



The League of Women Voters of Nashville
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CALENDAR

Monday 2/26/07 Issues Committee Meeting, 11:30 a.m. Check Website for location or contact Margie Parsley at 352-7551

Monday 3/05/07 LWVN Board Meeting, 5:15 to 6:45 p.m., at 3322 West End Avenue, 2nd Floor

Board Approves Health Care Position

This Fall the League of Women Voters of Nashville joined other local Leagues in a Health Care study initiated by the LWV of Tennessee. The goal was to develop a statement that addressed issues in broad terms, reflected current concepts and knowledge, and could serve as a basis for local league advocacy and State League advocacy and action.

Consistent with the position of the LWV of the United States, the Nashville proposal sets forth goals and defines appropriate high-quality health care. It also outlines the state role in promoting and providing care in partnership with federal and local governments and other public and private agencies, discusses financing and cost containment, and addresses issues related to equity.

Members who responded to the draft statement indicated strong support for the position and offered thoughtful comments and suggestions for improving the document, many of which were incorporated. Nashville Co-president Margie Parsley, who also serves as state League action chair, stated, "This is an area of great interest to local League members. The Board applauds their engagement in the process." With enthusiastic approval from the LWVN Board the proposed position statement has been forwarded to the State League for action.

League Action Chair and Members Set Priorities for 2007

The League will be active in the 2007 legislation, focusing on the following issues:

- Election Issues and Openness in Government
- Families First—Providing tools and support for families to move off welfare
- Health Care—Ensuring access
- Environmental Issues—Statewide Energy Plan and the Container Deposit Bill
- Early Childhood Education—Extending to more children
- Education—Adequacy issues, funding at-risk students and English Language Learners
- Tax Swap—Reducing the sales tax on food and increasing the cigarette tax

Local concerns of immediate interest will be followed as well:

- Homelessness in Nashville
- The Future of General Hospital

Nine Nashville League members with expertise or interest in these areas met with State League Action Chair Margie Parsley and LWV Nashville Action Chair Karen Weeks to discuss strategies for action on priority issues in the current legislative session. This group will be developing talking points and actively contacting legislators.

In addition to the areas listed above, the League will work with others on legislation that would mandate the use of Voter-Verified Paper Ballots, a goal set by the National League and endorsed by the Nashville Board at the February Board meeting. The League will also be looking at immigration policy as part of the National League study, specifically at issues of particular interest in Middle Tennessee.

These are issues on which we can have an impact. Join in by contacting Margie at mparsley99@comcast.net or 352-7551 or Karen at karenhweeks@comcast.net or 373-3551. The next meeting of the League Issues Committee will be held February 26th at 11:30 a.m.

League Lobbyist Tracks Current Legislation

League lobbyist, Stewart Clifton, provides League members with periodic updates and alerts for action on key issues as the legislative session develops. Nashville League members who receive the Voter by email receive the **Legislative Report** electronically. **To receive the report via US mail for one year**, mail a check for \$15 made payable to “League of Women Voters of Tennessee” to the League Office (Box 158369, Nashville, TN 37215-8369). Non-League members’ subscription rates are \$15/year for email and \$25 for US mail.

JoAnn Bennett Remembered

Nashville paid tribute to JoAnn Bennett as a civic leader in a memorial service conducted by Gene TeSelle in Benton Chapel at Vanderbilt. Mayor Bill Purcell, League members Carole Bucy and Miriam McFadden, Gordon Bonnyman of the Tennessee Justice Center, and her son, Michael offered tributes to her remarkable contributions.

In her leadership of the League of Women Voters—two terms as President of the state League and many years on the Nashville League Board—she raised the League to a new level of credibility, nurturing current leaders and recognizing and encouraging potential ones. An adroit and tactful lobbyist in the state legislature, she taught others how to be effective. Her kitchen table served as the epicenter of strategic activities. As other tributes to JoAnn have poured in, writers have used words like “mentor”, “transformative” and “intellectual leader” to describe her influence on them. Many of her protégés have gone on to serve as leaders in government, legislatures, and non-profit organizations.

JoAnn understood the power of a multi-issue organization, such as the League, to help educate the citizens and influence political decisions for the common good. A fine writer, she wrote an *amicus curiae* brief to the Tennessee Supreme Court in the successful suit challenging the methods for redistricting the State Senate. Her interests extended beyond the League and she served on the boards of the Tennessee Environmental Council, Legal Aid Society, Common Cause, Tennesseans for Fair Taxation, and many other groups. She made a career of civic engagement and the community has benefited as a result.

