



LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Published during the Missouri Legislative Session by the

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MISSOURI

8706 Manchester Rd. Suite 104 St. Louis, MO 63144-2733

314-961-6869 (fax 314-961-8393)

Email: league@lwvmissouri.org Web: www.lwvmissouri.org

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This issue will introduce you to the first general session of the 98th General Assembly that convened on Wednesday, January 7, 2015. LWVMO and LWVUS positions guide us in selecting bills/issues to support or oppose.

According to the LWVUS “Impact on Issues”, the goals for setting priorities to guide the LWV advocacy work are to:

- (1) Enhance the League’s effectiveness by concentrating resources on priority issues;
- (2) Build the League’s credibility and visibility by projecting a focused and consistent image;
- (3) Ensure that the League has sufficient issue and political expertise to act knowledgeably; and
- (4) Enable the League to manage resources effectively.

In setting legislative priorities, the Board considers the following:

- (1) Opportunities for the League to make an impact;
- (2) Program decisions made at Convention and/or Conference
- (3) Member interest; and
- (4) Resources available to manage effectively.

The LWVMO legislative priorities were chosen based on member interest, timeliness and past legislative efforts. Legislative Action Committee members will be reporting on the progress of bills and other activities. We hope that this is not a “one-way” conversation and that you will inform yourself, respond to Action Alerts and help us support passage or defeat of legislation that will best serve all Missourians.

TO KEEP YOU UPDATED AND INFORMED, THE LWVMO LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN WILL BE COMING TO YOUR E-MAIL BOX ONCE OR TWICE MONTHLY. IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE A COPY BY MAIL, PLEASE SEND \$10 TO:

*LWV MISSOURI
8706 MANCHESTER RD, SUITE 104
ST. LOUIS, MO 63144*

***The League of Women Voters®*, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active citizen participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.**

Members educate themselves on issues, lobby for causes for which the League has a position, and extend information to others through public forums, educational publications, coalitions, and public speaking.

The League encourages communication with elected officials, and promotes citizen participation in the governmental process.

LWVMO Legislative Priorities 2015

The League of Women Voters of Missouri supports:

- Legislative actions that promote ethical and responsible government.**
- Voting processes that encourage all citizens to participate.**
- Affordable, comprehensive health care for Missouri citizens.**
- Tax policies that provide financial stability and adequate funding for all state services.**

In this framework we will continue to address education concerns, environmental issues, the alternatives to the death penalty, and others when deemed necessary.

Capitol Action Day

On January 13, 2015 ten members of the LWVMO met at the Capitol to hand deliver our Legislative Priority Cards to the 162 state representatives and the 34 senators. It was a great opportunity to demonstrate our visibility, address our concerns and interest and communicate with our elected officials. Please watch for future Capitol Action Days during this session and take part in advocating for our priorities.

Electoral Process- Kathleen Farrell and Linda McDaniel, Directors and Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP) Chairs

VOTER PHOTO ID IS BACK!

The first hearing on HJR1, which would place a constitutional amendment on the November 2016 ballot to require that voters prove identity and citizenship by producing a government issued photo ID to vote, scheduled for January 21st, has been rescheduled for Tuesday, January 27th at 8:15 a.m. in Hearing Room #5.

HB30, the enabling legislation, would limit forms of acceptable IDs to current Missouri or federal photo IDs with photos and expiration dates—typically Missouri drivers' licenses, non-drivers' licenses and passports. The state would pay for the IDs but not the documents required to get them- certified birth certificates, marriage certificates, divorce decrees, etc. These can be very difficult and expensive to obtain.

Without Photo ID, exempt groups (limited groups of seniors, people with disabilities, or those with religious objections), would only be able to cast provisional ballots, which may not be counted. In 2006 the Missouri Supreme Court ruled that such legislation was unconstitutional. That's why legislators are trying to put it on the ballot as a constitutional amendment.

Watch for action alerts. This is a significant assault on Missouri voting rights. Let's deal with the real problem- getting people to vote!

Health Care – Barbara Davis, Director and Health Care Chair

Numerous bills related to health care in one way or another have already been filed in both the Senate and House of Representatives. LWVMO will submit testimony, either in person or in written form, as appropriate, to the proper House and/or Senate committees. If you are interested in writing or presenting testimony or attending a hearing just to see what happens, please contact me.

In addition to testimony and hearings, I participate in a weekly conference call with information presented and discussed among Missouri health care agencies and advocates. Included each week is information about what is happening with state money for health care, bills being considered, and upcoming activities/meetings/rallies related to health care in the state.

As the legislative session progresses, there will likely be times that LWVMO issues "Legislative Alerts" when contact with legislators is necessary. PLEASE PARTICIPATE—IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHEN OUR LEGISLATORS HEAR FROM US!

By the time the second legislative information is published, there will undoubtedly be health legislation under consideration. Please don't hesitate to contact me for information or to help with our efforts. The LWVMO office will provide contact information.

Tax Policy – Nancy Copenhaver, Director and Tax Chair

A main concern of LWVMO is the ability of Missouri to adequately fund critical services for all its citizens, whether this is education, pre-K through 12 or higher education, transportation of all forms, needed social services including healthcare, and public safety. Key to this ability is that the state has funds to provide those services that Missouri citizens expect and that those who might move to our state to work or establish businesses want. Thus League will be busy monitoring any changes in our state's tax structure that would jeopardize these state services or adversely affect current citizens struggling to make ends meet by reducing taxes on those with the ability to pay. Tax credit reform and shifting responsibilities will be areas to watch this session.

Helpful information:

To find your state officials go to www.moga.mo.gov Click on member look-up and then follow prompts to either put in your mailing address or your 9 digit zip code.

PLEASE SAVE YOUR LEGISLATIVE BULLETINS TO USE FOR REFERENCE AS LEGISLATION TRACKING CONTINUES THROUGH THE 2015 SESSION.