



# POWERING THE VOTE IN 2012



LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS®

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

## FROM THE LEAGUE PRESIDENT



It is a tremendous privilege to present the 2012 Annual Report of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and the affiliated Education Fund (LWVEF). The report highlights our programmatic activities throughout the calendar year, while the financial report covers our fiscal year from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012.

Another election season has come to an end, and I want to give a huge round of applause to all of the voters who overcame the odds, including long lines, shortened voting hours, and the chaos caused by Hurricane Sandy in the Northeast, to cast their votes and have their say. And I want to express my gratitude and admiration to the League leaders, volunteers, supporters, partners, Election Day workforce, and everyone else whose hard work made it possible for them to do so.

I don't remember an election year when so much of our democratic process was under attack. Voters cast their ballots last year amidst a barrage of negative, misleading, and even false campaign ads funded by shadowy groups. This was an election in which big dollars from secret sources reached historic proportions, an election of unrelenting attacks on the rights and needs of voters.

Yet the American people rose above these obstacles—guided, protected, and supported every step of the way by the League of Women Voters.

In keeping with our 93-year track record of fighting so that all Americans, of all backgrounds, have an equal say in our democracy, in January 2011 the League made an ambitious organization-wide commitment to act. Termed "Power the Vote," this initiative set the framework for a vast array of coordinated League activities undertaken by

nearly 800 League affiliates at the national, state, and local levels. United by the common goal of ensuring that every eligible voter had a fair and equal chance to register and vote, Leagues at every level moved our democracy forward. The success of our efforts is evident not in how the vote turned out, but in how many people turned out to vote.

There are many reasons for the League to be pleased with Election Day. While the League holds no partisan preferences, we are pleased because this election was decided by a diverse electorate, including many new and first-time voters and those who were targeted and most threatened by the voter suppression efforts the League so successfully combatted. We are pleased because ballot initiatives designed to undermine equality were largely rejected by a diverse electorate that is representative of the best of America.

Most of all, we are pleased because of the vital role the League played in this election. Leagues across the country were a bulwark against the attacks on voting rights. In statehouses and courthouses, we successfully battled back illegal purges of voter rolls, onerous voter photo ID and proof of citizenship requirements, and attacks on early voting and independent voter registration drives. We defeated suppressive laws in 11 states in time for Election Day. And we rallied voters in Minnesota to soundly reject a proposed constitutional amendment requiring voter photo ID in future elections, the first time voters in any state had done so.

As a torrent of secret money unleashed by Citizens United and other attacks on campaign finance regulation headed into towns all across America and threatened to drown out our voices, the League met it head on. We fought tirelessly for disclosure of campaign spending, armed voters with the facts about the flood of negative third party ads washing over the airwaves, and demanded that elected officials at every level of government let the sunshine in.

Ultimately, however, the League's proud history teaches us that the best antidote to the toxic flood of secret money in our elections is a restorative flood of informed voters. In 2012, the League helped millions of Americans prove that the power in our democracy rests in their hands.



Leagues across the nation registered more than 100,000 voters in all 50 states. We provided critical election information to more than 2 million people through our enhanced [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org) website. We distributed millions of voters' guides about the candidates and their positions and hosted hundreds of candidate debates. We organized poll watchers and worked at the polls to protect the process. I couldn't have been prouder when Leagues in areas affected by Hurricane Sandy jumped into service, making sure voters were able to cast a ballot. Together, these individual acts resulted in millions of voters served nationwide. When and where the League was needed most, we were there protecting and defending democracy.

Now we must build on these wins. Election 2012 was not an end point, for free, fair and accessible elections. Last year, the League empowered and mobilized thousands of Americans to cast a ballot for the first time.

In 2013, we are working to keep them engaged in the daily workings of our democracy.

We face massive hurdles and determined opposition. For all the special interest money spent on the 2012 elections, the political landscape is largely unchanged. The new Congress has taken up where the old Congress left off. State legislatures are already renewing efforts to require voter photo ID, curb early voting, and discourage groups like the League from registering voters. Wealthy, well-connected corporate and special interests continue to have special access.

We, who best understand the importance of full participation, must continue to oppose these efforts in every way possible.

No organization is better prepared to take the lead in putting citizens back at the center of our democracy than the League of Women Voters. The League has a mighty and respected voice and a unique power derived from smart, passionate people working together for change from the ground up. So we will take energy from our victories, lessons from our setbacks, and forge ahead in addressing our democracy's challenges.

Thank you to each of the members, supporters, volunteers, partners, activists and League staff who played a part in the vital work described in the following pages. I look forward to joining you in the hands-on work of getting our democracy back on track and in the hands of the people.

