



The Chicago Voter

League of Women Voters of Chicago
Website - www.LWVChicago.org

March 2017
Vol. 67 No. 8



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Upcoming Events

LWVIL Issues Briefing

Saturday, March 4
University Center

Membership Committee

Thursday, March 9, 2 pm

Briefing/Open Meeting

Saturday, March 11, 10 am
Room 430

Social Policy/Housing Committee

Tuesday, March 14, 10 am

Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 14, 5:30 pm

State of the City Committee

Wednesday, March 15, 10 am

Chicago in Focus

Tuesday, March 28, 5 to 7 pm
Union League Club

Meetings in the LWVChicago Conference Room unless listed otherwise

Please check the web site LWVChicago.org for additional scheduled committee meetings. Call 312-939-5949 or [email](mailto:) for meeting locations.

A Year of Action

President's Message

Dear League Members,
On February 14, the League of Women Voters of the United States had its 97th birthday. The League was founded in Chicago to help new women voters learn how to make democracy work. It's interesting that the League's mission is more relevant now than at almost any time since suffrage. We have work to do.



We've already been working hard. In February alone, League members have met with state legislators about the structure of the Chicago Public Schools, organized a candidate forum for the 4th Ward aldermanic election, attended a briefing on the Chicago city budget and a **Chicago in Focus** event on the city's planning process, and begun collecting data on city offices and commissions – among many other things!

So it's been a busy year, with more to come: the LWVIL Issues Briefing on March 4, a **Chicago in Focus** discussion on getting started on a run for office on March 28, and a host of committee meetings. The League year ends on June 30, so we are making plans for next year, too: more programs, more trainings, more ways for League members to get involved in making our government work for its people.

On top of that, we have a centennial celebration to plan! Not only is it an important time to be part of the League, it should be a fun time, too. We appreciate your enthusiasm and support.

Annie

Public Education Funding



Public Education Funding, the topic for the Briefing/Open Meeting on Saturday, March 11 at 10 am in Room 430, is in the headlines daily. The Governor's commission on public education funding has recently called for \$3.5 billion more funding over ten years, and a possible additional \$2.5 billion, but without details. They added that new money should be targeted first to underfunded districts. The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is in financial crisis, though the Governor has charged it is artificial, in spite of several downgrades from the rating agencies and desperate and expensive loans. CPS has filed suit against the Governor and the State on the basis that the state aid formula is violating the civil rights of its overwhelmingly minority student body. We will have an expert on all these matters, Ralph Martire, Executive Director of Center for Budget and Tax Accountability, bring us up to date on the problems, the solutions, and what we can do as citizens.

After this meeting attendees are invited to stay for about an hour to discuss opportunities for action. Watch your emails for details. Please let us know if you plan to attend either or both meetings. Contact the office by [email](mailto:) or phone 312-939-5949.

FEBRUARY EVENTS

What's Up at the Chicago Department of Planning and Development?



Quite a lot!

On February 23 David Reifman, Commissioner for the Department of Planning and Development (DPD), gave a whirlwind overview of his department to about 50 attendees at the **Chicago in Focus**

series cosponsored by LWVChicago and the Union League Club of Chicago. DPD oversees all city functions pertaining to economic development, land use, building and workforce development, and urban planning in order to provide a holistic approach.

Downtown

Mr. Reifman said that the department has a strong focus on neighborhood development but downtown is clearly the economic engine that drives all development in the city and surrounding area. Over the past several years, 33 companies have moved their headquarters to the downtown area. A key reason is accessibility to the rest of the United States, and, indeed, the world as a result of the proximity of O'Hare and Midway Airports. One of the mayor's recent announced goals is to create an express train to O'Hare to compete with similar transportation options found in other world cities.

Public Transportation

Public transportation is a key focus for the Mayor, Mr. Reifman explained, because if people spend less money on cars, they have more money to spend on other aspects of life. Developers are allowed greater heights and densities for projects built by transportation stations. The normal requirement to provide parking can be eliminated entirely. New elevated transit stations have been added to meet needs and drive further development: the Morgan station in the West Loop and the McCormick Place/Cermak station, which were financed through tax incremental funding (TIF). A Lake and Damen station on the Green Line has recently been announced to fill in a long stretch between Ashland and California and should have positive impacts for the Kinzie industrial corridor, the area around the United Center, and be a general spur to the neighborhood. As a result of recent state legislation, the city has created transit TIF districts along the Red and Brown Lines to help fund upgrades that are expected to cost \$2.1 billion.

