

February 2017



THE VOTER

The League of Women Voters Kansas City/Jackson/Clay/Platte Counties

www.lwvkc.org – email. lwvkcjcp@yahoo.com 816-464-1800

**THERE WILL BE NO REGULAR MEETING ON SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 18**

**INSTEAD PARTICIPATE IN THE FEBRUARY 23 SISTERHOOD
EVENT (SEE BELOW)**

February 23 (Thursday)

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Bridging the Gap – Celebrating Sisterhood

In partnership with

Women in the NAACP (WIN)

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Mu Omega Chapter

**Kansas City, Alumnae Chapter of
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.**

Working for Equality

Register at: <https://eventbrite.com/bridging-the-gap-celebrating-sisterhood-tickets-31683916447>

**Event location – Community Christian Church, 4700 Main Street, KCMO
Centennial Hall on South Side of Building**

Co-President's message (Linda Smith and Donna Hoch)

On February 23 from 6:00 pm to 8:30 p.m. our League is partnering with Women of the NAACP (Win), Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Mu Omega Chapter, and the Kansas City, Missouri Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. to work to bridge the cultural gaps between women so that we can work together more effectively to achieve equality. We are inviting other groups that participated in Women's Equality Week (WEW) last year to join us at the event to be held at Community Christian Church.

This is a follow-up to our "Women's Equality and Race: Bridging the Gap to Sisterhood" event in August 2016 and honors our collaborative efforts to register more people to vote and to work to defeat Amendment 6 to the Missouri Constitution at the ballot box. Although statewide efforts were unsuccessful in defeating Amendment, our organizations will continue to work together to help voters obtain the valid photo ID that is now required.

Our League had a wonderful experience working with these partners during 2016, and we want to build on that work.

We are not only celebrating our work together but also the League's 97th birthday and the NAACP's 108th birthday. A flyer for the program is attached.

Because we are likely to have a large crowd, we are asking attendees to register for the event at: <https://bridgingthegapcelebratingsisterhood.eventbrite.com> This will help us know how many tables to setup for our small discussion groups.

You are invited to bring a friend. However, please have them register. Our goal is to have a good representation of League members and friends.

If you have trouble registering, please contact Donna Hoch at 816 868-1083

ACTIVIST EVENTS POPPING UP ALL OVER

Since the inauguration of the President in January, non-partisan events hosted/convened by several activist groups in the KC area have popped up. Members of our League have participated in many of these, either in their individual capacities or, in some cases, representing the League. These have included the following:

- **Progressive Social Network Resource Fair held on January 29** in Kansas City, Kansas. Over 50 organizations had tables with information. Our League shared a table with the Johnson County League (Ann Norbury). Approximately 600 individuals came to this event. The League table was "swamped" with 130 people signing at our table to indicate their interest in the League. Donna Hoch and Cheryl Barnes worked the League table at this event. **American Friends Service Committee, January 31** – meeting to craft a shared agenda. Donna Hoch represented our League.
- **Northland Progress – held in North Kansas City on February 2.** This is a very new organization. The focus of this forum (their first) was to educate area residents on issues concerning the environment, roads and highways, education. The emphasis is on the local situation. League members known to have been there are Pauli Kendrick and Linda Smith.
- **Meeting on February 2 with Senator Claire McCaskill's KCMO Office Director, Corey Dillon.** Linda Smith represented the League. Other participants were from the KC UN Association, the Greater KC Women's Political Caucus and the NAACP. The discussion was wide-ranging and included our hope that Claire would support renewed efforts to get the ERA passed, support protection of the environment, and broaden her support on issues of importance to women. A meeting with Senator Blunt's KCMO staff is being planned.
- **February 9 non-partisan gathering at Oak Hall on Warwick St, KCMO.** Evelyn Maddox and Donna Hoch spoke to a non-partisan gathering of 28 people seeking ways to take action on issues of concern. Evelyn spoke

about photo ID and gathered names of 11 people interested in being trained/educated about photo ID requirements in Missouri. Donna spoke about our mission and current activities.

