



**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- **Lobby with us! See p. 2 for details**
- **Next state Board meeting, Saturday, Feb. 8**

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League to Seek Consensus on Ag Study

By **CINDY HEINE** and **IVONNE ROVIRA**

The League of Women Voters of the United States announced last year that it would be revisiting its position on agriculture, which dated to 1988. Since then so much has happened to revolutionize what brings meat, vegetables and dairy to our tables, clothes into our closets, and products into our homes and workplaces.

The national League is focusing on (1) current technology issues in agriculture, including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock and accurate food labeling and (2) current agriculture finance issues, including consolidation in agriculture

industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process.

For obvious reasons, Kentucky members are very interested in agricultural issues. Farmland covers 54 percent of the Bluegrass State, while Kentucky ranks first in the nation in both thoroughbred horses and non-alfalfa hay.

Kentucky leagues are encouraged to participate in the agricultural study. The League of Women



member. The Louisville League's consensus meetings will be in February and March. Results are due to the League of Women Voters of the United States by late April. You'll find the final study questions on pp. 4 and 5 of this newsletter. Leaders' Guide will be available in early January.

We will review that work and the work of other Leagues next spring and consider expanding the study in Kentucky at Council next spring.



Voters of Louisville has already tackled the issue, hosting well-attended forums on the

topic in October and No-

Presidents' Message



Co-presidents,
from top to
bottom: Tammy
Fagley and Cindy
Heine

By **TAMMY FAGLEY,**
and **CINDY HEINE**

On Voter Registration Day earlier this fall, the League of Women Voters of Lexington spent time at the downtown bus transit center inviting people to register to vote. It was heartening to hear many say they were already registered; of course, some said they had never registered while offering multiple excuses: a single vote makes no difference, reluctance to serve on jury duty, and so on.

What stood out for us were the many younger men and women who said, "I can't register." A few were too young or not yet citizens, but most had felony convictions in their pasts.

One young man had never voted because his troubles with the law began before he was 18. He has three more years of parole requirements before he can apply to restore his civic rights, yet he is working and paying taxes. He wants to be able to vote, to

have a say in his future and his country's future.

We support restoration of voting rights on principle, but when you meet so many people in just one afternoon and put a face on the heartbreaking loss of voting rights, it becomes much more real and so much more urgent.

None of those with whom we spoke seemed to know that they could have their voting rights restored. We offered applications and encouraged them to submit the

Cont'd on p. 3

Call Your State Legislators NOW!

By **TERRY NAYDAN**

The 2014 legislative session begins on Jan. 7. The League of Women Voters is supporting several bills, and it's not

too early to inform your legislators, both in the state House and Senate, that you want them to support these

bills also. They are:

HB 70, Representative Jesse Crenshaw: automatic restoration of voting rights to felons who have paid their debt to society.

Please call your state representative at
(800) 372-7181 to leave a message.

BR 406, Representative Jim Wayne: providing public financing of judicial campaigns starting with state Supreme Court candidates.

BR 11, Representative John Tilley: extending domestic violence protective orders to those who previously dated. Currently, the only unmarried persons who qualify are those

who share a child with their alleged abuser.

We also have a National position on abolishing the death penalty, but there's no prefiled bill yet.

Nita Smith and I will keep members up to date on the status of the bills we are supporting or opposing as the 2014 legislative session gets under way.



League Reaches Consensus on Civic Education

By **BEVERLY MOORE**

For almost a year, the League of Women Voters members across the state have been exploring the issue of what constitutes good civic education. Last month, after conferring with recommendations from leagues from throughout Kentucky, the state League adopted a new statement.

The League of Women Voters of Kentucky believes that schools have a crucial role in preparing students to be informed and engaged citizens.

Civics education should focus on knowledge and understanding of governments (e.g., local, state, national and other forms), including their structures, functions, and effects.

Effective civics education includes preparing students with the skills to participate critically and solve problems in civic life, and it provides practice for students working cooperatively in a community of citizens with rights and responsibilities.

Civics education should be integrated with history, geography and economics instruction throughout elementary, middle and high school instruction. An additional course (or courses) in civics or government should

be available in high school to further prepare students for their roles as citizens.

