



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CLEVELAND AREA

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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.

Inside this issue: Election Information, Juvenile Justice, President's Message, League Updates, Candidate Forums, Proposed Code of Ethics, Dike 14, Honored Belles'

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VOTE, TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 7th and TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd!

On Tuesday, September 7th residents of Cuyahoga County will vote in the Primary Election for candidates for the new charter county government. Offices include a County Executive and 11 members of County Council. On November 2nd at the General Election, residents will elect members of Congress (U.S. Senator and Representatives), Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, State Auditor, Treasurer, Secretary of State, State Senator and Representative. Judges for the Ohio Supreme Court, Court of Common Pleas and 8th District Court of Appeals will also be elected.

MINORITY DISPROPORTIONALITY IN OUR JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

by Roslyn Talerico, Juvenile Justice Chair for the Overrepresentation of People of Color

Discrimination is prohibited, but the juvenile justice system in Cuyahoga County detains youth of color at a much higher rate than Caucasian youth.

The purpose of the Juvenile Court Community Diversion program is to divert first time offenders from official court action. The goal is to make a juvenile's first offense his last offense. The program refers minor offenders back to their home communities, which then tailor penalties to fit the needs of the individual and provide an opportunity to avoid an official court record. Children who commit minor offenses such as being truant, breaking curfew, drinking beer, etc., benefit from being caught by the police and facing penalties. If they aren't punished for the little stuff, they are likely to commit larger offenses; it's part of growing up.

But in comparison with the suburbs, relatively few youth are enrolled in Cleveland's diversion program. In 2009, of the 1,854 youth in Community Diversion, only 141 were enrolled in Cleveland's program, compared with 171 in Parma, 130 in Maple Heights, 127 in North Olmsted, 111 in Rocky River and 104 in Lakewood. In Cleveland, police prepare a report for the County Juvenile Prosecutor, who determines whether to refer the youth to community diversion or to the Court for adjudication. In the other 50 Municipalities, the police report is turned over to Juvenile Court personnel, who decide whether or not to divert the youth back to his/her community. If there were consistent application of this program across the county, perhaps a greater percentage of minority youth would be referred to diversion and fewer to the Court for official hearings for first-time offenses.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Leaguers,

The Cuyahoga County transition to Charter government has presented LWV Cleveland Area with the opportunity to work toward goals we have been advocating for many years. League has been involved in the Charter movement since the campaign in 2009. League members collected over 2000 signatures to get the charter on the ballot, presented information programs on the issue and participated in the Transition Advisory Group (TAG).

League volunteers participated in the Boards and Commissions Workgroup. Since the three Leagues in the county had reached consensus on recommendations on the Authorities, Boards, Commissions and Districts several years ago, we were able to present our recommendations to the Workgroup. Many of these are included in the draft already presented to the TAG.

If you would like detailed information on the TAG process, you can search at www.charter.cuyahogacounty.us, go to the left-hand column and click on "Workgroups," then choose a workgroup. Scroll down to "Preliminary Recommendations" to read the drafts. Not all of the workgroups have finished as I am writing, but the deadline is approaching so more should be available soon.

LWV Cleveland Area, LWV Cuyahoga Area and LWV Shaker Heights have been cooperating on scheduling candidate forums for the new council districts and for the county executive. The Levin School of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University is also cooperating with us scheduling a county executive forum. This VOTER includes the most complete calendar of these events as possible. (See p.3) Party candidates and independents have been invited to each forum. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about these candidates. If you would like to serve as a timekeeper or screener at any of these events, please phone the office and leave your details. When you go, don't forget to encourage your neighbors to join you!

Don't hesitate to call us if you have questions about what district you are in or about the upcoming elections. Help us continue to make history in Cuyahoga County!

