 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a continuing period of time, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

GARFIELD HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT Shall a levy be imposed by the Garfield Heights City School District for the purpose of PROVIDING FOR THE EMERGENCY REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT in the sum of \$4,250,000 and a levy of taxes to be made outside of the ten-mill limitation estimated by the Cuyahoga County Auditor to average 9.3 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 93 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a period of five years, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006?

NORTH ROYALTON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT Shall a levy renewing two existing levies be imposed by the North Royalton City School District for the purpose of PROVIDING FOR THE EMERGENCY REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT in the sum of \$6,695,000 and a levy of taxes to be made outside of the ten-mill limitation estimated by the Cuyahoga County Auditor to average 7.2 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 72 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a period of five years, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006? If approved any remaining tax years on any of the above two existing levies will not be collected after tax year 2004 (collection year 2005).

PARMA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT An additional tax for the benefit of the Parma City School District for the purposes of GENERAL, ON-GOING PERMANENT IMPROVEMENTS at a rate of 1 mill for a continuing period of time and for CURRENT OPERATING EXPENSES at a rate of 4.9 mills for a continuing period of time to constitute a tax at a rate not exceeding 5.9 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 59 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

RICHMOND HEIGHTS LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT A renewal of a tax for the benefit of the Richmond Heights Local School District for the purpose of constructing, adding to, improving and equipping school buildings and landscaping, improving, equipping and providing school sites, at a rate not exceeding 2 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 20 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for five years, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

ROCKY RIVER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT An additional tax for the benefit of the Rocky River City School District for the purpose of current expenses at a rate not exceeding 4.9 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 49 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a continuing period of time, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

SOLON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT An additional tax for the benefit of the Solon City School District for the purpose of current expenses at a rate not exceeding 6.9 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 69 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a continuing period of time, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

SOUTH EUCLID-LYNDHURST CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT An additional tax for the benefit of the South Euclid-Lyndhurst City School District for the purpose of current expenses at a rate not exceeding 6.7 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 67 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a continuing period of time, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

WARRENSVILLE HEIGHTS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT Shall a levy renewing an existing levy be imposed by the Warrensville Heights City School District for the purpose of PROVIDING FOR THE EMERGENCY REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT in the sum of \$1,850,000 and a levy of taxes to be made outside of the ten-mill limitation estimated by the Cuyahoga County Auditor to average 5.1 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 51 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a period of five years, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006?

WESTLAKE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT A replacement of a tax for the benefit of the Westlake City School District for the purpose of current expenses at a rate not exceeding 5.7 mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to 57 cents for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for a continuing period of time, commencing in 2005, first due in calendar year 2006.

**Information provided by Cuyahoga County Board of Elections
Cleveland, Ohio 44115**

**2925 Euclid Avenue
216-443-3200**

MESSAGE FROM LWVUS: ACTION ON SOCIAL SECURITY

LWVUS has moved Social Security to its advocacy priorities for the coming year. State and local Leagues are encouraged to join with like-minded organizations in coalitions opposing the privatization of Social Security. There are several groups with whom LWVUS is working nationally: AARP, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, unions, religious groups, human needs organizations, and many others. League members are asked to contact their Senators and Representative to make their voices heard.

LWVUS bases its opposition to privatizing Social Security on its Position on Fiscal Policy, adopted 1986:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that federal fiscal policy should provide for: adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax; responsible deficit policies; and a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

Funding of Entitlements

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the federal government has a role in funding and providing for old age, survivors, disability and health insurance. For such insurance programs, participation should be mandatory and coverage should be universal. Federal deficit reduction should not be achieved by reducing Social Security benefits.

League History

The Funding of Entitlements position enables the LWVUS to support efforts to expand participation in the Social Security system (including participation by state and local government employees and other excluded groups). The League is opposed to measures that allow individuals to opt out of the system or measures to substitute private programs. The League opposes reducing Social Security benefits to achieve deficit reduction.

In 1999, with the debate over the future of Social Security heating up and various proposals to "privatize" the Social Security system, the LWVUS endorsed the principles of the New Century Alliance for Social Security, joining with other organizations to emphasize Social Security's central role in family income protection. The League's stance is based on support for a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

LWVO NEWS AND LOBBYISTS' REPORTS**New LWVO Program Position on Capital Punishment**

All but one League participated in the state consensus process on capital punishment. In true League fashion, many good discussions took place concerning this difficult and critical issue.

There was about a 2-1 margin of support for abolition and almost unanimous support for a moratorium. Opinion was divided on whether or not a study should be done during the moratorium, and whether it should be done by state government or an independent commission. Similar concerns were expressed about the death penalty by those favoring retention and those for abolition. Specifically there was concern that the death penalty is not being applied fairly.

At its February 5 Board meeting, LWVO adopted a new position on the death penalty, based on study and League consensus: The League of Women Voters of Ohio supports the abolition of the death penalty in capital cases and supports a moratorium until legislation abolishes the death penalty.

Delegates to Convention 2005 will vote to affirm the position as part of LWVO's 2005-2007 state program.

LWVO Program Planning 2005-2006: No New Study or Update.