Elisabeth MacNamara  
President, League of Women Voters of the United States  
Chair, League of Women Voters Education Fund

# POWERING THE VOTE:

## DEFENDING FREE, FAIR, AND ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS

After generations of progress towards the most open and accessible voting system in the world, in the past few years states across the country have enacted dozens of restrictions on voting that threaten to silence the voices of those least heard and rarely listened to in this country: the elderly, the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, the young, the disabled, and even our veterans. This is the largest legislative effort to turn back the clock on voting rights in over a century, and one of the greatest self-inflicted threats to our democracy in our lifetime.

The League, by contrast, has long endeavored to make the act of voting easier, not harder. In 2012, the League achieved widespread success in protecting and engaging tens of millions of voters as we worked to repeal these unjust and prejudicial laws and defend the right of every citizen to vote and have their vote counted—the foundation of American democracy.



### Election Administration and Voter Protection

Voting is the one time all citizens have an equal say in shaping our collective future. The trend of coordinated voter suppression laws that intensified in 2011 and 2012 threatens that equality.

The most common of these laws require voters to present specified government-issued photo identification before voting. As many as 21 million Americans lack such ID, and many of them lack the financial means or documents needed to obtain one. In 2012, the seventh year of our *Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP)* project, **the League worked with a wide variety of partners and civil rights leaders in multiple states to successfully fight photo ID bills and constitutional amendments and educate voters about the impacts of these laws.** Despite the onslaught of suppressive efforts introduced, the League's efforts resulted in far more successes than failures, including the defeat of strict voter photo ID bills in Colorado, Iowa, Maine, Missouri, and North Carolina.

**The League was equally effective in defeating voter suppression laws in the courts.** In South Carolina and Texas, the League convinced the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to use provisions of the Voting Rights Act to block implementation of new voter photo ID laws in those states and we intervened in support of DOJ's decision when the state governments appealed DOJ's decision in court. In both cases, the end result was that photo ID was not required in 2012. In March, in a case brought by the League in Wisconsin, a Circuit Court granted a permanent injunction against the state's voter photo ID law, the most restrictive of its kind in the nation. The League's suit against Pennsylvania's photo ID law prevented the potential disenfranchisement of as many as

750,000 voters in the state who did not possess the mandated ID in 2012. These were landmark decisions for voting rights in America.

Another came in *Gonzalez v. Arizona*. After more than six years of fighting by the League, in April, the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit struck down Arizona's Proposition 200, which required citizens to provide documentary proof-of-citizenship when registering and voting. An almost unanimous court accepted the arguments in the *amicus* brief filed by the League, setting an important precedent that protects the voter registration process for all eligible citizens. However, the case has been appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court and a ruling is expected in Spring 2013.

Unfortunately, three days after the 2012 election, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear a challenge brought by Shelby County, Alabama, to Section 5 of the *Voting Rights Act*, which prevents voting discrimination based on race or color. Section 5 requires specific states and jurisdictions with a history of discrimination to secure preclearance from the federal government before any voting changes may be implemented. This action by the Supreme Court was a massive step in the wrong direction, and the League is committed to defending the *Act*.

Thanks to the League's influence in a lawsuit in Florida, the court lifted restrictions on independent voter registration efforts that had forced the League to suspend registration work there until just a few months before registration deadlines. Following the decision, 30 Leagues in the state immediately resumed registering voters to make up for lost time. The League successfully opposed similar legislation in Michigan, Ohio and South Carolina that would have negatively impacted community-based voter registration drives that assist the elderly, disabled, youth, and low-income voters.

The League also stopped insidious efforts in several states to systematically purge eligible voters from voter rolls. In June, the national League, Florida League, and the Brennan Center For Justice filed an *amicus* brief in support of the Department of Justice's suit challenging the illegal and inaccurate voter purge initiated by the state of Florida.

On Election Day, **voters in Minnesota rejected a proposed constitutional amendment to require photo ID for voting.** Having defeated the measure through a gubernatorial veto last year, the Minnesota League engaged in a year-long campaign to educate voters about the impact a photo ID would have and that the ballot measure would be costly, harmful and unnecessary. When the League began the campaign, a majority of Minnesotans supported the amendment. But, once armed with facts, voters soundly defeated the amendment.

The League was also **a powerful champion for voting rights on Capitol Hill.** In May, we welcomed the introduction of the new *Voter Empowerment Act* in the U.S. House of Representatives to counteract the restrictive anti-voter laws adopted by the states by creating a new system for online voter registration and improving the provisional balloting system. In September, national League President MacNamara testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on the continuing importance of the *Voting Rights Act*. Much of the progress we have made toward racial and ethnic equality in this country over the past half century is due to this law. But the law is not just history; the flood of anti-voter laws enacted by states across the country proves the *Act* remains just as vital and relevant today.

