

The Kansas Voter



March 2008

League of Women Voters of Kansas

Working together...for Kansas

Your League in Action

■ League Advocates

Restoring Mental

Health Funding

On January 26th, the LWVK Board of Directors considered the cuts to Kansas state mental health funding proposed in the Governor's FY 2009 Budget. In addition, the Board of Directors received reports from the Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas and the Kansas Mental Health Coalition. The reports provided ample evidence that the proposed funding cuts would negatively impact mental health care in Kansas communities.

In response, the Board adopted a two-part action strategy. The first action was for League to participate in the Mental Health Advocacy Day held at the Legislature on February 20th. The second action is for the League to send a letter to Kansas state legislators. That letter appears below:

Dear Legislator.

Are you aware of the drastic cuts to mental health care proposed in the Governor's FY 2009 budget? If these reductions are implemented, many communities across Kansas will be significantly impacted.

The funding cuts the League of Women Voters of Kansas will address in this letter are as follows:

- State Grants to Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) \$15.8 Million total cut over FY 2007 funding.
- Prescription Mental Health Drugs for

MediKan – \$7.9 Million cut (formulary proposed).

- Therapeutic Preschool (\$1 Million) and School Violence Prevention (\$228,000) - \$1.228 Million total cut.
- Staffing for the 30 beds at Osawatomie State Hospital that the legislature funded in FY 2008 – is not included in the FY 2009 budget - (\$3 Million cost).
- Prescription Network of Kansas Program-- no new funding.

On April 28, 2007, the League adopted a statement of policy on Mental Health Care in Kansas. The statement contains a recommendation that "stable funding should be ensured to providers in the public mental health system." The proposed cuts listed in the preceding paragraph do not represent stable funding to providers. If these cuts are implemented we believe they would negatively impact mental health care in Kansas.

The results for communities in your district could be:

- Less access to mental health services
- More admissions to hospital emergency rooms
- More admissions to state hospitals
- More contact with law enforcement and increase in jail admissions
- More homelessness and deterioration of physical and mental health.

We respectfully ask that you consider these negative effects and vote to eliminate the funding cuts for mental health care proposed in the

Governor's FY 2009 state budget. Please contact me if you have any questions about our request.

Sincerely yours,
Diane Kuhn, State President 3

LWVK Council

We the People

April 26, 2008 in Topeka

See the registration form on page 5.

Hawver to Speak at Council

Martin Hawver will speak to the State Council meeting. According to his web site, he is "Dean of the Kansas Statehouse Press Corps, having covered the beat longer than any other current Statehouse reporter." He worked for the *Topeka Capital-Journal* for 25 years, starting as a copy boy and working up to Kansas Statehouse reporter. Marvin and his wife, Vickie Griffith Hawver, are owners of Hawver News Company. Vickie is also a former *Capital-Journal* reporter and editor.

Martin and Vickie publish an electronic news service (*Hawver's Capital Report*) that covers legislative activity. Martin claims to have the "inside scoop on the complicated issues, management crises, personality clashes, gossip and behind-the-scenes on the floors of the house and Senate." Marvin says he spends most of his time at the Kansas Statehouse and, as an unrelated point of interest, he doesn't wear socks. We look forward to his comments. 3

League Conventions – 2008 and 1922

On June 13, hundreds of League members will be landing in Portland, Oregon, airports and hundreds more will be looking for places to park their cars as they arrive for the 48th annual League Convention. Expectations will be high and enthusiasm contagious as Leaguers gather to take care of League business, elect officers, and choose program. Events and meetings will be scheduled from early morning to late in most evenings. Both planners and participants will be using the latest 21st century technology to communicate and to educate about the serious issues to be addressed.

Networking will be constant as Leaguers from around the country share and compare, argue and agree. Attending a national Convention really brings about a complete understanding of what League is and does.

And so it did back in 1922, even though times were far different. The following is an edited report from the April 18, 1922, Des Moines, Iowa *Evening Tribune* about their local League's trip to the third annual convention of the National League of Women Voters and the Pan-American Conference of Women convening in Baltimore, Maryland, from April 24–29.

“Several Des Moines and Iowa leaders....will leave this evening to join the large delegation in Chicago Wednesday and make the trip in a special train to the convention city. A luncheon will be extended by the fifth regional delegates to the wives of the Iowa representatives and senators in Baltimore, April 24.

Mrs. Nathan E. Kendal, wife of Iowa's governor, will serve as hostess for Iowa on Washington Day when a special train will convey delegates and visitors to the national capital where state delegations will meet their senators and congressmen and visit the galleries of the senate and house.