Thanks to Megan Barry and Sue Bredensteiner

The Board would like to thank Megan Barry for her service on the Metropolitan Council Board of Conduct. Megan is stepping down to run for office. Sue Bredensteiner has agreed to take this position for a 2-year term.

Thank You, Donors, for Your Support of the Nashville League

The League of Women Voters gratefully acknowledges the contributions of its members and friends to our operating fund, education fund, and lobbyist fund. These contributions make possible the services that the League provides to the community and to members. With your support we continue to encourage informed voting based on solid election processes and encourage legislators to address issues that affect us all.

LWVN Board: Karen Edwards and Margie Parsley, Co-Presidents; Lucy Chism, 1st VP; Berdelle Campbell, 2nd VP and Environmental Chair; Mary McLennan, Sec’y; Marian Ott, Treasurer; Carrie Hudson, Voter Services; Barbara Deneke, Voter Services Forum Chair; Rose Rodriguez, Membership; Barbara Mann and Debby Gould, Education; Jen Cole, Human Needs; Karen Weeks, Action; Luvenia Butler, Publicity; Denise Carr, Voter Editor. Jennifer Williams, Office Administrator.

PROPOSED LWVTN POSITION ON HEALTH CARE

Approved by LWV Nashville, January 22, 2007

POSITION: The League of Women Voters of Tennessee believes that an appropriate level of high-quality health care should be available to all Tennessee residents at an affordable cost. Tennessee health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of appropriate care in the least restrictive setting, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total state expenditure level for health care.

APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF HIGH-QUALITY CARE: Every Tennessee resident—regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, health status, or financial capacity—should have access to an appropriate level of high-quality care that includes disease prevention, health and wellness promotion and education; primary care; reproductive, maternal and child care; behavioral health care; acute, urgent and emergency care; and long-term care (including home- and community-based care). Appropriate high-quality health care is care that takes into account the age and health status of the individual; will prevent or ameliorate the effects of a condition, illness, injury or disorder; will aid in the overall physical and mental health of the individual; and will assist in achieving or maintaining functional capacity. Appropriate high-quality health care is care that improves health outcomes based on the best available scientific evidence, professional standards of care, or expert opinion of licensed health care professionals.

STATE ROLE: The League believes that the State of Tennessee, in partnership with federal and local governments and other public and private agencies, has a responsibility to promote and provide care in the following ways:

- Assure access to a basic level of high-quality health care for all Tennessee residents;
- Develop programs to decrease the number of uninsured individuals;
- Foster integrated health care delivery systems and continuity and coordination of care;
- Provide infrastructure for the delivery of preventive and therapeutic services, including those required to protect the public health;
- Provide education and training for health care professionals;
- Provide education on preventive health care and healthy lifestyles to Tennessee citizens.
- Measure and report on the quality of care provided to Tennessee residents.

FINANCING AND COST CONTAINMENT: Until such time as the United States develops a national health insurance plan, the League believes that an acceptable interim step toward such a plan can be instituted. This interim health insurance plan would include coordination of existing public health insurance programs with safety-net services and employer-based, private health insurance plans. Cost containment is essential, but must not impair the quality of care delivered. The efficient and economical delivery of care can be enhanced if both public and private health insurance plans use cost control methods such as:

- Minimizing administrative costs;
- Using evidence-based medicine whenever possible;
- Using best practices in care management, including the management of chronic disease;
- Using utilization review of treatment;
- Using regional planning for optimal allocation of personnel, facilities and equipment;
- Participating in multi-state purchasing pools to reduce health care costs.

EQUITY: The League believes that the ability of a patient to pay for services should not be a primary or deciding consideration in the allocation of health care resources to any individual. Health care services in Tennessee could be more equitably distributed by:

- Standardizing benefits for all state health insurance programs;
- Placing limits on out-of-pocket medical costs paid by health care recipients;
- Allocating medical resources to underserved geographic areas and individuals;
- Assuring care for people with severe or chronic illness or disability;
- Requiring health insurance plans to use community rating instead of experience rating;
- Prohibiting health insurance plans from excluding, limiting or delaying coverage for individuals with pre-existing medical conditions;
- Establishing insurance pools for small businesses and organizations.