



The League of Women Voters of Nashville
 P. O. Box 158369
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 www.LWVnashville.org

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March 2008

Calendar of Events

The League sponsors meetings and events for the public as well as for League members.

| Date | Time | Place | Description |
|------------------------------|------------|--|--|
| Monday, March 10 | 11:30 a.m. | PENCIL Foundation, 421 Great Circle Blvd. From Rosa Parks Blvd, turn right on Athens Way, then left on Great Circle. | State Action Committee , brown bag. The committee meets every two weeks (March 24 meeting will be at home of Berdelle Campbell, 1217 5 th Ave North) |
| March & April TBA | | TBA | League and NPT "Next Door Neighbors" small group discussions |
| Monday, April 7 | 5:15 p.m. | Looby Library, 2301 Rosa Parks Blvd. 37219 | LWV Nashville Board Meeting |
| Saturday, May 3 | | Holiday Inn Express, Lebanon, Tennessee | LWVTN Spring Council. |

From the President—Margie Parsley

In partnership with Nashville Public Television, the League will host a **Community Engagement Initiative "Next Door Neighbors."** We will convene one or two small group sessions of interested League members to discuss Nashville's response to its changing demographic based on the influx of immigrants and refugees. Though illegal immigration is a topic of the discussion, it is not the primary focus of this initiative. This program will provide another opportunity for League members to discuss topics raised in our recent Immigration Consensus process. We hope you will join us. Watch for details.

The new **LWVTN Health Care Position**, recently adopted by the state League board, incorporates much of the fine work done by Nashville League members a year ago. Our new health care position is accessible at www.LWVNashville.org under Issues, State. You will notice an emphasis on providing community- and home-based **long term care**, also reflected in the Governor's recent initiatives.

Our thanks to Judy Raines who hosted a very successful **New Member Recruitment Party** in February. Former Nashville and State League President, Deana Claiborne, gave a terrific presentation on the work of the League and Stewart Clifton led a discussion of League issues. We extend a warm welcome to new members Ashley Briaas, Nancy Leach, and Dorothy Shelton. Finally, we extend our thanks to members and others who made financial contributions to the League in calendar year 2007.

State Action Committee Works for League Priorities

The **State Action Committee** continues its work analyzing bills now working their way through the General Assembly related to League priorities listed in the January-February issue of the Voter. You should be receiving the weekly **Legislative Update**, typically on Monday, provided by Stewart Clifton. It offers a concise summary of the issue and the status of the bill, as well as suggestions regarding what you can do during the week to support the League positions. To participate, contact Mparsley99@comcast.net or KarenHWeeks@comcast.net.

Our thanks to the hard-working **members** of this committee, including Berdelle Campbell, Barbara Deneke, Karen Edwards, Debby Gould, Reba Holmes, Marian Ott, Margie Parsley, Past Post, Karen Weeks and Carol Westlake. We also have members from three other Leagues. In addition, a number of Nashville League members serve as resource persons to the committee. League members Thelma Kidd, Deborah Narrigan, and Phil Schoggen have been particularly successful in organizing the entire state in support of **Paper Ballots** to ensure the integrity of our electoral process. See the Tennessee Voter Confidence Act, SB 1363 Haynes, HB 1256 Moore—both are Nashville legislators—that was featured in the January-February Voter. Marian Ott has been our lead person on **Open Meetings and Open Records**, a top priority for the year. See the story below.

Please let us know if you can help us by visiting legislature and attending committee meetings. Twice a month, Stewart Clifton and Margie Parsley will be available in the Legislative Plaza cafeteria in the morning (Tuesday or Wednesday—to be announced on our web site and in the Voter) to give guidance on needed action. Access the weekly **Legislative Update** at the LWV-TN web site, www.lwv-tn.org under publications. Members receive the Update free via email. It's also available via US mail; send \$10.00 to the League office.

Looking Ahead to 2008-2009

In preparation for the **Annual Meeting in May**, we will be revising the Nashville League's **Program of Service**, which currently includes positions on Education, Environment, Electoral Process, Health Care, Human Needs, and Metro Government. Please take a moment to review the current program at www.LWVNashville.org under Issues, Nashville. If you have suggestions for revisions or additions, please contact Karen Weeks at KarenHWeeks@comcast.net or 373-3551. This is your opportunity to help us choose a direction for the coming year and beyond.

To enact chosen goals, we need to select a Board. The **Nominating Committee**, chaired by Tommy Morton-Young, is seeking candidates for President, First Vice President, and Secretary as well as four Board members who will hold portfolios in areas such as Membership, Voter Services, and various program areas. If you are interested in serving on the Board, have questions about any of the Board positions, or would like to nominate someone, please contact Tommy Morton-Young at 229-5626 or aagen1@bellsouth.net or Karen Weeks.

Open Meetings and Open Records

Issues related to open government have been on the front page for several months. Three different bills have been proposed. The first, SB 3275 McNally, HB 3636 McDaniel, includes the study committee's recommendations; creates the office of ombudsperson; makes changes in the Open Meetings Law, including a provision that would weaken it by allowing up to three officials of a body to meet privately to discuss public business; and generally strengthens the Open Records Law.

The second bill, SB 3280 McNally, HB 3637 Mc Daniel—and preferred by McNally—omits some of the weakening provisions in SB 3275 but adds several other exemptions including allowing private meetings when school boards are evaluating the school director's performance and when city councils or county commissions are discussing the sale or purchase of property. The League's position on the first two bills is to support the positive open record changes but to oppose the negative open meetings changes.

The third bill, SB 3593 Burchett, HB 3945 Lynn, makes some needed improvements to the existing Open Meetings Act; includes more controls (no votes allowed) on what can happen inside executive sessions that are currently allowed by law; and requires that minutes be kept and made public without the information the executive session is designed to protect. It also includes the Open Records improvements. This bill was drafted by the Tennessee Council on Open Government headed by Frank Gibson and requested by Knox County citizens. Marian Ott is the League's representative on this group. The League supports this bill.

TCOG and representatives of cities, counties, and school boards have agreed not to pursue changes this year in the open meetings law but to continue talking beyond this legislative session. Sen. McNally is expected to present only SB 3280 with public records improvements and the ombudsperson but minus any changes to the sunshine (open meetings) law. TCOG feared that proceeding this year could result in weakening current law.

The LWVN Board, 2007-2008: Margie Parsley, President; Lucy Chism, 1st VP; Berdelle Campbell, 2nd VP; Mary McLennan, Secretary; Marian Ott, Treasurer; Barbara Deneke, Environment; Debby Gould and Barbara Mann, Education; Reba Holmes, Metro Government; Karen Weeks, Action; Jan Bossing, Voter Editor; and Judy Raines, Office Administrator.