A luncheon will be served by Washington hostesses at 1;30 o'clock and at 3 o'clock a tea will be given at the Pan-American building. Another jaunt will be that to the United States Naval Academy where the visitors will be welcomed by the governor of Maryland at Annapolis. A reception at the White House to the Pan American and League convention delegates and alternates will be the concluding feature.”

It is regrettable that the newspaper did not choose to report on any of the substantive issues of the convention.³

McMillen Nominated to LWVUS Board of Directors

Kansas again will be in the LWVUS spotlight at the 2008 Convention. As Donna Lauffer, Johnson County, retires from the LWVUS Board, Janis McMillen, LWVK past President 2003–2007, will be on the slate of nominees to serve on the 2008–2010 LWVUS Board of Directors. This gives Kansas leaguers one more good reason to travel to Portland for the Convention June 13–17.

With a B.S. from Trinity University in San Antonio and a Ph.D. in Microbiology from Kansas University, Janis worked for 30 years in the animal health industry doing research and development on vaccines and licensed the first genetically engineered vaccine for the veterinary industry. She continues to do consulting in the regulatory area for animal health companies.

Janis has a long history of commitment to the League. Joining in 1993, she has served on the Johnson County Board for three years as Voter Editor, two years as Treasurer, and two years as Co-President. She started on the State Board as a lobbyist, then as Lobby Corps Coordinator, and finally as President

for four years. She also serves presently as President of MAINstream Coalition.

Johnson County League can be very proud of Janis and her many contributions to League locally and statewide. Now she moves on to share her skills and talents nationally. Go, Janis! We're with you all the way! ³

New Tool to Check Your Legislators' Votes

In mid-February, the League announced a new tool for researching congressional votes for the first session of the 110th Congress (2007), listing House and Senate votes on key good-government issues. This tool, searchable by member of Congress as well as by issue area, includes key votes on LWVUS legislative priorities and should assist members in advocacy. Check it out by visiting lww.org and clicking “Take Action.”

Here are some helpful tips for using the votes list:

1. Thank your members of Congress who voted the right way, and encourage those who didn't to reconsider their position on key good-government issues.
2. When lobbying in the future, research how your member(s) of Congress voted on key LWVUS issues.
3. Customize a press release template for local use—and let your community know how their elected officials are doing in Washington.

Contact Christine Vamvas at cvamvas@lww.org with any questions related to the list.

The purpose of this resource is not to “grade” or “score” members of Congress, but instead to provide an accurate listing of key federal votes. ³

Idea Exchange



Each League has tried a new program this year, reached out to another partner in the community, or just done the “same old thing” with a different twist. Why not share those ideas that worked (or even a funny story about one that didn’t) with other Kansas Leagues? All of us are looking for creative ways to attract new members to League, to involve all our members, to strengthen relationships with other like-minded civic organizations, and to gain exposure with the press. Below are projects from Wichita and Johnson County that might just work in any League.

i Wichita had a “Help Wanted” ad in their Voter asking for mentors for new members. What a great idea to help ease new members into understanding how our organization operates and enable them to find their niche and use their skills to strengthen League.

i Johnson County League is working with the Blue Valley School District and the Johnson County Election Office to distribute “Welcome New Voter” bags to all seniors who are 18 or will be turning 18 during the school year. League members will assemble contents which will include: a letter of congratulations from League and the school district, a voter registration form and envelope with election office address, two small League publications with voter information, a small flag, and candy. Approximately 1600 students will receive a bag that celebrates their new right and privilege. Although the program was not scheduled to begin until next fall, one principal has requested that the League deliver the celebratory bags to his school in mid-May. This project offers a unique opportunity to encourage responsible voter

participation among young people and perhaps their parents as well. 3

Spotlight on Local Leagues

■Manhattan

The Manhattan League has recently featured two dynamic women guest speakers at the February and March Lunch With League informational luncheons. Dr. Myra Gordon spoke about diversity and inclusion Tuesday, Feb. 12. Dr. Gordon is Associate Provost for Diversity and Dual Career Development at K-State. She pointed out that people from many different cultures and backgrounds are making significant contributions, and cultivating a welcoming environment is increasingly critical for a successful society. Gordon said there were at least five main places where people deserve to feel welcome: where they go to school, where they shop, where they live, where they work, and where they worship. Although attitudes have changed over the years, there is still plenty of room for behavioral improvements.

USD 383 School Board President Beth Tatarko is slated as featured speaker for the March 11 Lunch With League. Tatarko will talk about a proposed bond election intended to improve school infrastructure. Manhattan Lunch With Leagues are free and open to the public from noon to 1 p.m. in the auditorium of the Manhattan Public Library. 3

Changes to LWVK Endowment Fund

The purpose of the LWVK Endowment Fund, according to the Articles, is “to provide to LWVK supplemental income derived from investment of the contributions of donors to the FUND to be distributed at least annually.”