**League volunteers worked around the clock in their communities to ensure votes would be successfully cast and counted on Election Day.** They staffed English and Spanish language voter

hotlines, got the facts about voting requirements out to the media, set up poll observing programs, worked as poll workers, and reported challenges to the national Election Protection Coalition. While problems in the days leading up to and on Election Day did not appear to be widespread, the League did respond to particularly concerning last-minute attempts to restrict voting hours in Florida and Ohio, incorrect signage at Pennsylvania polling sites suggesting photo ID was required to vote, poor preparation in multiple places that caused long lines, and robocalls and targeted mailings intent on misdirecting voters.

Throughout the year, **the League's Power the Vote activities received extensive media attention** that helped bring our messages and services to a nationwide audience. In June, national League President MacNamara was a guest on the *PoliticsNation* television program to discuss efforts to purge the voter rolls in Florida. In July, the *National Journal* quoted MacNamara and League Senior Elections Director Jeanette Senecal, citing

*"I urge you—regardless of the opposition you face—to stay true, and remain fiercely committed, to the principles that have always guided the League of Women Voters and that can ensure that the 21st will be another 'American century.'"*

— U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder,  
50th Biennial League National Convention  
Washington, D.C., June, 2012

them as significant "foes" of voter suppression laws. The League's lawsuit against Pennsylvania's voter photo ID was featured in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and on PBS's *News Hour*.

### Voter Registration and Mobilization

With its vast volunteer network, **the League of Women Voters is one of the nation's largest and longest-standing independent voter registration groups.** To carry out an unprecedented voter mobilization effort in 2012, the national League trained more than 2,000 new volunteers and leaders to augment our already robust corps of volunteers, through webinars, in-person trainings, and one-on-one support to address last-minute challenges right up until Election Day. These capacity-building efforts will continue to strengthen and broaden the impact of the League's national network for years to come.

Continuing a recent tradition, in 2012 the League focused on registration events designed to **reach underrepresented communities within our electorate.** The League believes that all American citizens deserve the chance to register and vote. When our voter registration rolls better reflect the diversity in our communities, we will see more diversity in our elected leaders and public policies that meet all Americans' needs.

Americans under the age of 30 remain severely underrepresented in the electorate. In the past several years, the League has worked to reverse this trend with a wide range of voter registration, civic training, volunteerism, mock elections and scholarship/leadership programs. In July, Leagues in 21 diverse communities across the country wrapped up their work on one such effort, **our successful High School Voter Registration project, which encourages young people—especially young minorities—to register to vote and participate in our democracy.** Using the League's



popular *Empowering the Voters of Tomorrow* training manual, volunteers from 21 Leagues visited a total of 166 schools and helped more than 8,500 young people register to vote for the first time.

During the fall of 2012, the League focused on **reaching students at community colleges, vocational and technical schools, and other alternative education institutions.** With grants, staff support, and training from the national League, many local Leagues hosted registration events. Highlights included working with student leaders in Manatee County, Florida, to institute a permanent voter registration effort on area campuses; launching an intense regional effort in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to reach eligible young voters in Native American communities; and hosting 13 registration events at local technical schools and Job Corps programs in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Leagues nationwide also worked with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) field offices and federal courts to **help tens of thousands of new citizens register to vote at naturalization ceremonies.** Leagues in Baltimore, Maryland, Houston, Texas, Arlington, Virginia, and Long Island, New York, each brought in multiple

thousands of new voters through naturalization ceremonies alone.

The League was honored to **serve on the national working committee that organized National Voter Registration Day, September 25, 2012.**

Through this effort, more than 1,200 organizations across the country registered an estimated 350,000 voters. More than 240 Leagues from 44 states participated, making the League the single largest on-the-ground participant. The event was featured in tens of thousands of media stories and received social media attention from an overwhelming number of celebrities, thought leaders and other prominent individuals.

In the fall, national League President MacNamara traveled to 8 key states—Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, and Wisconsin. During her visits, she met with voters, elected officials, poll workers and observers, coalition partners, state and local elections officials, and the media in order to help ensure preparations were in place and voters had the information they needed to participate.

The League's work to **equip citizens with accurate information about voting** was more important than ever in 2012. Even in states where



the League succeeded in knocking down voter suppression measures, there remained a real risk that voters would be disenfranchised—either intentionally or inadvertently—due to confusion over procedural changes, especially last-minute changes. Therefore, to *Power the Vote* the League helped voters leap the barriers of misinformation and confusion, as well as actual legal barriers to voting.

On August 26, 2012, the 92nd anniversary of the 19th Amendment, the **League re-launched its one-stop online elections resource, VOTE411.org**, which has helped over 20 million Americans find factual, nonpartisan information about polling place locations, absentee and early voting options, registration deadlines, ID requirements, and the candidates' positions on the

issues. In 2012, *VOTE411.org* provided crucial election information for over 2 million voters, including almost 800,000 visitors on November 5th and 6th alone. The site provided candidate information on over 11,000 races, including—for the first time—every single federal, statewide, and state legislative office in the country.