APRIL 4, 2017 KCMO SCHOOL AND SPECIAL ELECTION

There are five ballot issues (questions) on the April 4 ballot. Three of these questions are for the “Special Bond Election” of \$800 million. The fourth is a proposed Central City Economic Development Sales Tax, and the fifth is directed toward reducing punishment that can be imposed for possession or control of small amounts of marijuana and to remove marijuana from the prohibition against drug paraphernalia.

Note: See January issue of “The Voter” for League position on marijuana.

Schools:

There are two school district Director/Board elections: Consolidates School District No. 2 (Raytown), Reorganized school District No. 7 (Lee’s Summit); and

There are two special bond elections. One is for Consolidated School; District Mp/ 4 (Grandview) and one is for the Independence School District.

KCMO Special Bond Issue:

The three-part KCMO Special Bond Election is getting the most play in the press and through town hall meetings hosted by the Mayor’s office and other gathers (E.g. the League will host two informational events in cooperation with other partners).

\$800 Million Special Bond Issue for Basic Capital Infrastructure:

This is being put before voters in three segments (questions) as follows:

\$600,000,000 for streets, bridges and sidewalks.

\$150,000,000 for flood control

\$50,000,000 for public buildings and infrastructure, including but not limited to the Animal Shelter (an estimated \$14 million), and for Americans with Disabilities Act improvements to public buildings and structures.

In each case, the authorization of the bonds would authorize the City to maintain tangible property tax rated (real estate) at a level sufficient to pay the interest and principal on the bonds until fully paid.

Central City Economic Development Sales Tax:

This is a voter-initiated ballot question. It calls for a 1/8% sales tax increase for funding economic development projects with the area bounded by 9th Street on the North; Gregory Boulevard on the South; The Paseo on the West and Indiana Avenue on the East. The question also states that this money “May include the retirement of debt under previously authorized bonded indebtedness or to repay bonds not yet issued.”

UPCOMING EVENTS and FORUMS

Where our League is a sponsor or significant participant

February 25 – NORML. League will make a presentation at NORML’s meeting at the Westport Library. NORML Kansas City is a regional chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). Their focus is on repealing the prohibition of marijuana at the local, state and federal level by educating the community about marijuana and hemp and their potential medical and industrial use, while promoting the responsible use of marijuana by adults. The KC Chapter of NORML successfully got a ballot initiative on the April 4 ballot in KCMO.

March 9 – Informational Forum in the KCMO Northland on the proposed \$800 million bond issue for infrastructure improvements in KCMO over a 20 year period, which will be on the April 4 ballot. Mayor Sly James and City Manager Troy Schulte will be present. The venue is the conference room at Northland

Neighborhoods Inc. (NNI). Our League is co-sponsoring the event with the NN which is located at 4420 NE Choteau Traffic way, KCMO. The event will be from 7:00 – 8:00. A separate forum on the other ballot issues will be held on March 30 at the same site.

Co-sponsored with Northland Neighborhoods, Inc. (Deb Hermann, Executive Director).

Venue: NNI offices at 4420 NE Choteau Traffic way, KCMO

March 28 (Tuesday). Our League and the Raytown Area Chamber of Commerce will again be presenting a Candidate Forum for Raytown City Council seats on the April 4 ballot. The list of candidates will be available February 17. We have partnered with the Raytown Area Chamber of Commerce a number of times and the forums are always interesting. If you would like to help with the forum please contact Charles or Anitra Steele.

March 30 - Northland forum (7:00 pm to 8:00 pm) on the KCMO Ballot Issues not covered at the March 9 informational forum. This includes the proposed measure to reduce legal penalties and prosecutions for possessing small amounts of marijuana and a proposed tax specifically for improvements on the east side of KCMO. Also on the ballot, is a proposed tax specifically for improvements on the east side of KCMO.

Venue: NNI offices at 4420 NE Choteau Trafficway, KCMO

Co-sponsors: Our League and the NNI.

These forums are an important way for you to participate, either by being present and asking questions or helping to make them happen. If you wish to volunteer to help (e.g. question gatherer and sorter, personing the League table to answer questions about the League, greeting people) please call Anitra Steele at 816 836-4031.