When students graduate from high school, they should have acquired the following:

- ◆ the knowledge to influence the legislative process on issues of importance to themselves and others;
- ◆ the motivation to be responsible citizens involved in providing for the general welfare;
- ◆ the skills, inclinations, and self-confidence to participate as informed citizens in the electoral, legislative, judicial and administrative processes of government;
- ◆ the process skills to work on projects cooperatively in various size group activities;
- ◆ sufficient background knowledge of history and politics to understand the effects of voting on their own and others' lives.



Presidents' Message: Voting Rights

Cont'd from p. 2

forms and advised them that the League was working to restore rights once sentences and parole were completed. And now, when we lobby in Frankfort for restoration of voting rights, we have very real stories to tell of disenfranchised citizens! Please join us in contacting legislators on this important issue!

We are looking forward to the upcoming General Assembly session. Terry Naydan and Nita Smith will keep us informed of issues and will alert us throughout the session when the League needs you to contact your elected officials.

We also look forward to work on the Agriculture Study. The League of Women Voters of the United States is revising its position on agriculture, which has not been updated since 1988. Thanks to the League of Women Voters of Louisville for taking the lead on engaging

Kentucky in this study.

In addition, we have wrapped up our Civics Study, and you'll find our new position in this newsletter (see above).

We're sorry to report that Cecile Schubert resigned as a co-president of the State Board this fall. In a unanimous vote of its members, the board thanked Cecile for her "contributions to the League in the form of leadership, hard work and dedication..." She was always willing to step in where needed at the state and local level.

We wish you well as we face the New Year! This will be a busy one with our advocacy during the 2014 General Assembly, multiple elections and candidate forums, voter registration drives and more — all important work engaging citizens in the democratic process!!



Leagues across the United States will be using these final study questions to reach consensus on what the League's new position should be on agriculture.

Agricultural Update Consensus

Economic Health of the Agricultural Sector

1. *Should government financial support for agriculture be directed to:*

(In each case, decide Yes, No, No Consensus)

- a) Subsidized agricultural credit (loans)
- b) Disaster assistance
- c) Crop insurance
- d) Farms that supply local and regional markets
- e) Subsidized implementation of best management practices
- f) Commodity crop programs, e.g., corn, soybeans, sugar, cotton, wheat
- g) Commodity livestock program
- h) Commodity dairy program
- i) Specialty crops, e.g. fruits, vegetables, nuts, etc. Other production methods, e.g., organic, hydroponic, urban, etc. farms

2. *What changes should government make regarding direct payment programs to farm operators?*

Note: Farm operators can be anything between family farms to huge corporations.
(In each case, decide Yes, No, No Consensus)

- a) Eliminate direct payments to farm operators
- b) Update the rules for direct payments to farm

operators to support sustainability

- c) Broaden the types of farms that are eligible
- d) Broaden the types of crops that are eligible
- e) Effectively enforce existing rules

3. *What changes to current crop insurance programs should government make?*

(In each case, decide Yes, No, No Consensus)

- a) Extend to more types of crops
- b) Link to the use of conservation practices
- c) Limit insurance for the cultivation of marginal and environmentally sensitive land
- d) Cap amount of premium subsidy to a single farm operator (see note in question. 2)

4. *Should government act on any of the following?*

(In each case, decide Yes, No, No Consensus)

- a) Revise anti-trust legislation to ensure competitive agricultural markets
- b) Enforce anti-trust laws as they relate to agriculture
- c) Promote alternative marketing systems, including regional hub markets, farmer cooperatives, farm markets, etc.

Animal Management

5. *Which of the following approaches to animal management should government achieve?*

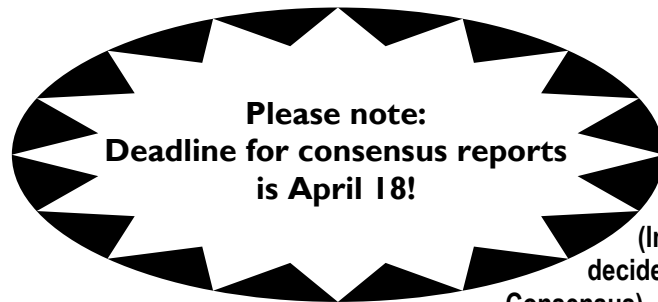
(In each case, decide Yes, No, No Consensus)