Leagues across the country also distributed more than 2 million printed voters' guides and other educational materials. They hosted over 600 candidate debates to give voters the chance to hear directly from the candidates about their positions. The national League distributed a range of materials, including public service announcement scripts, an updated version of the comprehensive "Electing the President" guide, media materials highlighting *VOTE411.org*, and our popular "5 Things You Need to Know on Election Day" palm cards.

In the final weeks before Election Day, League volunteers nationwide phoned and made in-person visits to new registrants, and sent out hundreds of thousands of emails with the information about voting rules, times, and locations. When Hurricane Sandy devastated the East Coast and threatened millions of voters' opportunity to exercise their rights, Leagues in New Jersey, New York, and other affected areas jumped into service. Even as they struggled to regain power and keep their own families safe, our volunteers promoted official hotlines, used social and traditional media to get the word out, and worked tirelessly with elections officials to ensure voters were able to cast their ballots. In fact, because state officials recognized that the League is a primary source of information for the public and media, local elections officials in New Jersey were required to inform the League whenever they finalized new polling locations so the League could disseminate the information.

To help amplify on-the-ground efforts to reach the voters most in need of helpful election information, the League worked at all levels to get the word out in traditional media and on social media channels. The League and our educational resources were mentioned in an estimated 14,000+ news stories, including prominent stories on *The Al Sharpton Show*, *Reuters*, *National Journal*, *Huffington Post*, *Current TV's The War Room*, *Univision*, *Governing Magazine*, and *Daily Kos*. The League's tweets earned nearly 11 million potential Twitter impressions over the election season, while our approximately 300 election season Facebook posts resulted in over 2.7 million impressions. These efforts greatly increased the reach of League's voter education message.

### Campaign Finance Reform

The 2012 election saw a new high in spending by so-called independent groups and a new low in messaging. The result of *Citizens United v FEC* is that corporations, unions, lobbyists, and special interests can spend millions of dollars in complete secrecy to get the elected officials they want into power, and candidates spend more time raising money than governing or listening to the needs of their constituents. This growing influence of money in politics threatens to corrupt our representative form of government, where the people—through their votes—are supposed to make the decisions.

The League of Women Voters has been a leader in seeking campaign finance reform for more than three decades. Last year, League volunteers at all levels worked toward solutions to limit the influence of money in politics.

In June, the **League was disappointed by the U.S. Supreme Court's reversal of the Montana Supreme Court** in the case of *American Tradition*

*Partnership v. Bullock*, a case that dealt with a century year-old state law restricting the corrupting influence of corporate money in candidate elections. The League had signed onto an *amicus* brief in support of the Montana law. With its ruling, the Court allowed special interest money to trump the will of the citizens.

Short of stemming the tide of unlimited money flooding into politics, the most important thing we can do to preserve the integrity of our electoral process is to disclose the sources of that spending so that voters can make up their own minds about the candidates and the issues. Therefore, the League and our members **forcefully advocated for passage of the DISCLOSE Act of 2012**, essential legislation that would put voters back in control of our elections by requiring financial disclosure by outside groups of campaign contributions and expenditures.

**The national League's volunteer advocacy group, the National Lobby Corps, lobbied members of the U.S. House and Senate multiple times throughout the year**, meeting with congressional staff working on campaign finance reform. The House Democratic leadership invited the League to a meeting in February to discuss strategies for passing the bill. Following the League's annual Convention, nearly 100 League members stayed to lobby their Members of Congress in support of the *DISCLOSE Act*. National League President MacNamara testified before the Senate Rules Committee in support of the bill, while Action Alerts sent by the League generated nearly 20,000 letters to Congress in support of the legislation.

In July, by a 51-44 vote, the Senate failed to reach the 60-vote threshold to invoke cloture, proving unwilling to engage in open and honest debate about the merits of the *DISCLOSE Act*. Following the vote, the League expressed its disappointment





to national, state and local news media, and our Letters to the Editor were published in many local newspapers nationwide.

In May, **with a grant from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Shelter Rock, New York, the League launched a special media and public education campaign** to build support for action to curtail special interest money in politics. At the heart of the campaign was a radio ad campaign, *Flood of Money*, that urged Senators Lamar Alexander, Bob Corker, Susan Collins, and Olympia Snowe, four key actors on this issue, to help bring disclosure back to American elections. Senators Snowe and Alexander responded to the ads, and the campaign jumpstarted a productive discussion that offers real hope for meaningful campaign finance reform.