VOTE411.ORG is Coming to LWV KC/J/C/P (Pat Goodwin)

As of February 1, the League of Women Voters of Kansas City, Jackson, Clay, and Platte counties has joined VOTE411.org. The VOTE411.org website, which is sponsored by the League of Women Voters Education Fund, provides comprehensive voting and election information such as polling locations, voter registration requirements, important dates, identification requirements and more. Although voters in the greater Kansas City area have had access to VOTE411.org for national and statewide races, they will now be able to access information for local races such as county, municipal, and school district elections.

What is vote411.org?

VOTE411.org is more than just a sample ballot. Voters can use it to find information specific to their voting jurisdiction. Upon entering their address, voters will have access to information about the races and ballot issues specific to where they live. In other words, whatever will be on each voter's ballot will be what is provided to that individual by VOTE411.org? Also candidates will have the opportunity to respond to questions about their priorities and plans for voters to evaluate. Then voters can use VOTE411.org's interactive tool to compare candidates and ballot issues, make choices, and print a ballot to take to the polls.

LWV KC/J/C/P plans to use VOTE411.org to provide an online voters guide for future elections in Kansas City, Jackson, Cass, Clay, and Platte counties and is currently preparing for the April 4th election.

Want to get involved?

The Voters Guide Committee is looking for people with technical skills or interest to work on this. This is a project that has a firm end date and does not require a long-term commitment. However, opportunities to build on this work will come up later in case you want to stay involved. Contact Pat Goodwin at 816-799-5555 or email her at patgoodwin6@gmail.com if you want to learn more.

NATIONAL IMMIGRATION ISSUES

In light of current heightened concerns around immigration, it is useful to reiterate the LWVUS position on deportation. The following is a statement issued by LWVUS President/Chair Chris Carson:

“The League is opposed to deportation of non-criminal undocumented immigrants.

The LWV supports cities, towns, counties and states that make a decision not to cooperate with Federal deportation and enforcement actions that include non-criminal undocumented immigrants. Moreover, the League believes that the Trump Administration’s orders are of dubious legality.

It is simply wrong, and a perversion of the American system of justice, for the Executive Branch to refuse to obey federal court orders.

The LWV is opposed to discrimination, including discrimination in immigration, based on religion. The Trump Administration’s orders appear to be targeted at Muslims and immigrants from majority-Muslim nations.

We would like to remind all our members that we are faced with many challenges to our positions on issues and the League is involved in serious efforts to address them. Among these, we spent last weekend anticipating the issuance of an executive Order investigating “voter fraud”. We continue to monitor this situation and are ready to issue a statement if that occurs. We also continue our efforts to lobby on ACA (Affordable Care Act) in Congress. Everybody in the country is scrambling to keep up.”

Signed
Chris Carson, President/Chair
League of Women Voters of the United States
League of Women Voters Education Fund

CALENDAR

- February 23** **Bridging the Gap to Sisterhood and Anniversary Celebration**
- February 25** **League speaking at NORML meeting**
- March 8** **Last day to Register to Vote in April 4 Election**
- March 9** **Ballot issues information event in Northland - \$800 million
Bond issue for infrastructure improvement in KCMO**
- March 19** **LWVKC/J/C/P Monthly Meeting – 9:30 a.m.
Com. Christian Church**
- March 25** **Candidate forum in Raytown**
- March 30** **April 4 Ballot issues information event in Northland – marijuana
And KCMO east side development through tax increase**
- April 4** **Municipal election day**
- April 15** **Monthly Meeting Comm. Christian Church**
- April 28-29** **LWVMO Annual Conference, Springfield, MO**
- May 20** **LWV ANNUAL MEETING –
Election of Officers and other business of the organization**

MEMBERSHIP

New Member – Rebecca “Becky” Stuteville:

Welcome Becky! The League is happy to have a member-resident of the community of

Lee's Summit, eastern Jackson County. Having grown up there, she knows much about its schools, elected officials and city-government.

Becky holds the faculty rank of Associate Professor of Public Administration at Park University where she is an active in teaching and research. Before her nine-year tenure at Park she worked for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for 16 years. Her degrees are from UMKC.

The League's bi-partisan perspective issues drew her to membership as a good way to stay current on important state local and national topics, particularly social policy and education.

