



*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 Cleveland Area and  
League of Women Voters Cleveland Educational Fund

# THE CLEVELAND AREA VOTER

**SERVING THE CITIES OF CLEVELAND, BEREA, BRATENAHL, BROOK PARK, EUCLID, INDEPENDENCE, MIDDLEBURG HEIGHTS, OLMSTED FALLS, OLMSTED TOWNSHIP AND STRONGSVILLE**

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## NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE INTERSTATE COMPACT

Since 1970, the League of Women Voters of the United States has had a position supporting the direct election of the president by popular vote, because this is deemed essential to representative government. However, the popular vote is currently not the determining factor—what matters is the vote in the Electoral College (EC).

Under our Constitution, each state sends electors to the EC equal to the number of United States senators and congressional representatives from that state. For example, Ohio has 18 representatives and two senators, so it sends 20 electors to the EC. In 48 states, including Ohio, the winner of the popular vote in that state receives all of the state's votes in the EC, regardless of how close the election was. This "winner take all" strategy generally produces the same result as the popular vote. However, Presidents John Quincy Adams (1824), Rutherford B. Hayes (1876), Benjamin Harrison (1888) and George W. Bush (2000) were not the winners of the national popular vote.

One way to ensure that the winner of the national popular vote is elected president is to amend the Constitution, but its drafters intentionally made this a difficult process. It requires a two-thirds majority vote of both branches of Congress, or a constitutional convention called by two-thirds of the states, with ratification of the proposed change by three-fourths of the states.

Another way is to creatively use the right of states to enter into a binding agreement or "compact" with other states. Under the terms of the proposed National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, states would agree to cast all of their electoral votes for the national popular vote winner, even if the presidential candidate is not the winner in their own state. Right now there are a total of 538 electors sent to the EC. When states whose combined total of at least 51%, or 270, of the electoral votes have joined the compact, the compact would go into effect. Those states would then cast their votes for the winner of the national popular vote. If as few as 11 states—California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Georgia, New Jersey and North Carolina—entered into the compact, the vote in the EC would match the national popular vote because those states control 271 of the votes of the EC. So far only Maryland has joined the compact. Similar legislation has been introduced in 42 other states although not in Ohio—yet.

[Ed. Note: Thanks to the LWV Ohio for this "Spotlight."]

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

(League office 216-781-8375 for more information)

**MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH!** Celebrate in some special way. You might want to read "Well-Behaved Women Seldom Make History" by Pulitzer-Prize-winning historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, who writes about the women who make history and the women who record it. The publisher has a women's history quiz at <aaknopf.com/Ulrich>

**Week of March 16-22:** Sunshine Week, an initiative spearheaded by the American Society of Newspaper Editors to educate the public about the importance of open government and the dangers of excessive and unnecessary secrecy. Help ensure that our government is open and transparent by volunteering for the LWV Observer Corps (see next column).

**Tuesday, April 15:** Income Tax Day. As you prepare your Ohio tax return, please support public financing of candidates and elections by checking the "Yes box" on Line 14 of the Ohio Tax Form IT-1040 (Line 10 of 1040EZ) to make a \$1 donation to the Ohio Political Party Fund. This money is used for voter registration, get-out-the-vote campaigns, etc. and is not restricted to any particular candidate or election. And it doesn't cost you, the taxpayer, anything!

**Wednesday, April 16:** Lake Erie Basin Committee meeting, 10-2 (bring bag lunch) at Harbor-Topke Public Library in Ashtabula. All are welcome. For more information, please call Dorothy Cibula at 440-331-4838.

**Saturday, April 26:** LWVC Membership Meeting on the Environment. Mark your calendars.

**Sunday, April 20: Earth Day/EarthFest 2008.** How about a day at the Zoo, or maybe two hours? The LWVC will have a booth to promote the Great Lakes Compact, inform the public about CAFOs (animal feeding farms that are contaminating our waterways) and conduct voter registration. Call Elva at 440-826-0157 to see whether you'd like to take part. If there are enough of us, there will be time to visit the other booths at the Fest.

**Saturday, May 3:** Dike 14 Spring Open House. Nature event at Dike 14 Nature Preserve, 7:30-11:30 a.m. For details, please contact Barbara A. Martin, 440-243-9070.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Did you know that February 14th was the birthday of the LWV? Our organization celebrated its 88th birthday on that day. In her message to League members, LWVUS President Mary G Wilson reminds us, "Our incredible members are living out our legacy in every state in our union, making sure voters are registered, educated, and confident in our nation's political process. 2008 will be a pivotal year, and we encourage all Americans to get involved in this historic election. As president of the League, my wish is simple: that we continue the vital push for changes that make our democracy stronger and work for all citizens. I know this is one wish sure to come true with the support of friends like you."

The time you can give attending a local government meeting, writing a letter, sharing information with others is all valuable to our community. We need your help, even if it is a small amount of time. Please call the LWVCEF office so we can tell you about opportunities to help the League and your community.