While the *DISCLOSE Act* fell short, the **League welcomed the enactment of the *Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge (STOCK) Act*** as a victory for transparency and government ethics. National League Executive Director Nancy Tate stood with President Obama as he signed into law the *Act*, which makes it illegal for Members of Congress to invest or trade stocks based on nonpublic information they acquire on Capitol Hill.

The League celebrated Sunshine Week in March by asking President Obama and the candidates for the Republican nomination to reveal more details

about their fundraisers who “bundle” contributions in amounts greatly exceeding what they are permitted to contribute on their own, and who can have tremendous influence in a campaign—and in an administration after the election. While recognizing that we were asking candidates to disclose more than the law requires, it is no more than the American public deserves to know.

As another essential step to lessen the impact of *Citizens United*, **the League called on President Obama to fix the Federal Election Commission (FEC)**. Of the six commissioners at the agency, three simply refuse to enforce the law, and five are serving despite the fact that their terms expired some time ago. The FEC is utterly failing in its obligation to enforce campaign finance laws, including those that prohibit coordinated spending between candidates and Super PACs. The League and our partners submitted more than 42,000 petition signatures to the White House’s “*We the People*” website urging President Obama to appoint new FEC commissioners who will enforce the law. Our democracy needs a fully-functioning FEC to ensure that the votes of millions of Americans are more valuable and decisive than special interest money.

To help guide our work on this issue, **the League created a new *Campaign Finance Task Force*** that includes nine knowledgeable and committed League members from around the country. The Task Force serves as a resource to the national League Board and members by researching and providing information on the proposed constitutional amendments introduced in the U.S. Congress in response to *Citizens United* and identifying future opportunities to limit the influence of secret money in our political process in 2013 and 2014.

Senior League staff also participated in an *Independent Sector (IS) Working Group* focused on

developing a response for the non-profit community to ensure the valuable role played by social welfare organizations is not tainted by new groups that are being created under the 501(c)(4) tax code, but whose sole purpose is to funnel funds into electoral races.

Elections are about choices, and voters need information they can trust in making those choices. Unfortunately, last year voters experienced one of the most harmful impacts of *Citizens United*—a barrage of campaign ads run by outside groups, the vast majority of them negative, and many of which were blatantly false or misleading.

In 2012, the League played a vital role in helping voters sort fact from fiction. **The League conducted a campaign with the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, *Truth in Campaign Advertising***, enlisting local television stations to reject or request corrections to misleading ads from third party group, and to include fact-checking segments about ads on their news programs. The goal was to ensure voters got facts, not spin, before they voted. Leagues met with TV program directors and newspaper editorial writers nationwide to encourage them to demand truth in campaign advertising and provide good, reliable election information to voters. We were pleased that some local TV stations, including in Iowa, Minnesota, and South Carolina, rejected or requested changes to some ads from outside groups because they contained false information.

### Redistricting Reform

Building off its targeted 2011 effort to ensure more fair and transparent redistricting processes in eight states, **the League released *Shining a Light: Redistricting Lessons Learned in 2011***. The report highlighted this work, as well as key reform opportunities for improving the process over the next decade and helpful practices for all advocates

to consider as they work to influence redistricting at the local level.

In 2012 Leagues in several states **continued to advocate for improved redistricting**, including Florida, North Carolina and Ohio among others. League advocates continue to seek opportunities to enact critical redistricting reforms before the next decennial census.

In Ohio, the League led a coalition that delivered more than 750,000 signatures to the Secretary of State in support of a redistricting reform proposal that was to be placed on the November ballot as a constitutional amendment. The proposal would replace the current system—in which a small group of elected officials draws district lines—with a nonpartisan commission of citizens armed with a balanced set of redistricting criteria. While the amendment fell short of the votes needed for adoption, it was an important step forward in challenging a manipulative system in which lawmakers pick their voters, not vice versa.



# POWERING THE VOTE:

## ADVANCING CRITICAL ISSUES

Today, at a time when special interests are inundating citizens with misinformation and politicians offer 30-second sound bites, the League of Women Voters continues to be unique in its practice of studying all sides of issues and developing consensus among our members before taking a stand on an issue. Our deliberative process ensures that our positions are well-considered and that when we speak, we speak with an authority that is trusted by the public and respected by those to whom we are advocating.

In 2012, in the same spirit of our *Power the Vote* campaign, the League empowered our members and citizens across the country to take action on critical issues and advance a more positive course for our country.

### Climate Change and Clean Air

After years of fighting for clean air, the League of Women Voters has emerged as a powerful voice for citizens calling for leadership to address both clean air and climate change.

Given Congress's inability to make any significant progress on these issues, that leadership must



come from the Obama Administration. Throughout the year, the League urged its supporters to call on the President to cut life-threatening pollution from power plants and establish this country as a leader in fighting climate change. In January 2012, **the League applauded President Obama for delaying his Keystone XL Pipeline decision**, putting the health and safety of Americans ahead of blind reliance on fossil fuels.