The FUND was begun in 1991 with all contributions invested “conservatively” in U.S. Treasury securities and in federally insured savings accounts and certificates of deposit. During the years of high interest rates, those investments served the FUND well. However, “the goal of earning the greatest amount of income possible,” especially during the years of declining interest rates, made finding suitable investments difficult.

The 2007 State Convention voted to amend the FUND articles. One change was to invest in a lifestyle index mutual fund, which is highly diversified among stocks and bonds, with no load and low costs. Vanguard LifeStrategy Moderate Growth fund contains:

- 50% MSCI US Broad Market Index (3,900 companies),
- 10% MSCI EAFE Index (1,137 foreign developed market securities),
- 40% bonds (Lehman Bros U.S. Aggregate Bond Index).

In the long run stocks outperform bonds, hence the larger allocation is in stocks. LifeStrategy is professionally managed at a low cost of .23% (expense ratio); the average total return for 2007 was 7.36%.

The other new component is a companion money market fund. Vanguard Prime Money Market has an expense ratio of .24% and returned an average of 5.14% for 2007.

Another change that will help the FUND to grow is paying to the Kansas League 90% of the dividends and interest, rather than 100%, and investing the remaining 10%.

As certificates of deposit came due, FUND money was gradually invested into the Vanguard funds.

Trustees for the FUND are Chair Edith Bronson, Treasurer Betty Wyckoff, and Secretary Ellen Estes.

The FUND Articles with rationale for changes can be accessed in the March 2007 Kansas Voter, archived on the LWVK web site. 3

Proposed Budget for 2008–2009

INCOME		Finance:	
Support:		Administration	\$75.00
Emporia	\$873.00	Project	\$50.00
Great Bend	\$513.00	Sales Tax	\$10.00
Johnson County	\$2,592.00		
Lawrence	\$1,494.00	LWVK Meetings	
Manhattan	\$1,548.00	Council 2008	\$100.00
Salina	\$972.00	Day at the Capitol	\$500.00
Topeka	\$1,674.00		
Wichita	\$1,557.00	LWVUS Meetings	
MAL	\$400.00	Convention 2008	\$3,000.00
Interest	\$272.00		
		Training:	
Contributions		Membership	\$100.00
Member	\$2,000.00	Organization	\$100.00
Nonmember	\$200.00		
		MAL Dues	\$50.00
Other Projects	\$100.00	Publications	
Publications	\$150.00	Other	\$50.00
		Voter	\$1,600.00
Meetings:		Education	
Council 2008	\$500.00	Program	\$100.00
Day at the Capitol	\$700.00	Study	\$100.00
Endowment:	\$2,000.00	Voter Service	\$1,000.00
Savings:	\$2,000.00	Action	
		Coalition Memberships	\$100.00
Other:		Lobby Corps	\$3,000.00
Ed. Fund	\$1,000.00	National	\$50.00
Total Income	\$20,545.00	Total Expense	\$20,545.00

EXPENSES	
Capital Expenditures	\$300.00
Fees and Contracts	\$1,200.00
Office Services	\$2,400.00
Rent	\$3,600.00
Postage	\$750.00
Supplies	\$400.00
Telephone/DSL	\$750.00
Web Page	\$200.00
Other Operating	\$50.00
Board:	
Adm. Committee	\$50.00
Board Meeting	\$50.00
Board Operating	\$30.00
President	\$600.00
Secretary	\$30.00
Treasurer	\$100.00

Nominating Committee Report

The slate of nominees presented by the Nominating Committee and to be voted on at Council is as follows:

Officers (2008–2010)

2nd Vice President: Diane Oakes, Lawrence
Treasurer: Lee Rowe, Overland Park

Directors (2008–2010)

Becky Dudrey, Great Bend
Jurina Watts, Manhattan

Nominating Committee (2007–2009)

Janis McMillen, Chair, Johnson County
Carrie Lindsey, Lawrence
Karen McCulloh, Manhattan

Respectfully submitted,

Marge Mintun, Chair, Salina
Cathy Hoy, Emporia
Caleb Morse, Lawrence
Lee Rowe, Johnson County
Mary Lou Warren, Great Bend

Board Members whose terms expire in 2008:

2nd Vice President: Cathy Hoy, Emporia
Treasurer: Lee Rowe, Johnson County
Directors: Janice Norlin, Salina, and Nona Ponder, Wichita

Council 2008

Every year, usually the last weekend in April, LWVK has its annual meeting when delegates from Leagues around the state assemble to elect officers, approve budgets, propose League action in the legislature, choose state study or receive updates, and give directions to the state Board for the coming year. In the odd year it is Convention and in the even year it is Council. This year Council will be held in the Historic Topeka High School Library three blocks west of the Capitol. Registration starts at 8:30 and the Business Session will begin at 9:15.