FOCUS ON MISSOURI GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION – EDUCATION

The Missouri General Assembly has, since convening in January, rapidly introduced legislation on education. The following summary, prepared by League member, Delores Blaser, is the current status of MO Filed legislation on education:

Legislator contact information by phone and email. www.senate.mo.gov or www.house.mo.gov

SB 23 - This act modifies provisions relating to elementary and secondary education. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACCREDITATION: When the State Board of Education assigns classification designations to school districts, it must use one of the following designations: unaccredited, provisionally accredited, accredited, and accredited with distinction. The State Board of Education must develop and implement a process to provide assistance teams to borderline districts, as determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and to underperforming districts upon assignment of such classification or determination by the Department.

SCHOOL TRANSFER AND IMPROVEMENT TASK FORCE: This act creates the "School Transfer and Improvement Task Force" within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The task force will study the following: means to address failing schools, including a school improvement district; developing options for school transfer finance formulas; best practices for how to design and finance public virtual and blended schools;

best practices and possible pilot projects to assist transient students; options for comprehensive school quality indicators leading to student success; options for school quality review models based on successful review models currently in use; options for locally-created assessment and accountability systems; and best practices in parent and community engagement.

SB 32 - This act establishes the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program. For all tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2017, a taxpayer may make a qualifying contribution to an educational assistance organization and claim a tax credit, as described in the act. The tax credit is for one hundred percent of the amount of the contribution. The tax credit may be carried forward for four years and may be transferred, sold, or assigned. The annual cumulative amount of tax credits is limited at \$25 million, which will be adjusted for inflation. The director of the Department of Economic Development must establish a procedure to apportion the amount of tax credits amongst all educational assistance organizations. The Director may reapportion those tax credits to educational assistance organizations that have used all, or a certain percentage, of their tax credits. (Section 135.713)

An educational assistance organization must meet certain requirements, including notifying the Department of Economic Development of its intent to provide scholarship accounts; being a 501(c)(3) organization; providing a receipt to taxpayers for contributions; ensuring that funds are used as specified in the act; distributing scholarship payments four times per year in an amount not to exceed the state adequacy target; providing the Department of Economic Development, upon request, with criminal background checks on all employees and board members; and demonstrating financial accountability and viability, as described in the act.

Each educational assistance organization must publicly report to the Department, by June first annually, the name and address of the organization, the name and address of each student who opened a scholarship account, the total number and dollar amount of contributions during the previous calendar year, the total number and dollar amount of scholarship accounts opened during the previous calendar year, and the total number and dollar amount of scholarship accounts opened during the previous year to students eligible for free and reduced lunch. (Section 135.714)

SB 41 - Under this act, the constitutions and laws of the United States and Missouri shall be interpreted, construed, applied, and enforced to fully protect the rights of an alternatives-to-abortion agency and its officers, agents, employees, and volunteers to freely assemble and freely engage in religious practices and speech without government interference.

Nothing in this act shall preclude or preempt a political subdivision from exercising its lawful authority to regulate zoning or land use or to enforce a building or fire code regulation, provided that the political subdivision treats an alternatives-to-abortion agency in the same manner as a similarly situated agency.

A court may order injunctive relief with specified damages for violations of this act. Additionally, the Attorney General may bring a cause of action to defend the rights guaranteed under this act.

SB 63- Provides that each school district may rely on technical coursework and skills assessments developed for industry-recognized certificates and credentials when establishing career and technical education offerings

SB 115 - This act modifies the laws regarding licensing child care facilities in several ways. First, when determining whether a facility must be licensed, a child related by blood, marriage, or adoption shall be counted in the total number of children being cared for only if the person is also caring for at least two other children for pecuniary gain who are unrelated by blood, marriage, or adoption to the caregiver within the third degree, and only if the children are not being cared for due to extenuating circumstances not exceeding 30 days within one calendar year. Additionally, a child living in the caregiver's home who is eligible for enrollment in a public kindergarten or elementary school shall not be included in the total. This act also requires all child care facilities to disclose the licensure status of the facility to the parents or guardians of children for which the facility provides care.