When the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a proposal to limit, for the first time ever, industrial carbon pollution from new power plants, **the League and our allies presented three million public comments in support of the new standard**, the largest number ever submitted to EPA during a public comment period and a wakeup call for policy makers to heed the public's desire to curb air pollution and climate change.

Later in the year, EPA released long-awaited air quality standards for fine particles that come from power plants, oil refineries, boilers, diesel trucks, and buses. The new rule will save thousands of lives by protecting Americans against asthma attacks, heart disease, and lung disease. National League President MacNamara released a statement congratulating the Obama Administration and EPA "for putting people before polluters."

In December, the League urged President Obama to use his existing regulatory powers to control industrial carbon pollution from both new and existing power plants. As President Obama ended his family vacation in his home state of Hawaii, the League sent him back to Washington, DC, with a reminder that his legacy on climate change will have a great impact on the island state's future. **In a full-page print ad, which ran in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser, the League urged the President Obama to set tough standards** for new and existing power plants under the *Clean Air Act*.

### Health Care Reform

Two years ago, the League of Women Voters played no small part in the historic passage of the *Affordable Care Act (ACA)*. In 2012, League staff, volunteers, members, and activists worked to **defend the Act** from repeated legislative challenges and even before the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court's decision to uphold the ACA was critically important.



While the law was upheld, it was clear during the debate that the public still did not understand many of its provisions. Therefore, many Leagues across the country worked hard to help their communities understand that the ACA will make a difference in the health and lives of millions of Americans. Leagues will continue this education work as the ACA is implemented.

The League believes health care coverage must include access to reproductive health services for women. In March, the League mobilized its supporters to **defeat the Blunt Amendment**, which would have limited access to

contraceptive services if any employer or insurance plan had a "religious or moral objection" to it. League supporters provided a strong voice in the debate in Congress and spoke out in their communities to defend access to preventative services. The national League created a template letter to the editor that League members customized and had printed in local newspapers from Juneau, Alaska, to Canton, Connecticut.

### Federal Fiscal Policy

Through the grassroots advocacy of our members, the League was also an influential voice during the critical federal budget negotiations leading up to the so-called "fiscal cliff" of January 1, 2013, which was scheduled to trigger huge spending cuts.

The League recognizes and supports the positive role that government can play in providing for basic human needs, especially during the current period of economic insecurity. Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and essential government programs for low-income Americans must be maintained. Millions of seniors, children, people with disabilities, and others depend on these services and they must not be cut.

In November and December, with the January 1st deadline fast approaching, the League sent Action Alerts to our members and supporters asking them to urge their Members of Congress to put forth a federal fiscal policy that ensures a brighter future for all Americans, not just a few. Specifically, we called for a return to a fair and progressive tax system in order to provide needed revenue, protection of the social safety net for the most vulnerable citizens, reductions in the bloated defense budget, and careful management of the deficit.

## POWERING THE VOTE:

### PROTECTING THE JUDICIARY

The League works in communities across the nation to educate citizens about how government works—and should work—at all levels. For several years, this has included an extensive program on the role of the judiciary. From 2009-2012, state and local Leagues in South Carolina and Kansas participated in the national League's *Safeguarding Democracy: Quest for a More Diverse Judiciary* project. In August 2012, the League of South Carolina concluded the project with a forum that presented diverse panels of lawyers, legislators, and judges who offered their points of views on South Carolina's system of selecting judges. The League's very public examination of this system reveals a high quality bench, but one that does not reflect the diversity of the state.

Rather than calling for radical changes, the League offered small, but meaningful reforms to improve the system, including greater transparency, a more diverse Judicial Merit Selection Commission, lessening the financial burden of seeking a judgeship, and bolstering the pipeline of minority candidates. This is the League at its best: employing

a transparent, fact-based process to bring into focus what works in government, as well as what can be improved. **The League also released a new publication, *From Theory to Practice: A Grassroots Education Campaign***, which shares the lessons learned during this project. The publication is intended as a resource for Leagues and partner organizations seeking to implement grassroots education campaigns to improve judicial diversity.

While South Carolina and Kansas have been at the forefront of the League's efforts in this arena, Leagues in several other states, including, Florida, Iowa, and Washington, hosted public events on the importance of diversity on the bench last year. At the national level, the League seized the occasion of Law Day, May 1st, 2012, to raise concerns about the funding crisis facing our nation's judicial systems. The justice system is essential to an effective, stable democracy, but today decreasing court services, delayed judicial proceedings, and other negative effects of underfunded courts are eroding public trust and support for the judicial system.