Neighborhood Development

The city has long had a policy in place to allow downtown developers to obtain "density bonuses" in return for adding setbacks, arcades, and public art. Now a developer can receive a density bonus by making a monetary contribution for Neighborhood Opportunity

Bonds: 80% of the funds are directed to development projects in under-served neighborhoods, including grocery stores, restaurants, and cultural facilities; 10% to repair of landmarked buildings throughout the city; and 10% to the neighborhood where the project is located. Some key neighborhood development projects cited by Mr. Reifman include Englewood Square, a \$20 million commercial development at 63rd and Halsted that includes a Whole Foods; the new Whole Foods warehouse facility in Pullman; and the Method Factory in Pullman which has the world's largest green roof.

Industrial Development

DPD is relooking at industrial corridors to reflect current realities, including the one on the North Branch of the Chicago River. While still in the midst of holding community meetings, it is likely the area may be redefined to include some mixed use, including residential, commercial, and parks and trails. Having seen the benefits of good architectural design at the Chinatown library, the DPD is working with the Chicago Housing Authority on 3 housing projects that will include libraries. Nine architect finalists are in the running to design the projects.

Residential Use

Following the 2008 economic crisis vacant land and buildings became a problem in a number of city neighborhoods. To start to address the problem, the DPD runs the Large Lot program where lots can be sold for \$1 in selected neighborhoods to property owners, block clubs and non-profit groups on the block for residential use, including community gardens, enlarging the lot of adjoining homes, or beautification projects. Under city ordinance, any residential project of more than 10 units that receives city contributions or a density bonus or is a downtown planned development must make 10% of the units available at affordable prices or pay a fee. Currently, about \$10 million/year is generated from these fees, which support the homeless, including single-room occupancy housing.

Public and Private Projects

At the close of his prepared remarks, Mr. Reifman quickly mentioned a number of major private projects being built now, including the Wanda Vista Tower (designed by Studio Gang, which will be the 3rd tallest building in Chicago), the new residential towers along Grant Park by world renowned architects Rafael Vonoly and Helmut Jahn, the makeover of the base of Willis Tower, the Riverline Project that will include housing and green public space on 14 acres of vacant land along the South Branch, the redevelopment of the Old Post Office, and the land marking of the Johnson Publishing building. Mr. Reifman concluded, "It is an exciting time in Chicago, and I am fortunate to be heading up the DPD with all that is going on now." - **Pris Mims**

Breakfast & Orientation a Success!

Next One Scheduled for April 22

The New & Prospective Member Breakfast and Orientation was a “sell-out” on February 4. With more



people wanting to attend than the room could hold, and new members continuing to join, the LWVChicago Board and Membership

Committee have scheduled another event for **Saturday, April 22**, at Aqua. Details will follow.

Fifty members and prospective members received information about the different levels of the League and the ways they could become involved while enjoying breakfast provided by the Board and Membership Committee. Among the speakers were LWVIL President Mary Kubasak, LWVChicago President Annie Logue, and LWVChicago members active in the Cook County and Lake Michigan Leagues. LWVChicago Committee and Activity Chairs, or their representatives, also explained what their groups are doing.

The program was fast-paced as each person had two minutes to present. But the attendees’ interests were piqued as the majority of attendees signed up to learn more about the League Committees and activities and several prospective members have since joined.

Welcome to New Members

*Sarah Bornstein
Michelle Clark
Yvonne Fawell
Katherine Feekin
Sally Fletcher
Lee Haas
Barbara Ifshin
Millie Juskevics
Barbara Lanctot
Lindsay Landsberg
Alyce Langbein
Catherine Mardikes
Janet Messmer
Mary Ellen Monzella
Jo-Elle Munchak
Sarah Rubin
Barbara Schmidt
Julie Shelton
Denise Stewart
Sarah White
Halley Williams*

Next Chicago in Focus



Political consultant Mia Phifer will share her secrets about fundraising, campaign training and management, and provide advice to citizens on ways they can become more effectively involved.

See the **CiF** flyer on page 8 of this **Chicago Voter** for details. There is no charge, and all are invited. To ensure, however, that we have a large enough room, please RSVP to the League office, 312-939-5949 or League@LWVChicago.org.

