

September 2016



# THE VOTER

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

[www.lwvkc.org](http://www.lwvkc.org) – email. [lwvkjcp@yahoo.com](mailto:lwvkjcp@yahoo.com) 816-464-1800

***Join us for our next meeting***

***Saturday, September 17, 2016***

***9:30 a.m. (social time); 10:00 program begins***

***The U.S. Supreme Court – Implications of the  
November Presidential Election***

**Speaker**

**Professor Allen Rostron**

**William R. Jacques Constitutional Law Scholar and Professor of  
Law**

**University of Missouri Kansas City**

**Meeting location – Community Christian Church, 4700 Main Street, KCMO  
Library – enter thru door on north side of building**

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

Our Government has three branches – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. The framers of the U.S. Constitution sought to achieve a balance of power by establishing these three branches. But, it has turned out not to be simple. When there is a vacancy among the nine seats on the Supreme Court, the President nominates a qualified individual to fill that seat and sends that nomination to the U.S. Senate. The Senate holds hearings on the candidate and votes whether or not to approve the President's nominee. That seems pretty straight-forward – but it isn't. In our highly-polarized political climate, appointments to the Supreme Court are a political game.

There is currently one vacancy on the Supreme Court, created by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February. There will in all likelihood be at least two more vacancies as elderly justices retire. Currently there are eight justices of whom four are liberal and four are conservative. Senate Republicans refused to consider (not even hold a hearing) President Obama's nominee of U.S. Circuit Judge Merrick Garland, insisting that the seat be kept open for the next President to put forth a nominee for the Court. Needless to say, the Republican dominated Senate hopes that there will be a Republican President.

The Supreme Court makes decisions that set the course for some of the major issues of our time, several of which are of special interest to the League of Women Voters. These include but are not limited to:

- Access to Health Care
- Voter Suppression
- Campaign Finance (Citizens United and related decisions)
- Gun Violence
- A Woman's Right to Choose
- Civil Rights, particularly LGBT rights
- The death penalty

Our speaker, Professor Allen Rostron, will help us understand the implications of the Presidential election for the Supreme Court.

Professor Rostron joined the UMKC faculty in 2003. He teaches and writes in the areas of constitutional law, tort law, products liability, and conflict of laws.

Before becoming a teacher, Mr. Rostron worked in Washington, D.C. as a Senior Staff Attorney at the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, where he was part of a nation-wide litigation effort that included lawsuits brought against gun manufacturers by several dozen major cities and counties.

Professor Rostron's research and writing has had a significant impact on several areas of law. The Supreme Court of Wisconsin relied on one of his articles in a decision in which it became the first court in the nation to impose proportional or "market share" liability on manufacturers of lead paint. In another article, Professor Rostron suggested a new approach to regulation of high-powered sniper rifles and that approach was subsequently enacted into law in the District of Columbia and incorporated into proposed federal legislation introduced in the U.S. Senate

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## MISSOURI AMENDMENT SIX AND CONSTITUTION AND CITIZENSHIP DAY

September 17 is *Constitution and Citizenship Day*, a national observance commemorating the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787. The day was originally observed only as Constitution Day, but since 2004 it has been congressionally mandated to "*recognize all who, by coming of age or by naturalization, have become citizens.*" The congressional act also specifies that government agencies and federally funded educational institutions are, in observance, to promote citizenship and knowledge. The observance is a reminder to all citizens, whether a citizen by birth or nationalization, that knowing the U.S. Constitution and one's state governance is a civic responsibility.

Knowledge of our constitutional rights is a necessity if we are to defend against assaults that would dilute or even negate our "*free exercise of the right to suffrage.*" Although the U.S. Constitution specified how voting would apply to the Electoral College, election of Senators and Representatives and to Congressional actions, it did not address citizens' right to vote. Later,

Constitutional amendments in 1870, 1920, 1964 and 1971 specified voting rights to groups who had been denied suffrage within the states. These national amendments collectively ensure that the right to vote may not be denied on the basis of race, color previous condition of servitude, sex and age (18 or above), and that failure to pay poll tax or other tax may not affect elections for federal officials. In addition, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 specified protections against racial discrimination in voting practices, although a recent Supreme Court decision seriously weakened some of its provisions.

Missouri added another layer of voter protection when in 1875 it included in its Bill of Rights, “section 25, That all elections shall be free and open; and no power, civil or military shall at any time interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage. Source: Const of 1875, Sec 9.”