## POWERING THE VOTE: STRENGTHENING THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The numerous aforementioned programs and campaigns managed by national League staff powerfully leverage the vast network of local and state League volunteer activists nationwide. These programs provide the important strategic, technical and financial support to participating Leagues that leads to big results like those seen in 2012. These programs are also key to successful long-term building of League capacity and grassroots effectiveness as a progressive presence in communities nationwide.

To ensure a vibrant future for our member-based organization, the League of Women Voters must also continually invest in ourselves even as we continue to focus on the important work at hand. **Our Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) Program is helping local and states League grow with new members and community leaders.**

This high-leverage program is strengthening local League capacity by deploying key national staff to provide training and technical support to a nationwide

network of League member volunteer coaches who in turn provide training and support to hundreds of local League leaders in serving their communities. In 2012, the League introduced the MLD program into nine new states: Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Washington. Now active in 41 states and the District of Columbia, the MLD program will be activated in all 50 states by the end of 2013.

To make the League a more attractive option to young people in their twenties, thirties and forties, **we created a Young People's Task Force to research and provide counsel to the national League Board about how to better engage young people to be League members and volunteers** and empower them to become League leaders.

And we increased our investment in and developed new strategies for engaging the ever broadening online community through **expanded outreach through social media including Facebook and Twitter.**

## POWERING THE VOTE:

### FACILITATING GLOBAL DEMOCRACY

The League of Women Voters, through our *Global Democracy Program*, has long been an essential provider of hands-on assistance to grassroots activists and organizations around the world, helping them increase civic engagement, make their governments more open, accountable, and responsive to all their citizens, and build more democratic institutions from the ground up.

**In 2012, the League was honored to be selected as the United States government's only nongovernmental organization partner for the *Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Initiative*.** Co-chaired by the governments of the U.S. and the Republic of Tunisia, *BMENA* is a cooperative effort among G8 and *BMENA* governments to advance democratic reforms by directly engaging with and investing in the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa to foster the development of pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies. The League organized a series of preparatory workshops for Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from the *BMENA* nations that took place across the region between July and November, culminating in the

Initiative's 9th Forum for the Future in Tunis in December.

While U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was unexpectedly unable to attend, the event featured high-level representatives of the U.S. and Tunisian governments and 33 other nations. National League President MacNamara co-chaired the session on economic governance and entrepreneurship, while League Deputy Executive Director Zaida Arguedas co-chaired the session on women's empowerment. The Forum concluded with agreement on a Final Declaration affirming the Foreign Ministers' commitment to greater respect for the right to peacefully assemble and the rule of law, full and equal participation of all people, strong and sustainable support for women, and the urgent need for increased economic opportunities for women and youth. The proceedings of the *BMENA Initiative* will be released in spring 2013 in a tri-lingual document (English, French, Arabic) signed by the co-host governments and the three nongovernmental organizations.





# POWERING THE VOTE:

## LOOKING AHEAD

In 2012, we saw widespread public calls to improve our election system and strengthen our democracy. In 2013, the League is working at the national, state and local levels to make sure every citizen is able to cast a vote and have it counted and to put the people, not special interests, back at the center of our democracy.

**The League is focusing on ensuring that the millions of Americans who turned out to vote on Election Day 2012, stay engaged in the workings of democracy, including casting a ballot every two years.** “Off year” elections typically inspire a far lower turnout than presidential elections, but they are no less important, as they choose who sits in Congress, governorships, and U.S. statehouses. Not only will the League continue to protect the right to vote, it will equip and encourage all citizens to exercise this right in 2014 and beyond. Some of the League’s highest priorities for the year ahead include:

- **Opposing the voter suppression efforts** that started on day one of the 2013 state legislative sessions. Drawing on the lessons learned from our many victories over anti-voter bills last year, the League will be fighting back against renewed attempts to restrict voter registration, purge voter rolls, push through voter photo ID requirements, and rollback positive reforms like early voting and Election-Day Registration.
- **Filing two *amicus* briefs in the two landmark voting rights cases before the U.S. Supreme Court**, one on the constitutionality of the *Voting Rights Act*, a critical bulwark against racial and ethnic discrimination, and the other on the *National Voter Registration Act*, which protects citizen-led, independent voter registration drives like those organized by the League. These cases will preserve hard-won voting rights or set them back several decades.
- **Going on the offensive to protect voters** by pushing for legislation that will enact four common

sense, achievable elections administration reforms to make our democracy as free, fair, and accessible as possible: secure online voter registration, permanent and portable statewide voter registration, expanded early voting, and improved polling place management.