- a) Transparently collect and disclose data about regulated animal feeding operations (AFOs) or aquaculture operations and about the health of animals in such regulated operations
 - b) Apply and enforce existing clean air and clean water regulations to animal or seafood management facilities
6. *Which of the following approaches to animal waste management should government require or bring about?*

- a) Treat animal waste with environmentally sound technologies for all regulated AFOs
- b) Prioritize federal funds to mitigate existing environmental challenges (such as Environmental Quality Incentives Program, cost share, loans, etc.) rather than construction of new facilities

7. *Which of the following approaches to research and development (R&D) should government fund or accomplish?*

Consensus Questions



(In each case, decide Yes, No, No

Consensus)

Note: For the purpose of these questions and some questions below, “developed using any new technology” or “new technologies” refer to any of many scientific processes for developing new crops or animals with genetic engineering, nanotechnology or other new techniques, which are not the traditional breeding or hybridization techniques.

(In each case, decide Yes, No, No Consensus)

- a) Basic research
- b) Independent third-party (such as an academic institution) risk assessment of products *developed using any new technology*
- c) Research to assess the impacts of *new technologies* on human health and the environment, prior to their widespread adoption
- d) Research that advances the continuation of diversified and sustainable agricultural systems
- e) Seed banking, research, and other means that promote and preserve genetic diversity
- f) Both transparency in the reporting of research studies related to approval of new products **and** respect for intellectual property rights of private enterprises engaged in

- research
- g) Research on long-term effects of new crops, products and processes
 - h) Development of new practices and technologies to promote conservation for all types of farms

Food Safety

8. *Which of the following approaches to food safety should government perform or fund?*

(In each case, decide Yes, No, No Consensus)

- a) Clarify and enforce pre-market testing requirements for new foods and food additives *developed using any new technology* (see note below question 7)
- b) Require developers to monitor all food products *developed using any new technology* after releasing to the market
- c) Withdraw marketing approval if products are shown to be unsafe
- d) Require post-market monitoring of approved pharmaceutical applications in animal production for human health and environmental impacts
- e) Require developers of new products to provide data and other materials to independent third parties (such as academic institutions) for pre- and post-market safety as-

- f) Limit use of antibiotics in animal production to treat and control disease
- g) Fund independent third-party (such as academic institutions) risk assessment of long-term and multiple exposures from foods on human health and the environment
- h) Promote crop management practices that decrease dependency on added chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers)
- i) Fund, train and add personnel for assessment and compliance functions of regulatory agencies

Food Labeling

9. *How sufficient are the following regarding current food labeling?*

(In each case, decide Insufficient, Sufficient, Too much, No Consensus)

- a) Nutrition Facts on food labels
- b) Nutrition Facts on food labels as a means of consumer education
- c) Common allergen labeling
- d) Health and ingredient claims that consumers can understand

10. *Which of the following should government achieve regarding marketing and ingredient claims on food labels?*

- a) Define (and approve for use) health and safety marketing terms (e.g. immunity support, humane, pasture-raised, natural, etc.)
- b) Regulate the use of images or other sensory advertising
- c) Require that ingredient marketing claims accurately represent what is in the required ingredient list

11. *Recognizing that each food developed using any new technology can be unique, and assuming that required food labeling should be useful to consumers, should the following generalized information relating to how products or components are developed be presented on food labels?*

(In each case, decide Not Recommended, Voluntary, Mandatory, No consensus)

- a) Contains ingredients developed using any new technology, stating which technologies are involved
- b) Doesn't contain ingredients developed using any new technology
- c) If meat, fish, eggs, or dairy products are from animals that have consumed feed developed using any new technologies, stating which technologies are involved

No County for Old Prisoners

By **IVONNE ROVIRA**

In an article at the website of the Brennan Center for Justice, Andrew Cohen describes how counties across America are undermining the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case, *Baker v. Carr*.

In that case, the High Court established the “one person, one vote” ruling that voters in rural areas weren’t entitled to more representation than those in urban areas. In other words, that every vote should count just the same.