Twenty-six local Leagues returned program report forms to LWVO. A clear picture emerged of widespread interest in taking action on current program items, such as water, land use, taxes, redistricting, and education. However, no strong issue was found for study or update for the 2005-2006 year.

LWVO Focus for 2005-2006: How Redistricting Is Done in Ohio

The LWVO Board unanimously agreed that redistricting reform is one of its most important concerns. The League has long supported nonpartisan apportionment for Congressional seats and nonpartisan districting for legislative seats in Ohio. When one party controls the legislature or the Apportionment Board, history has proven that the candidates choose their voters long before the voters have a chance to choose the candidates. Redistricting must be a priority for Ohio.

LWVO Priority for 2005-2006: Election Reform Agenda

The League's goal for election system reform is not only to assure fair and honest elections but also to assure transparency so that voters, the media, candidates, and the general public have confidence that each election is fair and honest. Therefore, problems of perception must be given serious consideration along with problems of practice and law.

The following 10-point proposal includes recommendations based on League history and experience, and stems from League positions and principles:

1. Create an impartial bipartisan election administration board to assume state election responsibilities;
2. Expand absentee voting to allow any voter to vote by absentee ballot at the board of elections without needing to provide a reason;
3. Allow provisional ballots to be cast anywhere in the county;
4. Make voting fully accessible to all voters with disabilities;
5. Revise recount procedures so they can be completed in a timely way as to allow elected officials to take office on time;
6. Adopt statewide use of the optical scan voting system, with specific safeguards;
7. Improve procedures, training, and recruitment of poll workers;
8. Expand training and provide adequate resources for county boards of elections;
9. Expand voter education; and
10. Reinstate Election Day registration.

[Editor's Note: Visit lwvohio.org for complete discussion.]

Lobbyists' Reports February/March 2005

There's a Malvina Reynolds folk song that goes, "Do you think you've hit bottom? Oh no. There's a bottom below. There's a low below the low you know." That's the way it is at the Statehouse this session, and we've only just started.

In addition to an estimated structural deficit of \$4-5 billion in the next budget cycle, Governor Taft's proposals for tax reform--intended to encourage a more favorable business climate--would decrease state revenues by another \$800 million. While the proposals may help business, they create a bleak situation for human service agencies, libraries, local governments, and most other government programs. Taft started early in making cuts, filing to end eligibility on March 1 for the Disability Medical Assistance Program that provides health care and prescription drugs to very poor people, those who earn less than 33% of the federal poverty level. (Fortunately, it now appears this can't be done administratively, and the cuts will become a budget issue.)

Add to this dreadful mix the proposed state constitutional amendment, a cap on spending called the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR). Also known as Tax Expenditure Limitation (TEL), it would provide that state government spending could not increase above the combined rates of inflation and population growth unless approved by a vote of Ohioans and a three-fifths majority vote of the General Assembly. The same limitations would apply to local governments. Ohio need only look to Colorado to see the crippling effect of such an amendment. LWVO has acted to join a broad coalition of human service, environmental, governmental and non-governmental groups called "Ohioans for Fiscal Responsibility" whose goal is to prevent the passage of TABOR.

In March, the legislature was in hyper mode, with a full schedule of hearings on the state budget (described as the tightest in 40 years) and tax reform (a top priority), plus several other significant bills the League is following. LWVO lobbyists' testimony can be read in the Advocacy section of the Web site <www.lwvohio.org>. And to keep informed, please subscribe to the LWVO Legislative Update, e-mailed bi-monthly during the legislative session.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE Ellen Mee, Budget/Finance Specialist

Tax reform: HB 1. HB 1 contains the Governor's tax reform package which proposes extensive reform to Ohio's tax system. The reforms would be phased in over five years, and its major provisions would: Reduce personal income taxes by 21% across all tax brackets, and create a nonrefundable tax credit for taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes of \$10,000 or less; Phase out the current corporate franchise tax and the tangible personal property tax, and replace them with a flat 0.26% commercial activity tax (CAT) on taxable gross receipts; Establish a permanent sales and use tax rate of 5%; Increase the kilowatt-hour tax for all electric distribution companies (except self-assessors) and increase the percentage rate paid in the total price of all electricity distributed to a commercial or industrial self-assessor; and Increase excise taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products, and on alcoholic beverages.

While the League supports a nonrefundable tax credit for low-income taxpayers, we have serious reservations about this bill as a whole and oppose its enactment. Our primary reasons for opposing HB 1 are that we believe that 1) There is insufficient evidence that the CAT tax is an effective or even an appropriate vehicle for generating economic growth and job creation in Ohio; 2) Revenues projected to be generated by the proposed reforms will fail to meet state financing requirements in both the long and the short term, and will result in severe cuts to vital state programs and services; and 3) The implementation of the package as a whole will result in a further shift of the larger share of tax responsibility away from the business sector onto individual taxpayers, and away from wealthier individual taxpayers onto low- and middle-income taxpayers.

Let your legislators know that you do not support HB 1 or SB 1. Insist that the General Assembly enact tax reform that is fair and equitable, and provides adequate resources for vital state programs and services.

