

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MANITOWOC COUNTY
FEBRUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER**

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

02-07	Haiti
02-14	U.S. National Security
02-21	Financial Crisis
02-28	Germany Ascendant
03-01	Board Meeting on Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.
03-07	The Caucasus

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Dear Leaguers,

Our County Executive has said on many occasions that it is a good time to be interested in politics and he is right. There are several issues before the state legislature of concern to League. These include eliminating same day registration on Election Day, redistricting along partisan lines, and a new bill that would require the governor's approval for any state agency's administrative rules changes. And, of course, there is the issue of voter photo ID. To keep up on important issues, we have added an advocacy agenda item to our board meetings. We will try to keep you informed and if you agree with a League position, please contact your legislators when you receive alerts.

Thank you for being advocates and I hope to see you at our wonderful Great Decisions series.

Mary

GREAT DECISIONS

02-07	Haiti -- Professor Jason Brozek, Lawrence University
02-14	U.S. National Security – Professor Joseph Tullbane, St. Norbert College,
02-21	Financial Crisis – Professor Marty Farrell, Ripon College
02-28	Germany Ascendant – Professor Frederick Gerlach
03-07	The Caucasus – John Katzka, Retired Diplomat, Sr. Foreign Ser. Officer

The Great Decisions series begins on February 7 and runs for eight consecutive Monday evenings at the Manitowoc Public Library from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the Baransky Room.

If you would like to have dinner with any of our guest speakers, please join us at the Courthouse Pub at 4:30 p.m. Contact Marilyn Sontag at 682-8988 for further information.

LEGISLATION ACTION COMMITTEE

TIME FOR ACTION!!!

VOTER PHOTO ID -----SB6

The right to vote is a basic and highly prized right all over the world. As Leaguers we know that the Suffragettes, who preceded us, fought courageously for this right for nearly a century. They were mocked, harassed, and went to jail before the right was grudgingly given with passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920.

The current state legislature and governor are supporting legislation to make it harder for some people to vote. If passed, the requirement to present a Voter Photo ID and eliminating same day registration would clearly have that effect. The majority party of this legislature is fast tracking the Voter Photo ID legislation to have it become effective for the April election (for details on the issue look up Andrea Kaminsky's Guest Commentary on the subject in the HTR on Friday, 01-28-11).

Nationally about 11% of the qualified voters do not have the Voter Photo ID required under this proposed legislation. Consider the impact on the elderly, students, disabled folks, and the poor, many of who do not have the transportation or birth certificates or finances to pay for the required verification. Consider that many county Motor Vehicle Departments have closed in recent years. Some eligible voters will need to travel 50 miles or more to an adjacent county to get the Voter Photo ID.

So why the push to get legislation passed that is not needed and which will have a considerable cost to implement. The few cases of voter fraud (voting more than once or in the wrong jurisdiction) could be more appropriately handled by more training of election officials. This legislation would have no impact on this problem. If there was a situation of impersonation of another person, showing a photo would help. However, there has not been even one such case sited.

The head of the Government Accountability Board, Mr. Kennedy, who is in charge of elections at the state level opposes SB6 as being costly (\$2.3 million for DMV changes and costly at the local level as well and causing more confusion and work on election day for poll workers. It would also eliminate vouching for a neighbor, friend, or relative who did not have the documentation necessary and may have recently moved.

States that have implemented these restrictions on voting have, not surprisingly, found reductions in percentages of people voting. Indiana experienced a drop of 5% when implemented.

As an organization, League has always worked to increase voting participation and to engage people in their government and be good citizens. Restricting access and

suppressing the vote, thereby reducing the numbers of the poor, the disabled, students, and the elderly who are able to vote runs counter to our beliefs and to a democracy based on fair, open, and accessible elections for all eligible citizens.

Every Leaguer needs to contact their State Senator and Representative on this issue. The names and addresses are listed below for your convenience. Please email me that you called. Darlene Wellner at ddwellner@charter.net or telephone (920) 682-0469 and leave a message.

FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LEGISLATORS IN OUR AREA:

FEDERAL

U. S. Senator Herb Kohl

330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510-4903
(202) 224-5653
[http://kohl.senate.gov/gen](http://kohl.senate.gov/gen>Contact.html)
Contact.html;http://kohl.senate.gov

U. S. Senator Ron Johnson

506 Hart Senate Office Building
2 Russell Courtyard (Temp)
District of Columbia 20510-4904
(202) 224-5323
Fax: (202) 228-6965

U.S. Rep. Tom Petri

2462 Rayburn Building, DC 20515
(202) 225-2476
Fax: (202) 225-2356

STATE

State Senator Frank Lasee

Room 104 South State Capitol
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(608) 266-3512
Fax (608) 267-6792

State Senator Joe Leibham

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State Representative Andre Jacques

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State Representative Bob Ziegelbauer

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STATE LEVEL LEGISLATIVE ACTION by the State LWV

This memo was sent to all State Senators and Assembly Representatives in Madison.

The Special Session Assembly Bill 8 was passed by the full Assembly on Wednesday, February 2nd and is now going to the Senate Committee on Economic Development. It will likely be up for a vote in the full Senate very soon.

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin opposes the proposal to require the Governor's approval for administrative rules. We view this power shift with alarm because it would weaken the necessary checks and balances in state government.

The League supports an open government system that is representative, accountable, responsive and capable of making decisions. Government must be able to function efficiently with a minimum of conflict, wasted time or duplication of effort.

The State Legislature is composed of elected representatives who are responsible not only to their districts but to the good of the state as a whole. The law gives the Legislature authority to approve the administrative rules that are promulgated by state agencies, which are responsible for implementing legislation. This ensures that the rules accurately reflect the intent of the lawmakers.

The new proposal to give the Governor approval power over the implementation of rules undermines the responsibility and power of the legislature. The Wisconsin governor already has great power to influence legislation with the selective use of vetoes. The current checks and balances provide for the Legislature to sign off on rules. There is no need for the Governor to do so as well.

The legislative branch, composed of statewide representatives, should not cede its rule-making authority to the single-person executive branch. We urge you to oppose this measure.

FEDERAL LEVEL

An attempt to repeal the **Affordable Care Act** failed in the Senate yesterday by 51-47 votes. Proponents of repeal have indicated that they will continue to raise the issue in the Senate. Please tell your Senators not to repeal the Affordable Care Act and to stand firm in support of this law that extends coverage to millions of uninsured Americans.

