



Red River Voter

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LWV Web Sites: www.lwvnd.org & www.lwvnmn.org



A look ahead...

GUESTS are always welcome at League meetings!

*First Friday meetings are held at the Sons of Norway Lodge, 722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo. Buffet lunch is available beginning at 11:30 a.m.

- Friday, December 4—First Friday** **12 noon-1 PM**
 Sons of Norway, 722 2nd Ave N, Fargo
 (Buffet lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)
Topic: Update on Fargo Residential Garbage Collection & Landfill
- Friday, January 8—First Friday** **12 noon- 1PM**
 Sons of Norway, 722 2nd Ave N, Fargo
 (Buffet lunch available beginning at 11:30 AM)
Topic: Ghosts of State Conventions—Party Platforms & Resolutions
- Third Tuesday Discussion Group** **5:30-6:30 PM**
Moorhead Public Library
Topic: Exploring Moorhead Library Space Issues
- February 5—First Friday** **12 noon-1 PM**
 Sons of Norway, 722 2nd Ave N, Fargo
 (Buffet lunch available beginning at 11:30 A)
Topic :The 2010 Census —Redistricting & Reapportionment

President's letter

Let me be the first to wish you a Happy 2010. To start off the Holiday season, December's First Friday will help you dispose of all that wrapping paper ecologically by studying Fargo's new solid waste disposal system. In January we will investigate what happens to resolutions and platforms that are decided at party conventions. In February we will become informed as to the importance of the 2010 census and its effect on redistricting at all levels.

We owe thanks to Amy Jacobson and Mary Tintes for their efforts on organizing our successful October 20th Moorhead Candidates Forums. Judy Lee served as the moderator, and there were many excellent questions posed by the people in attendance. On to the Fargo elections in June!

We held our first Third Tuesday meeting on November 17. We will hold another at the Moorhead Public Library small meeting room on January 19, 2010. Hope to see your there and at all the First Friday meetings.

Patti Kratky
Co-president, LWVRRV

Why I am a Leaguer!

I think it was 1998 when I was recruited to join LWVRRV by the great Mary Davies. She invited me to a First Friday and before I knew it I was a board member. I served on the board, including a stint as a Vice-President in charge of First Fridays through 2002 when I resigned to take the job of chair of the Department of Political Science at MSUM. I still participated when I could with Voter Service activities, including being a moderator. I think I agreed to be a moderator in part because I enjoyed having students and others say, "I saw you on TV" as they are broadcast on the public access channel.

I agreed to return to the board in 2006. I forget who talked me into it that time.

What I love best about the League is the dynamic women and men who are part of our organization. These are the sort of people who I would trust to provide me help in an emergency. The reason is simple. These are folks who will get it organized and get it done without expecting much in return. They simply think it is the right thing to do.

To me being in the League is "the right thing to do." The nonpartisan political activities we bring to the area provide much needed opportunities for citizens to hear from candidates; become more knowledgeable on issues; and get a chance to have their voices heard as well. It is a chance for me to practice the important role of political participation required of citizenship. I continually tell my students that this is required for a vibrant representative democracy. I am proud to add my efforts to our activities and encourage all who read this to join in as often as you can.

— Barb Headrick
Vice President, LWVRRV



Official positions of the League of Women Voters of the United States

■ Reproductive Choices

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

■ Health Care Reform

The League believes that quality, affordable health care should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. Furthermore, the League believes that all Americans should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care and mental health care.

Through decades of work in their communities, League members have learned that Americans believe that fairness and responsibility, as well as access, are important values for any health care system. We believe that healthcare reform can only succeed if it takes all these values into account.

Time to set record straight on reform, abortion funding

By: *Renee Stromme, Lois Altenburg and Sureshi Jayawardene Anaman, INFORUM*

Right now in the corridors of power in Washington, D.C., decisions on substantial health care reform are being made – decisions that will have vast impact across North Dakota. Action on this landmark legislation cannot come fast enough for the women and families of our state who are reeling from the impact of the worst recession in our nation’s history and need relief now.

We know the statistics are bad. One in three Americans is uninsured. And according to Families USA, North Dakotans aren’t much better off. In fact, one in four North Dakotans went without health insurance last year. And nearly 85 percent of the uninsured in our state are members of working families. What this means is that roughly 150,000 of our neighbors had to make tough decisions about whether to see a doctor, simply because they lacked health insurance.

With premiums racing past pay increases and more North Dakota families feeling the pressure of the recession and job loss, health care reform seems like a goal that we would all work toward. But some are more concerned with throwing up roadblocks to impede the progress and are attempting to derail reform over the abortion issue. It’s time to set the record straight.

Even though the majority of private insurance companies currently cover the full spectrum of women’s reproductive health care – from maternity benefits to abortion, a vocal minority is demanding that any insurance plan that includes abortion coverage be excluded.

The effect of this would be to severely restrict access to health care for women of reproductive age in North Dakota and across the country. While the rest of the country’s health care security would move significantly forward with the passage of health care reform, women’s health would take two steps back as they lose the benefits they currently have.

To address both pro-life and pro-choice concerns around health care reform, Rep. Lois Capps, D-Calif., drafted a provision that attempts to balance both sides of the issue. Here’s what it does: 1) maintains the current policy of restricting federal funding for abortions and 2) ensures that women won’t lose benefits they currently have and will have access to insurance that covers abortion if they want it. Further, the Capps proposal expressly prohibits the use of federal funds to pay for abortion care.

