



The VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM
<http://www.lwvgb.org>

SEPTEMBER 2013

LWVGB OBSERVER CORPS

Ann Smith, LWVGB Director

The LWVGB Observer Corps needs members to attend meetings of a local board, council or commission. Observing the meetings of governmental bodies is one of the League's most interesting and important jobs. Since the League's founding, transparency in government has been one of our core principles.

As an observer you will represent the citizens of your community, as well as the League, reminding our representatives with your presence of the public's right to know. You'll be the "eyes and ears" of the League and will be ready to keep our members informed. You can help us to continue to encourage governmental bodies to make more information easily accessible.

So choose one that interests you: your city council, your school board, your county commission or one of several other boards, and join the OC. Some boards meet during the day - perfect for retired OC members, others in the evening. We'll provide all the information to get

you started. Training for new members can be arranged to fit your schedule. Please contact Ann Smith at 823-4749 or at annsmith1@charter.net.



LWVGB ANNUAL SOCIAL & MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Date: Thursday, 9/26

Time: 5:00 PM CDT

Venue: Alamerica Bank

2170 Highland Avenue S

Please join us for casual but stimulating conversation over a glass of wine and light hors d'oeuvres. Bring friends who might join!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL MONTH

September is our traditional dues renewal month. Please submit your dues payment online or by postal mail. See <http://www.lwvgb.org/about/page10/page10.html> for details.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2013

Monthly LWVGB Board of Directors Meeting, 4th Tuesday, 11:30am, Landmark Center

September 17: [Constitution Day](#)

September 21: [International Day of Peace](#)

September 24: [Voter Registration Day](#)

September 26: LWVGB Membership Meeting, 5pm, Alamerica Bank

October 8: Birmingham Runoff Elections

October 17: LWVGB Membership Meeting, 5pm, B'ham Water Works Board; Details TBA

October 24: [United Nations Day](#)

See [LWVGB Online Calendar](#) for latest information.

Challenges from Our State and the U.S. Supreme Court

Nancy Sales, LWVGB Director

The new Alabama Photo Voter Identification Law will be in effect as of Jan. 1, 2014. Hopefully you have seen the Proposed Implementation of the Rules and the call for comments which were due by September 4th. (These were in an email to LWVGB membership recently.)

The Secretary of State's office has promised availability of free photo ID's good for voting only. They are to be available in every county, two for the counties with two county seat locations. That doesn't make it very close to many of the elderly, disabled, and otherwise disadvantaged citizens who do not currently have one of the recognized photo ID's. In addition one must be a registered voter before applying for the free photo ID. So the League of Women Voters and other civic groups have some good work to do to educate about and assist persons to have the necessary document. Given the importance of voting, we will want to be ready to work on some aspect of helping people get registered and have the necessary ID. More details will have to come from the state.

Our work comes not only from our state. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision on the Voting Rights Act certainly presents a challenge. Our LWVUS President, Elisabeth MacNamara made this response on Aug 28th, 2013, "Earlier this summer the U.S. Supreme Court erased fundamental protections in the VRA against racial discrimination in voting that have been critical to protecting our democracy. The damage to the VRA can and must be fixed - Congress has the power to act swiftly to restore the effectiveness of the Voting Rights Act. Tell your member of Congress to work quickly to repair and restore the VRA to ensure our elections are free, fair and accessible to all citizens." This is something which we can do personally.

CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION COMMISSION

Nancy Ekberg, LWVGB Director

As you know, this is the language approved by the Constitutional Revision Commission for the Education Article revision at the meeting held on August 8th:

The legislature shall establish, organize and maintain a system of public schools throughout the state for the benefit of children thereof,

And then Matt Lembke offered this amendment which passed: ***provided nothing in this Section shall create any judicially enforceable right or obligation and nothing in this Section shall in any way affect the provisions of Amendment 582.*** (Amendment 582 says the courts cannot make decisions regarding education that affect funding/appropriations by the Legislature for public schools.)



Commission Chair, Gov. Brewer has said he will invite another meeting in the early half of September, at the call of the Chair. So we anticipate another meeting the second or third week of September. I am hoping we can get some Commissioners to ask that this be revisited.

These are the Commissioners and how they voted:

Voted to add the disabling “provided” clause;

Jenna Bedsole, Birmingham, jbedsole@bakerdonelson.com

Gov. Robert Bentley (by proxy), Tuscaloosa, rebecca.boykins@governor.alabama.gov

Greg Butrus, Birmingham, gbutrus@balch.com

Rep. Randy Davis, Daphne, rmdavis14@aol.com

Vicki Drummond, Chair, Education Committee, Jasper, vickidrummond50@gmail.com

Rep. Paul DeMarco, Commission Vice-chair, Homewood, pdemarco@pljpc.com

Speaker Mike Hubbard (by proxy), Auburn, jason.isbell@alhouse.gov

Matt Lembke, Birmingham, mlembke@bab.com

Rep. Cam Ward, Alabaster, camjulward@aol.com

Voted to support the simple 22-word sentence;

Gov. Albert Brewer, Commission Chair, Birmingham apbrewer@samford.edu

Phillip Brown, Birmingham, pbrownalmgop@yahoo.com

Senate Pres. Pro Tempore Del Marsh (by proxy), Anniston ryan.cantrell@alsenate.gov

Carolyn McKinstry, Birmingham, cmckinstry@bellsouth.net

Jim Pratt III, Chair, Education Text, Birmingham, jim@hwnn.com

Sen. Quinton Ross, Jr., Montgomery, Quinton.ross@alsenate.gov

Rep. Patricia Todd, Birmingham, reptodd@gmail.com

Not present;

Al Agricola, Montgomery, aagricola@rpdas.com

Sen. Bryan Taylor, Prattville, bryan.taylor@alsenate.gov

On another matter, the Commission also approved the following. (This synopsis was provided by John Pickens from Appleseed. While I attended, his summary is better than mine.):

Equal Protection & Due Process (in Section 1 of Article I

Section I proposal that passed by a 9-6 vote:

“That all persons are equally free and independent; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; nor shall any person be denied equal protection of the laws based on race, gender, sex, religion, national origin, or color. This provision must be read in conjunction with this Constitution as a whole and shall not be interpreted to create any additional rights not specifically enumerated therein.”

Voting in favor of this proposal – Commissioners Butrus, Drummond, Cantrell (representing Pro Tem Del Marsh), Pratt, Todd, Ross, Ward and Brewer (9 votes)

Voting against – Commissioners Bedsole, Boykins (representing Governor Bentley), Davis, Isbell (representing Speaker Hubbard, Lembke and DeMarco (6 votes)

Board of Directors, 2013-2014

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Off Board

Leonette Slay	Chair, Nominating Committee Fundraising
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QUOTABLE QUOTES

You wouldn't worry so much about what others think of you if you realized how seldom they do.
~ *Eleanor Roosevelt*

As usual, there's a great woman behind every idiot.
~ *John Lennon*

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