Currently, however, that mandate is being undermined, points out Cohen, a fellow at the Brennan Center, a contributing editor at *The Atlantic* magazine and a legal analyst for CBS’s *60 Minutes*. The U.S. Census Bureau is allowing states and counties to count prisoners as residents of the prisons where they

are housed rather than as residents of their home of record. That gives rural areas, where most prisons are located, higher Census populations — a violation of *Baker v. Carr*. To make matters worse, once prisoners are released, they find they’ve been disenfranchised and can’t vote in their real district. In effect, their “vote” remains imprisoned in their prison “district” until the next Census.

“In a nation where millions are incarcerated, this is no small accounting glitch,” Cohen writes....“So the inmates help give rural residents and their lawmakers more power without gaining any of the benefits themselves — all at the expense of the urban



Raoul Cunningham, president of the Louisville Branch of the NAACP; League members Nita Smith and Terry Naydan; and Father Pat Delahanty lobby for the restoration of voting rights for felons who have paid their debt to society. Photo by Nita Smith

communities where most of the inmates came from. Only Maine and Vermont are exceptions — there prisoners are specifically counted in their own districts.”

You can read this excellent analysis of “prison-based gerrymandering” online at <http://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/no-county-old-prisoners-one-person-one-vote>.



More than 50,000 Register to Vote in One Day

National Voter Registration Day was a great success! In all, 931 organizations — including the League of Women Voters — registered 56,196 persons to vote in a single day!

The one-day voter-registration drive on Sept. 24 generated more than 700 news stories, even though 2013 was not an election year in most of the states.



2-Day Conference Focuses on Kentucky Health

BY HARIETTE SEILER

Health-care advocates from across Kentucky convened at a two-day conference focusing on the steps needed to improve health in the Bluegrass State.

The Friedell Committee’s fall meeting in Lexington last fall featured speakers from across the nation and the unveiling of a telling study of health inequality.

Kentucky has been lauded for the smooth rollout of its health-care exchange under the Affordable Care Act, Kentucky Kynect, and Governor Steve Beshear’s decision to expand Medicaid in a state in which nearly one out of six residents were uninsured.

Keynote speaker and former University of Kentucky President Lee Todd Jr. recapped a depressing scorecard of “Kentucky uglies”: We lead the nation in smoking-related and cancer deaths and preventable hospitalizations. We are in the top ten in heart disease, obesity, diabetes and workdays lost due to poor mental and/or physical health. Such

poor health leads to higher taxes and makes the state less attractive to companies seeking to relocate.

A study presented at the conference revealed that



Kentuckians’ life expectancy can vary by more than a decade, based on where they lived. The study, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, ranked every county in America by life expectancy, health behaviors, environmental health threats and more. Julie Willems Van Dijk of the University of Wisconsin’s Population Health Institute discussed the ranking of Kentucky counties according to health outcomes, a ranking with Oldham County coming in first and Floyd County coming in last. A Kentuckian’s life expectancy is 73.3 years, nearly three years less than

the national average. In Perry County, it is 68.3 years. In urban Jefferson County, those who live in the East End can expect to live 13 years longer, on average, than those who live in downtown Louisville.

Various speakers proposed solutions to these dire issues. Dr. Gil Friedell, the committee’s founder, proposed treating diabetes, now at epidemic levels in Kentucky, in the same way that contagious diseases are targeted for diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

A panel discussed collaborative efforts between the departments of Education and Health. Speakers described several “get healthier” initiatives being tried in schools. So-called “grab ’n’ go” breakfasts, more exercise, non-food fund raising and walk-a-thons were some of the ideas presented as ways to combat hunger, promote healthy eating, provide adequate nutrition and combat childhood obesity.

“The state ranks among the worst, if not the worst, in almost every major health category, including smoking, cancer deaths, preventable hospitalizations, premature death, heart disease and diabetes,” wrote Governor Steve Beshear in The New York Times.



LWV of Kentucky

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Nominating Committee:

Terry Naydan
Nita Smith

The Voter Editor: Ivonne Rovira

Calendar

Saturday, Feb. 8, 10 a.m.:
League of Women Voters of
Kentucky Board meeting, loca-
tion TBA

Saturday, April 12: League
of Women Voters of Ken-
tucky Board meeting, location
TBA

Saturday, April 12: League
of Women Voters of Ken-
tucky State Council, location
TBA

**Friday through Tuesday,
June 6-10:** League of Women
of the United States, Conven-
tion Dallas, Texas