In League,
Penny Jeffrey, President

LWV NEWS UPDATES

LWVO Election Administration Reform Progress:

The historic 2009 election lawsuit settlement agreement between the LWV of Ohio and the office of the Ohio Secretary of State established new requirements for county boards of elections in their administration of elections. Phase 1, which recently ended, involved the work of volunteers from 17 local Leagues who interviewed board staff in 22 Ohio counties to determine compliance with the terms of the agreement. Responses indicate that the boards are largely complying, except in the areas of recruiting and training competent poll workers and of accessibility laws for voters with disabilities. Phase 2, now underway, involves assessment of the plans developed by county boards of elections to address their past election-administration problems and to continue improving future election procedures.

LWVUS 2010 Convention Highlights:

1. Delegates voted for an increase in the Per-Member-Payment rate of \$29.70 for FY 2010-2011 and \$30.00 for FY 2011-2012. Please note that LWV Cleveland Area has consequently voted to increase its annual dues to \$60 (\$90 household) to cover these costs.
2. LWVUS will undertake a new study of the "Federal Role in Public Education," focusing on its role in education policymaking, with possible consideration of funding, common standards and /or governance relationships. A second study on "Privatization" will also need to be completed by Convention 2012.
3. Delegates adopted three new concurrence positions, including one updated position on Arms Control and two new positions for advocacy on Selection of the President and Equality of Opportunity.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, September 7: Primary Election for County Executive and County Council for 11 districts. Please vote yourself and encourage your family and friends in Cuyahoga County to participate in this important election as a new form of county charter government is established.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED as moderators, timers and examiners of audience questions for the council forums listed below. Please try to help at a convenient location or two. We really need YOU! For more information contact (216) 781-8375 or email sherecegray@lwvcef.org.

FORUM DATES:

Monday, September 20: 7p.m., District 1
Westlake Performing Arts Center,
Westlake High School
27830 Hilliard Boulevard, Westlake 44145

Tuesday, September 21: 7p.m., District 8
Maple Heights Library
5225 Library Lane, Maple Hts. 44137

Tuesday, September 21: 7p.m., District 6
Solon High School
33620 Inwood Drive, Solon 44139

Wednesday, September 22: 7p.m., District 3
Westside Community House
9300 Lorain Avenue, Cleveland 44102

Thursday, September 23: 7p.m., District 10
Cleveland Heights Library
2345 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights 44118

Monday, September 27: 7p.m., District 9
Shaker Heights Middle School
20600 Shaker Blvd., Shaker Hts., 44122

Tuesday, September 28: 7p.m., District 7
Broadway United Methodist Church
5246 Broadway Avenue, Cleveland 44127

Wednesday, September 29: 7p.m., District 2
Lakewood Women's Pavillion, Lakewood Park
14532 Lake Avenue, Lakewood 44107

Thursday, September 30: 7p.m., District 5
Middleburg Heights Community Center
16000 Bagley Road, Middleburg Hts. 44130

Monday, October 4: 7p.m., District 4
Parma High School
6285 West 54th Street, Parma 44129

Tuesday, October 5: 7p.m., District 7
Bethany Baptist Church
1211 East 105th, Cleveland 44108

Wednesday, October 6: 7p.m., District 11
Brush High School
4875 Glen Lyn Road, Lyndhurst 44124

CUYAHOGA COUNTY EXECUTIVE FORUMS:

Thursday, October 7: 7p.m., West side
Ballwin Wallace College, Strosacker Hall
(College Union) 120 East Grand St., Berea 44017

Tuesday, October 12: 7p.m., East side
Shaker Heights Middle School
20600 Shaker Boulevard, Shaker Hts. 44122

Tuesday, October 19: Time TBA, Downtown
Cleveland State University
1717 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland 44115

Saturday, September 25: Open House at Cleveland Lake Front (Dike 14) Nature Preserve, 7:30 am. to 2:00 pm. For more information, call the League office (216) 781-8375

Sunday, October 10: 10/10/10 Day of Climate Action, as Leagues across the country participate in the international day of climate action being organized by 350.org, a movement aimed at uniting the world around solutions to the climate crisis. To join the discussion, visit the For Members section of the LWVUS website.