This is an even-handed compromise supported by people on both sides of the issue. A recent poll by the Mellman Group found that a majority of Americans support this proposal. Pro- life and pro-choice members of Congress support it, too.

While reasonable people disagree over the issue of abortion, no woman wants her health to be the object of political gamesmanship in this debate. That’s why the Capps proposal was created. It’s a common-sense solution to help health care reform move forward with the support of the mainstream on all sides of the issue.

It’s time to put partisan special interest politics aside and work toward a real solution for the one in four North Dakotans who had to go without basic health care coverage for their families last year.

Stromme, Bismarck, is executive director, North Dakota Women’s Network; Altenburg, Fargo, is president, League of Women Voters of North Dakota; Anaman, Fargo-Moorhead, is co-chairwoman, Women’s Network of the Red River Valley.



League applauds U.S. House passage of historic health Care reforms

“Profoundly Disappointed” by Passage of Stupak-Pitts Amendment

Washington, D.C., November 10, 2009

League of Women Voters National President Mary G. Wilson today praised the U.S. House of Representatives for passing the Affordable Health Care for America Act (H.R. 3962) on Saturday.

“The House moved America closer to realizing true health care reforms this weekend by passing this legislation,” said Wilson. “We now have a set of real reforms that provides comprehensive coverage and includes a public insurance option, which we believe is key to ensuring choice and controlling costs.”

“The League was profoundly disappointed, however, in passage of the Stupak-Pitts amendment, which not only prohibits abortion coverage in the government-run plan but prevents any private plan from offering abortion coverage to plan participants if even just one individual in that plan uses government subsidies,” Wilson stated. “It is our hope that the Senate will do the right thing and pass health care reform legislation without such language and with a strong public option.”

“Americans are counting on Congress and the President to end the health care crisis that has brought us skyrocketing costs and an insurance system that leaves millions without coverage,” Wilson said. “The League believes that universal coverage will determine the humanity of our system, and a public option will make that possible for those who cannot obtain coverage through traditional employer-sponsored plans.”

“But universal coverage is not the only possible advantage of the public option,” warned Wilson. “We must control costs, and the public option is the best chance to bring costs down. As a nation, we spend \$1 out of every \$6 we earn on health care. Over the last three decades, increases in the amount we spend on health care have consistently risen faster than wages and inflation.”

Wilson concluded, “The House of Representatives should be commended for taking the first step to achieving comprehensive health care reform. Now the Senate must pass strong health care

reform legislation that guarantees quality, safe and affordable health care to all U.S. residents, including the choice of a public insurance plan.”

■ LWVRRV advocates with Congressional Staff

On, September 8, LWVRRV advocated for H.R. 2454, The Clean Energy and Security Act with a staff member from MN Representative Collin Peterson’s office, Sharon Josephson, and one from MN Senator Amy Klobuchar’s office, Andy Martin.

Diane Wray Williams, Stephanie Goecke, Dave Beauchamp, Llewellyn Hille and Patti Kratky were present. Mr. Hille, of Oxfam America, presented a Talking Points outline. Patti presented the LWV support for the bill and others presented the support of their religious organization. After that discussion, the staff asked for our opinion of the proposed Health Care Reform measures, which we gave. The meeting was very cordial and we felt that our position was heard.

Why I am a Leaguer!



In 1962 I was a young mother with a three-year-old and a one-year-old. We lived in St. Peter, MN which was a community deeply divided into three factions: those whose lives were involved in the work and administration of the state hospital; those whose lives were involved in education at Gustavus Adolphus College; and those who were the town’s people, most of whom were descendants of the founders of that community.

Over coffee one day one of my new friends and I decided to inquire into chartering a LWV. To make a long story short, we went through the process and found that there had been a longing for something that would, not only bring people from these three entities, but would be a challenge for us all. We began with more than double the number of people required for establishing a new league and it turned out to be a great thing for St. Peter. I found fellowship and challenges that I was needing at that time and have never looked back.

The League of Women Voters has been one of the most important groups I serve and after 47 years I still look forward to all we do and learn and provide for our community.

— Alice Hauan

Director, LWVRRV Board

Why I am a Leaguer!

My reason for joining the League was to be of service to an organization that is very valuable to our community. The League provides venues to spread accurate, up-to-date information regarding all aspects of our local and federal governments.

By belonging to the League and becoming an “active” member, I have become a much more informed citizen, especially regarding our causes of child care issues, homelessness, representation of women in politics, and education.

—Portia Danielson
Director, LWVRRV Board



JOIN THE LEAGUE!

Individual: \$50, students: \$15

Send your check to:

LWV RRV

PO Box 295

Fargo, ND 58107-0295

Include your name, address, telephone number
and e-mail address.



2009-2010 LWVRRV Officers

Co-Presidents:

Lois Altenburg, Patti Kratky

First Vice President: *Barbara Headrick*

Second Vice President: *Mary Tintes*

Secretary: *Amy Jacobson*

Treasurer: *Carol Sawicki*

2009-2010 Board of Directors:

*Sharon Benzel, Donna Chalimonczyk,
Portia Danielson, Alice Hauan,
Nancy Jardine, Frank Kratky,*

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages an informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters values diversity in its members. In principle and in practice, the League knows no barriers on the basis of age, creed, disability, gender, national origin, race or sexual orientation, and encourages full participation in and contribution to the organization by all its members.