SB 206 - This act modifies the requirements for school anti-bullying policies. The definition of "bullying" is modified in the act. This act removes the requirement that policies not identify lists of protected classes of students.

SB 255 - Creates the Every Child Can Learn Act to require turnaround options for certain underperforming schools, create personalized learning plans for certain students, address student promotion, and require letter grades for public schools

SJR 13 – Eliminates income taxes: replaced by an expanded sales and use tax and creates a property tax relief credit.

HB 118 - STUDENT TRANSFER LAW and TRANSPORTATION.. Similar to HB 42 (2016). This bill changes the laws regarding elementary and secondary education. NONRESIDENT PUPILS (Section 160.410) Charter schools must enroll nonresident pupils who transfer from

an unaccredited school district if space available. Etc., 8 pages

HB 139-Changes the law on school funding so that the exemption from compliance with certain statutes by school districts in the event of withholding of funds by the governor is permanent.

HB 189- *Creates an educational savings plan for K-12 educational expenses such as tuition, books, special needs services, etc.*

HB 254 – *Excludes funds designated by taxpayers in an urban district as local early childhood education funds from the local tax revenue calculation used to provide funding to charter schools*

HB 457 - *Allows children who attend early childhood education programs that are unde districts or charter schools to be included in the average daily attendance of the district or cl*

HB 680 – Establishes adult high schools to be operated by a Missouri nonprofit organization

LWV position – Education. Adopted 1965, Updated 1970, 1974, 1983.
Support for equal opportunity in education, access to quality programs and adequate financing.

Charter Schools – Adopted 1999, updates 2007, 2015. The League neither supports nor op schools. Since Missouri law permits charter schools, the League supports criteria for govern operations similar to those of traditional public schools but accountability and accreditation of traditional public schools.

An enormous amount of legislation has been introduced on abortion. There are 10

Senate bills and 22 House Bills:

Women’s Health - Abortion. MO 2017 filed 10 Senate Bills: SB 41, 67, 71, 72, 96, 195, 196
2017 filed 21

House Bills: HB 147, 174, 182, 194, 236, 326, 368, 369, 370, 371, 374, 382, 404, 456, 530, 531
692, 708, 757.

LWV position – Family Planning. Adopted 1998. Support state family planning

programs and educational programs about family planning, including funding for these programs.

LWVMO State Convention in Springfield – April 28-29

Our Co-Presidents, Linda and Donna will be going to the state convention. We hope that as many of our League members as possible will go. We want to be inclusive, because this is a great time to hear what other MO leagues are doing, meet great women, and help make decisions about what LWVMO will focus on the state level.

Please let either Donna or Linda know if you want to go. We will organize carpools and the Springfield is planning to arrange some lodging in their members' homes.

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIFTS TO THE LEAGUE

The League of Women Voters of Kansas City, Jackson, Clay and Platte Counties is now officially a 501(C)(3) "charitable" organization. That means that not only donations but your membership dues payment to our League are tax deductible for those who itemize deductions on their tax returns. If you would like to make tax-deductible donation to our League, please send your check marked "donation" and payable to the LWVKC/J/C/P to our Treasurer Carolina Arnold at

REMINDER RE LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEWS

If you have not done your assigned interview please do so as soon as possible and send your responses to Peg Prendergast at 4430 Terrace, KCMO 64111.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

We need volunteers to:

Data input for Voters Guide (call Pat Goodwin)

Voter registration (call Sue Scholl)

Assistance at forums (call Anitra Steele)

OFFICERS and BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Pat Goodwin

Evelyn Maddox

Cheryl Barnes, Communications (off Board)

Dixie Brown and Pauli Kendrick, Membership co-chairs

Peg Prendergast, Special Projects

Caroline Arnold, Nominating Committee Chair

Linda Smith, Newsletter

Sue Scholl, Voter Registration

Charles and Anitra Steele, Candidate and Issue Forums

Pauline Testerman, studies

Carolyn Weeks, Member Development (off Board)

Jane McClain, Women's Equality Week (off Board)

You will be pleased to notice our website continues to be updated.

Check it out at: <http://www.lwvkc.org>