Missouri’s proposed Amendment Six, if passed on November 8, would provide an exception to Missouri’s Bill of Rights, Section 25, by adding the following new section: *“Section 11. A person seeking to vote in person in public elections may be required by general law to identify himself or herself and verify his or her qualifications as a citizen of the United States of America and a resident of the state of Missouri by providing election officials with a form of identification, which may include valid government-issued photo identification. Exceptions of the identification requirement may also be provided for by general law.”*

Amendment 6 is clearly contrary to the spirit of Missouri’s *Bill of Rights Section 25, Prohibiting “interference” of the “free right of suffrage.”* Its effect is to create an impediment to voting. Its enabling legislation would disenfranchise and estimated 220,000 lawfully registered voters who do not currently have unexpired government-issued photo identification. Seniors, youth, certain ethnic groups, the poor, university students, veterans, and the disabled are particularly disadvantaged by the government-issued photo ID requirement. As written, the amendment provides authority to the General Assembly to modify, by legislation at any time, what constitutes valid identification.

The Missouri League of Women Voters and its local leagues are vigorously working to defeat Amendment Six. Its enabling legislation, HB 1631, is expected to be passed by the General Assembly and would be effective if Amendment Six is passed, enacting its provisions would cost taxpayers \$1,000,000+ annually,

**burden election boards and voters with expense and extraordinary efforts to comply, and, are unnecessary given that the Amendment's proponents cannot cite even one case of impersonation in Missouri history that would have been prevented by photo ID.**

## **WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING? YOU WILL BE AMAZED**

### **Celebrate the Vote Celebration in St. Louis – Sept 3. (Donna Hoch)**

Eight local LWV members participated in the Sept 3 "Celebrate the Vote" event in St. Louis. Departing at 5am, Peg Prendergast, Margie Richcreek, Jane McClain, Joan Pratt, Evelyn Maddox, Bertie Daw and Donna Hoch headed out from KC. Joan Pratt, who is a descendant of Susan B. Anthony, surprised us all with some of her home-made cinnamon rolls to enjoy on the ride. They were joined in St. Louis by Pauline Testerman and her daughter, Amanda.

Jane McClain displayed her Wall of "Women's Achievement" which was one of the most visited and commented upon exhibits of the day. We all marched in the parade with our "Vote for Women" sashes on and our white outfits holding the sign with our League's name. We stood on the front row of the Central Library's steps. There were 700 women in the picture. Security estimated that 900 were there.

The program included speakers telling us about the 1916 action where over 3,000 suffragists converged on St. Louis in the sweltering heat during the Democratic National Convention, which was poised to re-nominate Woodrow Wilson. The suffragists' sole demand was a plank in the party platform in support of women's suffrage. Wearing white dresses and golden sashes that said "votes for women," they lined the street where the convention delegates would walk from their hotel to the convention center. The impact of these women who formed a "walk-less talk-less parade," called "The Golden Lane" was enormous. They accomplished their objective and got the plank in the party platform.

At the Sept 3 event, we were encouraged to "Vote No" in November ballot issue on Missouri Constitution Amendment 6 which would enable the Missouri legislature to pass requirements for a currently valid state issued photo ID in order to vote. This would disenfranchise over 220,000 voters to solve a problem that does not exist. The Senator from St. Louis received applause when she said "We do not have problems with voter impersonation but we do with voter participation." We were reminded again of how long and hard the battle to gain the right for women to vote was and how we must continue to protect this right for everyone.

We owe a great thanks to the Metro St. Louis LWV. Although there were other sponsors, the LWV stepped out and took the leadership and risk. It was a great day to be a member of the

League of Women Voters! The long day ended as we returned to Kansas City with non-stop conversation about all the good work LWV of KC/JCP is doing and what else we can do to educate and inform our members and our community.

#### **WOMEN'S EQUALITY WEEK:**

Just when we thought that WEW (this is the fourth annual) could not get any better, it did. Our League had a lead responsibility, in cooperation with others partners, for two significant events. These were:

Women's Equality and Race: Bridging the Gap to Sisterhood held at the Bruce Watkins Center on August 22. An audience estimated at 90 heard from panelists Jackie Loya-Torres of Commerce Bank; Kiki Curls, MO State Senator; Shanna Steitz, Senior Minister Community Christian Church. Moderator, Barbara A. Washington, Esq, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority skillfully led the discussion about challenges to success and how to bridge the gap to overcome those challenges.

Huge thanks go to our League members Jane McClain and Sandra Fowler Jiles for their leadership and to partners with the NAACP, Alpha Kappa Alpha, and El Centro.

Voter Suppression: Kansas & Missouri at the Epicenter held at Asbury Methodist Church in Prairie Village. With the leadership of Columnist Mary Sanchez, speakers Micah Kubic, ACLU Kansas, and Judy Morgan State Representative MO laid out the facts on the efforts to suppress the vote in both Kansas and Missouri.

Thanks go to other sponsors: LWV of Johnson County, KS; the Mainstream Coalition, Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, and Women for Kansas.