Penny Jeffrey, President  
LWV Cleveland Area

**WANTED—VOLUNTEERS FOR THE LEAGUE'S OBSERVER CORPS:** If you can donate a few hours of your time, consider joining the LWVs in Cuyahoga County and observing a meeting of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. You would be asked to take notes and send them via email to other observer corps members. Meetings are held at the Board of Elections at 2925 Euclid Avenue. Volunteers are needed at 10 a.m. on May 6th, July 8, August 4th, October 7th, and November 3rd. Please call the LWVC office at 216-781-8375 if you would like to become involved. Detailed instructions can be provided. LWV needs YOU!

**LWVUS CONGRESSIONAL VOTES TOOL:** The National League unveiled a new tool for researching congressional votes for the first session of the 110th Congress (2007), listing House and Senate votes on key good-government issues. This tool, searchable by member of Congress as well as by issue area, includes key votes on LWVUS legislative priorities and is an invaluable aid to assist you in your advocacy. Check it out by visiting [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) and clicking "Take Action."

The **2008 Public Officials Directory** for Cuyahoga and surrounding counties is available for purchase. To order your copy, please send check payable to LWV Cleveland Educational Fund for \$10 plus \$2.25 shipping and handling to  
LWV Cleveland Educational Fund  
850 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1010  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

**ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS**

by Elva Edger, V.P., Environmental Issues

**Healing Our Waters**

The Healing Our Waters (H.O.W.) Great Lakes Restoration Conference was held last September in Chicago. LWV Ohio is a member of H.O.W., a coalition of environmental groups formed thanks to support from Peter Wege, The Wege Foundation, and from the Joyce Foundation. Attendance included members of the environmental, business, governmental, political and scientific worlds. The goal of the conference was to carry on the momentum created by formation of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy, drawn up to restore and protect the Great Lakes.

The eight states, two Canadian provinces and Indian tribes bordering the Lakes now need to formally endorse the Strategic Plan as a prelude to federal funding. Ohio has not yet done so, though it is carrying out some of the improvements using existing monies and programs.

The speakers at the conference emphasized that restoration of the Great Lakes should be a question for candidates in presidential and state races.

**A Gift from the Glaciers**

99% of Great Lakes water is derived from the glaciers and is not renewable—at least not in this millennium! Yet there is no state or federal legislation to prevent lake water from being sold to Asia or to the U.S. South or Southwest. This is a matter of quantity. As for quality, phosphorous is again at high levels, new algal blooms are showing up, and invasive species—both animal and vegetable—continue to enter the lakes.

The Regional Collaboration Strategy for cleaning up the lakes can be federally funded if all eight Great Lakes states have legislation signed by their governors and thus approve the proposed Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Water Basin Resources Compact. Under this compact, diversions or bulk exports of water outside of the natural Great Lakes basin would be banned, with limited exceptions. It also applies a common standard for managing all waters within the basin, which holds 20% of the world's fresh surface water. Minnesota and Illinois have ratified the Compact. One of the current concerns of the Lake Erie Basin Committee is Compact ratification by the Ohio House and Senate in order to have a working relationship with the seven other Great Lakes states and two Canadian provinces.

This is the 35th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. It has been two years since the Regional Collaboration Strategy was pulled together. Please contact your state senator in particular to support the Great Lakes Compact and help protect and restore the Great Lakes.

**Results of Dike 14 Testing & Risk Assessment Public Meetings**

from the Dike 14 Nature Preserve Committee

Approximately 60 people attended the public meetings held in early December 2007 to hear Partners Environmental present their testing and assessment results for the 88-acre Dike 14 site. Partners Environmental report that from a human health perspective the site as a nature preserve poses no danger for adults or children visiting the site; but from an ecological perspective, there are two small areas (five acres total) that require remediation for the benefit of wildlife—to protect burrowing animals from slightly elevated levels of PAHs, PCBs, and heavy metals. Partners Environmental allowed for discussion of remediation strategies, and Davey Resources provided information and discussion on invasive plant control and managing diverse wildlife habitats. Decisions on these important topics will be forthcoming once a determination is made as to who will own, operate and maintain Dike 14 Nature Preserve.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
CLEVELAND AREA  
850 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1010  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114**

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Contact Information

216-781-8375  
Fax: 216-619-5026  
info@lwvcef.org  
www.lwvcef.org

**LWVC'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.

**Dates to remember in 2008**

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Tuesday, September 30</b> | General Election absentee ballots ready (35 days before election)  |
| <b>Monday, October 6</b>     | Voter registration deadline for November 4 election                |
| <b>Saturday, November 1</b>  | Applications by mail for absentee ballots must be received by noon |
| <b>Tuesday, November 4</b>   | General Election polls are open for voting from 6:30 am to 7:30 pm |

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**Not a member? Join today!**

I want to join the League of Women Voters Cleveland Area

**Please check one or more:**

- one year individual membership \$50
- one year household membership \$75 (two sharing an address)
- Sustaining member \$100
- I'm unable to join the League now but enclose a donation

Please make checks payable to the **League of Women Voters**

Return to: **Membership  
League of Women Voters Cleveland Area  
850 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1010  
Cleveland, OH 44114**