Unit Meetings

Topic: Public Education Funding

Far Southwest Side Unit

Wednesday, March 22 – 7 PM

Home of Katy Cunningham*

Leaders – Marcia Cowing, Betsy Perrine

Hyde Park Unit

Thursday, March 23 – 1:30 PM

Montgomery Place

Leaders – Susan Hamburger, Dorothy Scheff

Loop Unit – afternoon

Wednesday, March 15 – 1:30 PM

LWVChicago Conference Room

Leader – Carol Ziegeldorf

Loop Unit – evening

Tuesday, March 21 – 5:30 PM

LWVChicago Conference Room

Leader – Margaret Herring

Loop Unit – morning

Thursday, March 16 – 10 AM

LWVChicago Conference Room

Leader – Bernice Fortini

West Side Unit

Sunday, March 19 – 1:30 PM

Third Unitarian Church

301 N. Mayfield, Chicago

Leader – Joan Morton

*For address contact the office

Voter Service

Because of elections in many suburban municipalities, the Chicago Board of Elections is not scheduling regular Deputy Voter Registrar training during March.

The Board will offer training, however, to a group of LWVChicago members on **Tuesday, March 14, 2:30 pm**. Please let [us know](#) by March 6 if you would like to be enrolled in this training. **Helene Gabelnick**

LWV CHICAGO COMMITTEES

Issues/Action



The Issues/Action Committee met for the second time and agreed on a topic for review and action: **Running for Political Office**. We will explore all

the possibilities and ways a person can begin the journey into Chicago politics. Members of the committee will also gather data on the over 100 City of Chicago commissions. If these topics are of interest. RSVP to League@chicagoleague.org or 312-939-5949

Pat Graunke

State of the City



The State of the City Committee continues to prepare for the fundraising luncheon--City Hall and City Council: Is the Balance of

Power Shifting?--to be held on May 2 at the Union League Club. Mary Ann Ahern, the moderator, has been a member of NBC News in Chicago since 1989. The panelists for the event are Ben Joravsky, a staff writer for the *Chicago Reader*, Hal Dardick, a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*, and Mary Mitchell, a columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Issues that may be discussed are the balance of power, effective representation, and how City Council committees work. This will be a very informative program and one you will not want to miss. Remember May 2nd for our State of the City luncheon. The next committee meeting is March 15 at 10 am.

Rae Sokolow

Membership



After a successful New and Prospective Member Breakfast Orientation on February 4, which had a filled-to-capacity attendance (see the article on page 3), the Membership

Committee is planning a second Breakfast Orientation on April 22. If you would like to help plan this event, you are welcome to come to the next committee meeting. Since our membership has had such a surge in growth in

the past few months, the Committee also needs to have a growth spurt. Come join us in making plans for the future of the League. We meet March 9 at 2 pm. Please RSVP to League@LWVChicago.org or 312-939-5949.

Pat Graunke

Communications

The Communications Committee continues its plans to expand the League's social media capabilities and



redesign and redevelop the web site. If you have any suggestions or would like to

participate in these projects, please get in touch at: League@LWVChicago.org or 312-939-5949.

The Communications Committee also hopes to begin preparing sets of issue papers that will help members understand and respond to the current political environment. One series of papers, called Tools You Can



Use, will provide practical guidance; others will present general background information about a topic, with a specific

focus on Chicago and Illinois, and highlight local, state, and national League positions. We want to make these papers timely and relevant; so please let us know the issues that you care most about or find most confusing.

Social Policy/Housing

The tentative agenda for the April 8 Social Policy/Housing Briefing/Open Meeting is the status of CHA's 10 Year Plan for the Transformation of Public Housing (ending with the redevelopment of Lathrop Homes) and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing



(AFFH)--what it means, how it is being applied in Chicago and the suburbs, and how it will fare under the new administration.

Since the date of this meeting is only three days before the 49th anniversary of the enactment of the Federal Fair Housing Act in 1968, which prohibits discrimination in housing and fosters fair housing for recipients of Federal funds, it is a good time to review the situation.

The next committee meeting will be Tuesday, March 14 at 10 am. All are welcome.

Herb Ziegeldorf

Call for Nominations for the LWVChicago Board and Nominating Committee

At the Annual Meeting on June 17 members of LWVChicago will elect Officers and Directors for the 2017-2018 League year.

Current officers whose terms expire:

Vice-President: Esta Kallen
Secretary: Alice Perlin
Treasurer: Pat Vogtman

Directors whose terms expire:

Nancy Brandt
Bernice Fortini
Rae Sokolow

Officers continuing:

President: Annie Logue
Vice-President: Jill Althage

Directors continuing:

Helene Gabelnick, Pat Graunke, Margaret Herring, Cathy Potkay and Karen Sandrick

The offices that are to be filled are: Up to three Vice-Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer. There can be a maximum of 12 elected directors. All terms are two-years. In addition, three members of the nominating committee are elected for a one-year term.