We cannot say enough good things about Jane McClain for her creativity and leadership role in making these events and other activities possible. She is great at building partnerships and helping to ensure that things work.

#### **VOTERS GUIDE: (Pat Goodwin – LWV lead)**

Many voters in Missouri have limited access to unbiased clearly understood information about candidates, either from newspapers and other print media, TB or radio. To help remedy this situation, LWVMO, in cooperation with local Leagues, including LWVKC/J/ C/P has launched an effort to produce a printed voters' guide that can be distributed through libraries, community centers, senior centers, colleges, hair dressers, high traffic areas, and especially areas where voters may not have access to election information.

**Our League has a Voter's Guide Committee, led by Pat Goodwin. Members of that committee are: Delores Blaser, Sandy Eads, Joyce Fulps, Donna Hoch, Symie Menitov, Peg Prendergast, Margie Richcreek and Sue Scholl.**

**The guide will include information on the following races:**

- **Statewide races, including ballot issues**
- **MO General Assembly races for KC area (45 candidates)**
- **County-wide races for Jackson, Clay and Platte counties (identification of candidates only)**
- **County and KC ballot issues with pro/con statements**

**We have selected the "Columbia Tribune" to print the guide, based on their proposal to us. The cost for 10,000 will be around \$2,000. Our schedule calls for the file to be sent to the printer on September 28, with distribution to begin on October 14.**

**We have received around \$750 in donations for this project. Additional contributions are needed, even small amounts help. If you or someone you know can help, please send your check, payable to LWVKC/J/ C/P, with the memo line reading "voter's guide." Donations are tax deductible, if you itemize deductions on your income tax forms.**

**We are grateful to those who have already made contributions. It adds up. Send your check to (along with your 2016-2017 membership if you have not already done the latter) to:**

**LWVKC/J/ C/P Treasurer  
Caroline Arnold  
1912A Cherry St.  
Lee's Summit, MO 64081**

### **VOTER REGISTRATION**

**Sue Scholl and her team have held 18 voter registration events so far this year. More are scheduled.**

We are coordinating voter registration with other groups including What U Can Do, the AAUW, and the NAACP, among others.

An opportunity has been presented to us to set up voter registration at Arrowhead and Kauffman Stadiums. More information about this will follow.

October 12 is the last day individuals may register to vote in order to vote in the November 8 election.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS/ACTIVITIES**

**HEARTLAND COALITION AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE** (YES, WE ARE A MEMBER AND CO-SPONSOR OF THIS EVENT)

**“Gun Violence – The Culture of Fear”**

**October 10, 2016 (Monday) - 8:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.  
Kauffman Foundation Conference Center**

**This forum will prove an opportunity to again bring together individuals and groups concerned with the spread of gun violence. Participants will leave with new information and strategies for moving our culture to more responsible and sensible gun policies and practices.**

**For the first time, the Forum will feature a keynote speaker of national prominence:**

**Leonard Pitts, Jr. winner of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for commentary and a powerful advocate for common sense gun regulation will speak. His syndicated column appears in the *Kansas City Star* each Tuesday.**

**Register on-line at: [gunviolencethecultureoffear.eventbrite.com](http://gunviolencethecultureoffear.eventbrite.com)**

### **BARRIERS TO THE BALLOT – TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 6:00 – 8:00 P.M.**

**Location: National Archives**

**Sponsored by: AAUW –KC, the Black History Study Group, and the National Archives**

**A panel discussion including Delores Furtado of the LWV Johnson County, Anita Russell of the NAACP, and Quinton Lucas KU Professor and KC City Councilman,**



**followed by a short film “The Black Bell.”** The film is a documentary on Alabama and the closing in 2015 (you read that right) of 31 voting locations in predominantly black counties due to budget cuts, forcing residents to obtain voter ID cards by going to mobile units. The film focuses on the mobile units, which are woefully inadequate and how residents coped with finding viable alternatives for obtaining IDs.

The program is free. However, because the Archives is a federal government facility, you must make a reservation by either calling 816 268-8010 or emailing: [kansascity.educate@nara.gov](mailto:kansascity.educate@nara.gov)

### **REGULAR LWVKC/J/C/P MONTHLY MEETINGS:**

**October 8 - PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN THE DATE – NOT OUR USUAL SATURDAY DATE**  
We will review November ballot issues, including pros and cons and positions that LWVMO has taken on various ballot issues.

**November 19 - The Transpacific Partnership – is it a good or bad deal or some of each?**  
Speakers: **Jim Turner, Sierra Club**  
**Judy Ancel, UMKC labor expert**

### **OFFICERS and BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Sue Scholl, Voter Registration  
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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>