

# The Kansas Voter



August 2007

League of Women Voters of Kansas

*Working together...for Kansas*

## LWVK Joins Kansas SCHIP Coalition

### League Supports Insurance Plan

On May 30th, the League of Women Voters of Kansas signed an agreement to join the Kansas State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Coalition. The Coalition is made up of more than 50 nonprofit organizations.

The following background information about the SCHIP and the purpose of the Coalition is excerpted from a Kansas Action for Children briefing paper:

"The SCHIP was created ten years ago to provide health insurance to children who were not eligible for Medicaid but whose families are unable to afford private insurance. SCHIP has reduced the number of uninsured children by more than one-third in the last ten years. The original legislation for SCHIP expires at the end of the current federal fiscal year and must be reauthorized by the current congress in order to continue.

"SCHIP funding for HealthWave provides health coverage to more than 35,000 Kansas children. Without our SCHIP funding, Kansas would increase the number of uninsured children by 63%."

The purpose of the Kansas SCHIP Coalition is to give a strong message to the Kansas congressional delegation about the

importance of SCHIP reauthorization at a higher level of funding.

LWVUS supports the SCHIP, as well as League membership in the Kansas SCHIP Coalition. League members are urged to play an active role in the SCHIP reauthorization by communicating with our congressional delegation and submitting letters and opinion pieces to newspapers. A reauthorization brief, talking points, and sample letters are available from the Kansas Action for Children web site: [www.kac.org/SCHIP.html](http://www.kac.org/SCHIP.html)

— Kay Hale, LWVK Board Member

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

•LWVK has a new email: [lwvk@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lwvk@sbcglobal.net).

•LWVK has the same website: [www.lwvk.org](http://www.lwvk.org).

•Paul Johnson, our advocacy consultant in the 2007 Kansas Legislature, will continue to update LWVK members about pending legislation in which we have a stated interest. He does not lobby for our positions; he only apprizes us about information we might otherwise have difficulty obtaining if we do not have representation in the legislature.

•The current LWVK position on Water Resources Management is posted on the website (as are all other positions).

•A set of Guidelines for a State Study or Update is also posted. \_

## 2007-2008 Calendar

Sept. — State League Day – Water Study

Oct. 27 — State Board Meeting

Jan. 26 — State Board Meeting

March 6 — League Day at the Capitol

March 15 — State Board Meeting

April 26— State Council Meeting, Topeka

### Agenda for State League Day September 25, 2007

Supreme Court Room for registration, coffee, and pastries  
9:00 a.m. Opening Remarks  
9:15 a.m. Guest Speaker  
10:15 a.m. Break  
10:30 a.m. Panel Discussion  
12:00 noon Lunch  
1:00–2:00 p.m. Small Group Discussions

The cost of \$20 includes coffee, juice, and pastries in the morning and the noon lunch. Please make checks payable to the League of Women Voters of Kansas and mail to: League of Women Voters of Kansas, 618 S. Kansas Ave., Suite B1, Topeka KS 66603.

# Highlights from LWVUS Council

**Strengthening Our Leaders** was this year's Council theme, and strengthen us it did—all 116 delegates. Committee reports citing actions and progress, a comprehensive budget presentation, knowledgeable and articulate LWVUS and guest speakers, spirited dialogue among thoughtful and intelligent Leaguers all contributed to a Council which informed, inspired and challenged its participants.

## Membership Recruitment

Critical to strengthening League leaders was the emphasis placed on building a visible, active League in the 21st century through the Membership Recruitment Initiative, or MRI. Launched as a one year pilot project in 2006, LWVUS worked closely with five pilot Local Leagues in an intensive effort to build membership through monthly phone talks and activity suggestions. Several participants from the project recalled with both humor and frustration the pressure imposed by LWVUS staff to comply and meet deadlines, but all agreed the strategies worked and their Leagues grew 10% or more.

Key findings were:

1. Communicating concisely and consistently what the League is about is crucial to success.
2. Asking works. Leagues that explicitly invite members of the target audience (educated women 50-65 years old) see results.
3. Forming partnerships with other community organizations gains visibility.
4. Persistence with their outreach to local media brought more visibility.
5. The pilot program focused leaders on a common goal and brought new energy and excitement to their boards.

## Advocacy

Kansas LWVUS Liaison, Judy Duffy, delivered the Advocacy Report, noting the 110th

Congressional Lobbying Visits focused on D.C. Voting Rights in House; Presidential financing in Senate; Lobbying reform legislation in House; Senate public financing in Senate; D.C. Voting Rights in Senate. LWVUS legislative priorities for the coming year will be: campaign finance reform; civil liberties; DC voting rights; election administration; ethics and lobbying reform; global climate change; health care reform.

To discover different perspectives about immigration policy, I would encourage you to go to [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org), click on Members Only, and then on Immigration. There you can see and hear the three panelists who spoke at the Immigration Policy in the 21st Century Forum as they offered insightful perspectives to consider in our two year immigration study. It's not as good as being there, but it's better than just reading about it.

## Impartial Justice

"Protecting Our Rights, Protecting Our Courts," was a presentation led by two judges committed to educating the public about fair and impartial courts. They

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*Asking works. Have you asked someone to join the League lately?*

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focused on the problem of increasing influence on judges by other branches of government, the press, or the public directly. They stressed that judges must be servants of the law and the constitution, not of special interest groups. If your League is interested in learning more about this issue, I would be happy to share a CD with the above title and a book entitled, *The New Politics of Judicial Elections*.

The LWVUS 2007 Council, led with grace and dignity by President Mary Wilson, continued its famed tradition of providing the best in leadership training. \_

## 2007 Interim Topics

The Legislative Coordinating Council has approved six special committees to study over 35 different topics.