Below is the application form for recommendations for

these positions. You may nominate more than one member, but please fill out a form for each person. Please have the consent of the nominee before you submit the recommendation. You may nominate yourself as well – you are encouraged to do so.

The League is a working organization and this is a working board. Board members are expected to attend the Annual Meeting and Board meetings and participate in Board and LWVChicago activities. Specific duties are delineated in the bylaws. These may be viewed on our [website](#). The Nominating Committee notifies members of openings for officers and the directors. This committee recruits nominees, informs nominees of the responsibilities of the position and presents a slate of nominees to all members thirty days prior to the Annual Meeting. Members may also nominate candidates from the floor at that meeting. Questions? Please [contact](#) the office.

JOIN US! We are looking for energetic members like you! Please return the form below by mail or [email](#) to the LWVChicago office by March 17.

Nominating Committee: Marcia Dillon, Tana Durnbaugh and Helene Gabelnick

Application for the LWVChicago Board or Nominating Committee

If you would like to nominate an LWVChicago member to the Board or the Nominating Committee, please complete the form below. If you would like to serve, nominate yourself! Be certain to obtain the nominee's consent to be nominated.

For Vice-President there are up to three vacancies for two-year terms.

For Secretary there is one vacancy for a two-year term.

For Treasurer there is one vacancy for a two-year term.

For Directors there can be a maximum of 12. There are 5 continuing directors. Directors are elected for two-year terms.

For the Nominating Committee there are three vacancies for one-year terms.

Please provide the following information for each nominee:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

- What background/experience will the nominee bring to the Board or Nominating Committee?
- In which topic(s)* does the nominee have an interest? _____
*Topics: Action, Chicago Government, Chicago in Focus, Communication, Education, Environment (land use), Fundraising, Health Care, Membership, Observing, Social Policy/Housing, Voter Service
Other _____

Person completing form _____

Contact information _____

INTERVIEW
IN PROGRESS

Legislative Interviews

Legislative interviews are a recurring League activity. Following each biennial election of legislators, LWVIL requests that local Leagues interview their state representatives and senators. LWVIL prepares questions and background materials, provides instructions and a response form. This year LWVIL has selected the following topics for inquiry: Campaign Finance, Criminal Justice, Education Funding, the Environment, the State Budget, and Health Care.

These are not open-ended interviews. For example, questions involving Criminal Justice ask about the proposal to provide increased rehabilitative services and treatment capacity in high-need communities. This is the first of 27 recommendations in the recent Report of the Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform. The background information provides the text of this recommendation.

LWVIL has posted the questions, instructions, and reporting form on its [web site](#). On the web site, go to Featured Resources and select Legislative Interview Materials. The materials include LWVIL's issue priorities for the Spring 2017 session of the General Assembly.

LWVChicago would like to interview all its legislators. Whether you are a new or a long-time member, please participate in this process. Call the office (312-939-5949), [email](#), or contact us via the web site.

We will coordinate who interviews whom. Ideally, constituents interview their legislators, but this may not be possible for all legislators. Ideally, two League members interview a legislator—one to ask the questions and one to take notes—and the pair jointly prepare the report of the interview.

The values of a legislative interview are many. LWVIL gains a legislator's perspective on issues that are important to LWV and its members and guidance for its action plans. Local Leagues learn about the concerns of its legislators and local issues that require state action. Finally, as an individual League member, you may interview a future governor, US Senator or President. And then you can say: "I met her when her office was a Chicago storefront."

Margaret Herring

Health Care Report

Need for ACA Advocacy

If the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) is repealed it will be devastating for Illinois. Many will lose their health insurance and the state will lose billions of dollars it receives from the ACA and Medicaid funds and to manage the marketplace. We all know that Illinois has serious financial problems. Even Governor Rauner has told Congress that repealing the ACA without an adequate replacement would be a bad thing.



LWVIL is involved with a coalition of advocacy and social service groups and healthcare providers called Protect Our Care Illinois (PoCIL). We are working to prevent the repeal of the ACA without an adequate replacement.

Throughout the state LWV members, especially those in districts whose representatives support repeal, are contacting these legislators, attending meetings, town halls and rallies to express their views. We encourage our members to contact their legislators, even if they support the ACA, to express the view that the continuation of the ACA is important to the citizens of Illinois.