Attending Council offers members the opportunity to network with other Leaguers around the state and to appreciate the wisdom and talents of so many individuals in League committed to ensuring good government. This year our theme is **"We the People"**—emphasizing League's commitment to citizen participation in government. Fill out the registration form below and mail it today! 3

A Word of Thanks

Many thanks to all who have so generously responded to our Finance Drive. As of February 23, those donors include:

- Anonymous
- Sharon Ailslieger
- Margaret/Wm. Arnold
- Baye Badeker
- Fayna Belzer
- Edith Bronson
- Carolyn Brushwood
- Wanda Brussell
- Kay Calvert
- Carol Chalmers
- Marilyn Chamberlin
- Marjorie Cole
- Sarah Dean
- Jan Durrett
- Hilda Enoch
- Kay Hale
- Ann Havenhill
- Elnora Hazelrigg
- Jean Hiersteiner
- Sue Himes
- Cathy Hoy
- Carol Jory
- Julia Johnson
- Linda R. Johnson

- Marjorie Kirkwood
- Jeanne Klein
- Robert Kruh
- Burritt lacy
- Martha Lusk
- Fannie Mandelbaum
- Royceann Mather
- Karen Mayse
- Julie Merklin
- Gail Milton
- Marjory Mortvedt
- Peggy Neal
- Frank Neff
- Debbie Nuss
- Nona Ponder
- Betsy Rohleder
- Janet Roth
- Georgia Sandlin
- Joy Schell
- Ann Smith
- Carol Snyder
- Dr./Mrs. Joseph Stein
- Joan Strickler
- Ruth Wilkin
- Rosemary Williamson
- Lawrence Wilson
- Karin Winn
- Beverly Worster 3

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KANSAS COUNCIL MEETING

April 26, 2008 – 8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

We the People

Registration must be received by April 8, 2008

After April 8 a late fee of \$7 will be charged for all registrations, including on-site registrations

Name _____

League _____

League responsibility _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Daytime telephone _____

I am attending as a delegate _____ nonvoting member _____ guest _____

I will need a table to sell wares _____

Registration Fee (includes continental breakfast and lunch) **\$53.00**

Payment to: League of Women Voters of Topeka-Shawnee county (LWVTSC). Return form with payment by April 8 to Sybil Wiegman, LWVTSC, 2805 SW Tall Grass Drive, Topeka, KS 66614; 785-478-1679.

Lobbying for the League

A non-politicized court system promotes an independent third branch of government, assuring citizens their fair and impartial day in court while preserving the necessary checks and balances in our democracy. You might ask — what does this have to do with lobbying for the League? Read on.

For 50 years, Kansas has used merit selection for Supreme and Appeals Court justices/judges. A Nominating Commission of five attorneys from across the state, elected by their peers, and four non-attorneys, one appointed by the Governor from each Congressional district, reviews the applications, then investigates and interviews each attorney-applicant seeking a position on the bench, concluding with submission of two or three names to the Governor. The Governor interviews and investigates each nominee and selects the appointee.

Over the past few years, several bills have been introduced to change this process, including having partisan election of judges/justices, and/or requiring Senate confirmation of the

Governor's appointee. Recently, the legislature held hearings on a bill that would change the way the Nominating Commission is selected. HCR 5031 proposes to have all members of the Nominating Commission appointed, three each by the House Speaker, the Senate President and the Governor. Each of these individuals would appoint two non-attorneys and one attorney (i.e., a Commission composed of 6 non-attorneys and 3 attorneys). The additional change would require that the Governor's appointee be confirmed by the Senate. The League opposed this bill, primarily because it makes all members of the Commission a political appointment, and in addition, requires Senate confirmation. This combination significantly politicizes the process. It should be noted that the existing make-up of the Kansas Nominating Commission is consistent with that of the majority of other states.

To be a lobbyist for the League, it's important to constantly review our positions, and those of LWVUS, to know if or how the League should

speak on an issue. In some cases, our files from previous studies have fairly in-depth information for the basis of developing testimony. In other cases, while the position was developed based on a study, there is limited file data available, thus requiring additional research. To develop the testimony for HCR 5031 (the above is a descriptive of the legislation, not the testimony), I talked with a number of lawyers I have been working with on preserving merit selection. I also looked at the web site of a national, non-partisan information source pertaining to the judiciary. There I found data comparing Kansas procedures with that of other states which employ Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Commissions. Additionally, I try to talk with legislators about the bills, gain their perception of the likely viability of a particular piece of legislation, and also try to learn and understand the views of those who differ from the League's position. Lobbying is always a learning opportunity. 3

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The *Kansas Voter* is published by the League 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.

President Diane Kuhn
Editor Linda R. Johnson

www.lwvk.org