HJR 4. HJR 4 would place a state constitutional amendment on the ballot for November that would impose a "Tax and Expenditure Limitation" (TEL) on state finances. It would cap state and local government spending at no more than the prior year's expenditures, plus a percentage amount that does not exceed the national rate of inflation and the rate of state population growth. The TEL would apply not only to municipalities, counties, and townships but also to all taxing districts in the state. The General Assembly or a local government or taxing district could override the cap only by a vote of three-fifths of the lawmakers and, if approved by the Governor, additional approval by a majority of the electorate.

Continued on next page.

The proposal also would prohibit the state from imposing state mandates on political subdivisions without full state funding, and require the state to establish a Budget Reserve Fund of up to 15 percent of total state expenditures for the prior year. All revenues above this amount would be required to be returned to individual state income tax payers.

This proposal would undermine state democratic processes, removing the ability of elected state officials to consider and develop appropriate state financing goals and priorities, or to respond to economic downturns, or natural or public health emergencies. It would require drastic cuts in important social safety nets and other state and local programs and responsibilities, and contains a "ratchet effect" that would make it extremely difficult for the state to restore programs when the economy improves. Because the TEL would not affect federally or judicially mandated spending such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Medicaid, such expenditures would, over time, make up an increasing share of all state spending. In addition, the TEL could affect the ability of nonprofit organizations--such as health and human services providers, arts groups, civic organizations, environmental or conservation groups, and others--to receive federal or state matching funds or grants and other funding.

Efforts in Ohio to secure passage of a tax and expenditure limitation arise as part of a national campaign by anti-tax advocates to insert spending caps into state constitutions. Voters in Colorado approved a TEL more than 10 years ago, and Colorado today suffers from a major decline in funding for health and human services and may soon run out of funds for higher education. The League opposes the imposition of spending caps, and is working closely with the Campaign to Protect Ohio's Future and a coalition of organizations, Ohioans for Fiscal Responsibility, to educate voters about the dangers of a tax and expenditure limitation and to oppose its adoption.

EDUCATION Joan Platz, Education Specialist

Executive Budget/Education FY06-07: Education organizations are running the numbers in Governor Taft's proposed FY06-07 budget, HB 66, and are not happy with the results. According to Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Tave Zelman, approximately 200 districts will be flat-funded in FY06 if Governor Taft's budget is adopted by the General Assembly. She thanked Governor Taft for including additional funds for several initiatives, but requested more funding for line items under Basic Aid, Targeted Help for Students, and Training for Teachers.

On March 15-17, advocates for education asked the House Finance Committee to amend HB 66 in the following ways:

- * Reinstate the Cost-of-Doing-Business Factor, or hold districts harmless for its loss.
- * Use the three-year average for determining Average Daily Membership.
- * Address phantom revenue.
- * Fund districts based on where students are educated.
- * Eliminate the Ohio Choice Scholarship Program.
- * Fully fund parity aid and special education weights, and reinstate funds for school bus purchases.
- * Fully fund kindergarten students who attend school all day.
- * Hold districts harmless for losses due to changes in the state's tax structure.

Constitutional amendments to fix school funding. Groups and individuals are currently developing language to amend the Ohio Constitution regarding funding for schools. Former state representative Bryan Flannery has been working with the Ohio Coalition for Equity and Adequacy and others on an amendment that calls for education to be a fundamental right, the creation of a commission to determine the basic aid-per-pupil level, which will be adopted by the State Board of Education, and repeal of real property taxes above 15 mills. This proposed amendment has been submitted to Attorney General Jim Petro for language verification, and may soon be circulated to obtain the necessary number of signatures to be eligible for the November 2005 ballot.

ELECTIONS AND VOTING Peg Rosenfield, Election Law Specialist

Election Reform. Identical companion bills, House Bill 3 and Senate Bill 3, are the primary focus for election reform so far this session. There seems to be a genuine desire to improve the mechanics of election administration and some of the underlying problems. At the same time, some bills have been introduced that we must oppose. One would require that every voter show photo identification at every election; another would have the effect of doing away with the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) requirement that was enacted last year after extensive hearings by a bipartisan joint committee of both houses of the legislature.



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LWV's Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of the Cleveland Area is committed to achieve a membership representative of the multicultural composition of our city. Membership is open to all persons, age 18 or older, regardless of color, creed, national origin, race or sex. League welcomes the diversity of thought, opinion and ideas reflective of all citizens in our democracy.



**We need you with us...
 Join today!**

All League members receive *The National Voter* magazine and local and state League newsletters, plus significant discounts on publications, videos and other valuable resources. What are you waiting for? Join the Cleveland Area League today.

I want to add my voice to yours by joining the League of Women Voters of the Cleveland Area

Please check one or more:

- one year individual membership \$50
- one year household membership \$75
 (membership for two who share an address)
- Sustaining Member \$100
- I'm unable to join the League now
 but enclose a donation of \$ _____

 Name(s)

 Address

 City State Zip

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*Membership dues are not tax deductible.
 Donations to the Ed Fund are tax deductible as allowed by law.*

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