The special committees included:

- 1) Assessment and Taxation;
- 2) Energy, Natural Resources, and Environment;
- 3) Federal and State Affairs;
- 4) Financial Institutions and Insurance;
- 5) Judiciary; and
- 6) Transportation.

Further, the Council identified 25 additional topics for study by statutory joint committees or commissions. Included in the list of approved studies that may be of particular interest to League are: Public Smoking in Kansas; Health Care Tax Credits and Benefits; Mental Health Services for the Elderly; and Reimbursement for Mental Health Services. \_

## DC Voting Rights Quiz

— True or False

1. Washington, DC, is just a city.
2. The framers of the U.S. Constitution intended to deny District residents congressional voting rights.
3. DC citizens pay federal and local taxes even though they have no voting representation in Congress.
4. The population of DC is not large enough to have representation.
5. People who live in DC have more influence because they are closer to the President and Congress.
6. Americans can have their civil rights denied depending on where they live in the United States. \_

*Answers on page 4*

## SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL LEAGUES

■ **Emporia:** ELWV Helps Emporia Celebrate 150 Years.

Emporia XPs (ex-presidents) has a history of meeting to solve world and community problems (and to drink a little wine). This group accepted the Chamber of Commerce invitation for floats for the Fourth of July parade, which celebrated Emporia's sesquicentennial. Ideas were plentiful. The Board accepted the theme of "Voting—past, present, and future."

Planning began. The Wichita League loaned us their suffragette costumes. A rancher-member provided the truck and trailer. The county clerk, also a member, let us use old voting booths and a current voting machine. School district USD 253 loaned laptops. A talented new member planned the decorations and made the signs. Many Leaguers pitched in to decorate the float, and to ride or walk in the parade.

Three women led off carrying the League of Women Voters of Emporia banner. Four "suffragettes" followed, with signs advocating for women's right to vote. They yelled "votes for women" as they walked.

On the float were two voting booths from the past days of paper ballots; a touch-screen machine, which is the way we vote now; and four middle-school children with laptops, representing the likely mode of voting in the future. Several League members on the float played the roles of voters and poll workers.

We were received with cheers and "thumbs-up signs" by parade viewers. This was a fun experience that reminded members of our purpose, created a sense of solidarity, and made the community aware of the League. A bonus was having a colored picture of our float on the front page of *The Emporia Gazette!* \_

■ **Wichita:**

Pat Dooley addressed the County Commissioners regarding

the Sedgwick County Voter Coalition's very serious concerns over the 70% reduction in polling places and its implications for the 2008 presidential election. League also submitted a supplemental budget to add to the Election Commissioner's proposed budget to add 20 more polling sites. The *Wichita Eagle* reported their remarks. They plan to continue pressing their issue at a meeting with Bill Gale, Election Commissioner, and another meeting with Ron Thornburgh, Secretary of State.

League Book Club holds its open-to-the-public gatherings at Rockwell Library each third Thursday evening. Last month they read about teaching evolution in public schools, and invited a speaker from Wichita University's Elliott School of Communication to present a program on how mass media have portrayed Kansas during the recent flap over the Kansas Board of Education's



actions. This fall they are working with the Wichita Library and the Association of University Women in a series of special programs on the "Lost Boys of the Sudan." \_

■ **JOHNSON COUNTY**

This fall League is inviting the community to explore how their local government works by attending "LOCAL GOVERNMENT MADE EASY," a five-session course led by experienced government teachers and former government officials. Co-sponsored by the Johnson County Library, the two-hour classes held every two weeks will enable attendees to become better acquainted with the workings of their city, county, school board, and court system. In the fifth session, "Meet the Press," members of the press will explain how the media report on local government.

Cooperating with the public library, we see this program as a key opportunity to educate citizens about their democratic government as well as to recognize the value of League of Women Voters—and of course, to



attract new members. \_

## Education Funds Available to Local Leagues

The LWVK will help to fund Local League expenses for Voter Service or Public Education activities. These grants from the LWVK Education Fund will provide a 50% match, up to \$300. The LWVK has already matched expenses for Guides to Government and Voter Guides for Naturalization Ceremonies.

For more information, contact Leonore Rowe, LWVK Treasurer. \_

## Answers to DC Voting Rights Quiz

1. False. DC is most accurately described as a District. The DC government is responsible for most jobs of a city, county, and state. DC runs a police force, school system, and is treated as a state in more than 500 federal laws.

2. False. Times were different when the Constitution was written. At that time, the federal government needed the state for protection if there was a revolt. That was why the federal government had to have control over DC. The record shows that the founders were concerned about the rights of District citizens and left open the possibility that future generations could address the inequity.

3. True. DC citizens pay about \$5 billion per year in District taxes. The money is sent to Congress and is given back to DC to pay for the city's budget.

4. False. All states, regardless of size, have equal representation in the Senate. In the House of Representatives, representation is determined by population size. DC has a larger population than Wyoming.

5. False. Residents of the District of Columbia are not constituents of any member of Congress and have less access to them.

5. True. Unlike the 50 states, Congress has complete control over DC's laws. Not only does Congress create the federal laws by which district residents must abide, it can also change DC's local budget and cancel any law it does not agree with. DC citizens are denied equal representation in Congress. They have no voice in the legislative body that determines its laws and budget.

TELL CONGRESS THAT LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS SUPPORTS DC VOTING RIGHTS! \_

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P E	<p>The <i>Kansas Voter</i> is published by the President of Women Voters of Kansas, a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. LWVK is affiliated with the League of Women Voters of the United States and with local Leagues in Kansas communities.</p>
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