It is also important to obtain positive stories of how people have been helped by the ACA. The [link](#) to use to share consumers' stories is on the Coalition for Health Access (ICHA) website.

Legislation

Currently there are two bills in the Illinois legislature concerning reproductive rights:

HB40 Removes a trigger provision in the 1975 Illinois Abortion law that states if the Supreme Court ever reverses or modifies *Roe v Wade*, Illinois will revert back to its pre *Roe* state, making abortion a criminal act. The bill also requires abortion to be a covered service for women insured by Medicaid or the Illinois State Employees Health Insurance. LWVIL sent a proponent witness slip, and sent TFA to members requesting they ask their Representatives to support the bill. Present status: held on calendar order of second reading - short debate.

SB78 Funding Responsibility Act prevents any public funds be given to any organization that performs abortions even if these funds would not be used for abortion service. Present status: held in Public Health Committee.

Margaret O'Hara

FROM LWVUS

League Opposes End to Voting Agency Passed by US House Panel



Washington, DC - The House Administration Committee recently voted to terminate the federal Election Assistance Commission (EAC), the only federal agency devoted exclusively to improving election administration on a

bi-partisan basis. EAC seeks to ensure the efficacy, reliability, and trustworthiness of our nation's election systems by conducting research, collecting data, and sharing information among elected officials, members of the public, and interested organizations. It was set up by the Help America Vote Act, which was adopted after the controversial presidential election in 2000.

"Rather than eliminating the EAC, Congress should provide the agency with resources and a renewed commitment to sponsoring and encouraging information-sharing among state and local officials, EAC committees, the non-partisan voting rights community, technical experts and others," said League President Chris Carson. "Elections are the life blood of a democracy. The League of Women Voters strongly opposes this legislation." -- Sarah Courtney

FROM LWV COOK COUNTY

Annual Meeting Date Is Set

LWV Cook County will hold its Annual Meeting on Monday, May 8, at the University Center, 525 S. State, Chicago, from 9 am to 1 pm. The League is composed of all members of local Leagues within Cook County. All Chicago League members are invited and will receive their invitations via email and in the April *Voter*. At the Annual Meeting, members will have the opportunity to learn what the League has been doing this past year. In addition, each local league is entitled to a number of delegates, who will be voting on new officers and board members, the budget, and other matters.

The featured luncheon speaker at the meeting will be **Cook County Commissioner Bridget Gainer**, 10th District, which is in Chicago. Com. Gainer spearheaded the creation of and now chairs the Cook County Land

Bank Authority, which seeks to purchase and then sell vacant/abandoned properties to spur development. She also heads up both the Pensions and the Workforce, Housing, and Community Development Committees of the Cook County Board.

In the meantime, want to know what is happening at the Cook County and Metropolitan Water Reclamation Boards? Check out the [Eyewitness Reports](#) on the Cook County League website written by League Observers.

Pris Mims

FROM LWVIL

Program Planning for 2017-19 Is Underway

Local Leagues are making recommendations for on current LWVIL positions, identifying new areas of study or action, and engaging their legislators in dialogue. See the article on Legislative Interviews page 6 to become involved in this project.

FROM LWV LAKE MICHIGAN REGION

Members Support EPA



HR 861, a bill to terminate the Environmental Protection Agency, has been referred to several committees in the House since it was introduced on Feb 3. LWVLMR is proud two of its board members, Judy Beck and Jeanette Neagu, rallied to support the EPA in Chicago. Many existing environmental laws are administered by the EPA, so it is unclear how this bill would work. Keep watching for details.

Remember: LWVLMR will meet Saturday, March 18, 9:30 a.m. in the 4th floor conference room in the League office building, 332 S. Michigan. If you are interested in environmental issues, come to this quarterly board meeting. Visitors are welcome! Please RSVP to League@LWVChicago.org or 312-939-5949.



Chicago in Focus

A quarterly discussion series featuring All Things Chicago

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Chicago and the Union League Club of Chicago

March 28, 2017

From the Starting Block! How to Run for Office in Chicago



Mia Phifer and Associates

**A Political Consultant Shares her Secrets About
*Fundraising, Campaign Training and Campaign Management***

Union League Club
65 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL

5 - 7 p.m.
Doors open at 5 p.m.
Program begins at 5:30

Admission is free, cash bar
Dress: Business casual, no jeans/denim

RSVP to 312-939-5949 or League@LWVChicago.org
Bring a friend!

Coming:
May 11 - Laura Caldwell - Life after Innocence