Saturday, November 20: General membership meeting with a discussion of housing, possibly with Housing Judge Raymond Pianka. Time and place to be announced.

Saturday, December 11: LWV Cleveland Area Holiday Party, Details TBA

MARK YOUR 2011 CALENDAR:

Saturday, January 22, 2011: Membership discussion of LWV Ohio positions for approval, update or deletion.

PROPOSED CUYAHOGA COUNTY CODE OF ETHICS

by Barbara Sones, Workgroup Committee

As citizens of Cuyahoga County prepare to elect officials to a new county charter government this fall, Leaguers and others have been working to provide these officials with a guide to "best practices" so that they can perform their duties with transparency, accountability and impartiality, while adhering to high ethical standards. With this goal in mind, 15 of us--including Roslyn Talerico, Deb Talley and myself from the Cleveland Area League--joined a Code of Ethics Workgroup in the spring of 2010 to examine codes from other counties, looking at how they dealt with issues like conflicts of interest, campaign contributions and whistleblower protection.

Under the direction of chair Lynda Mayer of the LWV Cuyahoga Area, each committee member was responsible for reviewing at least one county ethics code and then, with access to relevant information from other codes, writing recommendations for our assigned topic. Drawing on our best computer skills and meeting together regularly--either in person or online--we compiled, reviewed and revised the document, with sections on "Prohibited Conduct," "Disclosure, Transparency and Prevention," and creation of a "Cuyahoga County Ethics Board." In the final writing stage, I was part of a subcommittee tasked to do line-by-line editing to make the code clear, concise and accessible to the general public. Then in early August, the "Proposed Cuyahoga County Code of Ethics" was presented to the executive committee of the county's Transitional Advisory Group, who promised that it would be submitted to the newly elected county government officials.

It is now up to the citizens of the county to insist that a strong code of ethics be adopted, including a dedicated ethics board with defined enforcement powers. Perhaps then the corruption scandals, conflicts of interest and other malfeasance in county government can become a thing of the past and the government once more become responsive to the interests of the people it serves. To read the Proposed Code, go to <http://charter.cuyahogacounty.us/en-us/workgroup.aspx>, then click on the link for "Code of Ethics."

THREE CLEVELAND "BELLES" HONORED

Jeannette Grasselli Brown and Margaret Wong, both past recipients of the Cleveland League's Belle Sherwin Democracy in Action Award, have been selected for the inaugural class of the Cleveland International Hall of Fame, sponsored by ClevelandPeople.com. Jeannette and Margaret join 11 other women and men being honored for their contributions to their ethnic communities and to Northeast Ohio.

Jerry Sue Thornton, president of Cuyahoga Community College and former Belle, has been named the 2010 Mildred Bulpitt Woman of the Year by the American Association for Women in Community Colleges. She is being recognized for outstanding service to women in two-year colleges, including her mentoring other women to lead those schools.

DIKE 14 CELEBRATION!

The Dike 14 Nature Preserve Committee and friends are celebrating the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority's decision to withdraw its proposal for a confined disposal facility at East 55 Street, which would have undermined Dike 14's status as a nature preserve. Also, the Cleveland City Planning Commission adopted a Master Plan for "Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve" (Dike 14), including restoration and management of diverse wildlife habitats as well as pedestrian trails at the 88-acre Dike 14 site.

LWVC MEMBERSHIP
2011-2012

I/We want to (re)join the League. Please check one or more:

- _____ one-year individual membership \$60
- _____ one-year household membership \$90
(two sharing an address)
- _____ my/our dues plus something extra _____
- _____ sustaining member \$100

Please make checks payable to the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Name _____
 Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
 Telephone _____ Email _____

_____ Yes, I would you like to receive the "Voter" and other League updates online?
(Your mailing information is NOT sold/leased to organizations outside LWV.)

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



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
 CLEVELAND AREA &
 CLEVELAND EDUCATIONAL FUND

Making Democracy Work for Over 80 Years

850 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1010
 Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Contact Information

Phone: 216-781-8375
 Fax: 216-619-5026
 Website: 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.