- **Powering the Vote by building new voter registration programs** that effectively reach young voters, new citizens, and other underrepresented groups; identifying new technologies and methods for providing voters with the information they need to cast a vote; and expanding on-the-ground voter mobilization programs.
- **Continuing to push for passage of the *DISCLOSE Act*** to bring transparency to our elections and pressing President Obama to appoint new FEC commissioners who will enforce our nation’s elections laws.
- **Pressing President Obama and EPA to limit carbon pollution from new and existing power plants**, the largest stationary source of carbon dioxide pollution in the United States.
- **Working to ensure that immigration reform legislation includes a path for those already in the country to earn citizenship** by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and other relevant criteria.
- **Promoting common sense solutions to the epidemic of gun violence.**
- **Advancing greater civility and accountability in public debate** by partnering with other groups who have made a commitment to problem-solving, collaboration, and fact-based public dialogues.
- **Engaging communities** in conversations about health care reform, immigration and other critical issues.

# CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES AND LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS EDUCATION FUND

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30,	2012	2011
<b>Unrestricted activities</b>		
Revenue and support		
Grants and contributions	\$4,190,094	\$3,626,706
Per-member payments	1,295,025	1,231,158
Mailing list rental income	233,164	183,425
Convention and council registration and other fees	221,492	69,900
Contributions in lieu of per-member payments	105,261	214,163
Publication sales and other income	19,035	35,781
Investment income	(195,989)	917,401
	<b>5,868,082</b>	6,278,534
Net assets released from restrictions - satisfaction of program restrictions	<b>1,242,535</b>	2,726,929
	<b>7,110,617</b>	9,005,463
Total revenue and support		
Expense		
Program services		
Communications	834,745	817,631
Election services	626,686	766,383
Civic engagement	501,536	1,938,985
Member services	444,099	405,657
Advocacy	376,675	312,200
Convention and council	249,765	111,889
Judicial independence	161,149	171,581
International programs	129,090	399,284
	<b>3,323,745</b>	4,923,610
Supporting services		
Fund raising	2,433,452	2,086,932
General and administrative	1,222,881	1,185,956
	<b>3,656,333</b>	3,272,88
Total supporting services		
Total expenses	<b>6,980,078</b>	8,196,498
Change in unrestricted net assets	<b>130,539</b>	808,965
<b>Temporarily restricted activities</b>		
Grants and contributions	1,051,730	2,304,313
Investment income	62,000	144,015
Net assets released from restrictions	(1,242,535)	(2,726,929)
	<b>(128,805)</b>	(278,601)
Change in temporarily restricted net assets		
Change in net assets	<b>1,734</b>	530,364
Net assets, beginning of year	<b>6,064,502</b>	5,534,138
<b>Net assets, end of year</b>	<b>\$6,066,236</b>	\$6,064,502

# THANK YOU!

The League's success is made possible by the thousands of members, supporters and partners who contribute to our programs and help us realize our mission every day. We are grateful for all they do and wish we had space to list each and every one.

Below, we are pleased to recognize our members, friends, corporations and foundations who have donated \$1,000 or more during the past fiscal year, July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.

## Leaders for Democracy

As the League's most committed and generous supporters who make annual contributions of \$1,000 and more, Leaders for Democracy receive special benefits such as invitations to participate in semi-annual conference call briefings with the national League President and senior staff members, special recognition at Convention, invitations to League special events, complimentary copies of League publications, recognition in the League's annual report and more.

For more information about Leaders for Democracy or to make a contribution, please visit [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) or call 202-263-1355.

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## Carrie Chapman Catt Legacy Society

The League is pleased to recognize the following Catt Legacy Society members who have informed us that the League of Women Voters Education Fund has been included in their estate plans. These individuals are providing for the League's future in many different ways, including: naming the League in their will; participating in our pooled income fund; obtaining a charitable gift annuity; designating the League as a beneficiary of their insurance policy, IRA or trust; or, through other planned giving vehicles.

Members of the Catt Legacy Society receive special benefits such as invitations to participate in semi-annual conference calls with the national League President and senior staff members, special recognition at Convention, invitations to special League events, complimentary copies of League publications, recognition in the League's annual report and more.

The Catt Legacy Society is our way of thanking members and friends for remembering the League in their estate plans and serves as a visible way for our members and friends to demonstrate their faith in the League's bright future and to inspire others to follow their generous example.

For more information about remembering the League in your estate plans, or to let us know that you have already included us, please contact Aimee Olivo at 202-263-1355 or [aolivo@lwv.org](mailto:aolivo@lwv.org).

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## OUR MISSION

The League of Women Voters, a grassroots nonpartisan organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence those policies through education and advocacy.

Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With over 93 years of experience and nearly 800 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations. At the national level, League activities are coordinated and staffed by two distinct but complimentary organizations.

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) is a 501(c)(4) advocacy and membership organization. Dedicated to promoting political responsibility, the LWVUS encourages active and informed participation in government.

The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) is a 501(c)(3) citizen education and research organization. Established in 1957, the Education Fund provides research, publications, and conferences on public policy issues and disseminates information and training that help citizens, in the United States and abroad, to thoughtfully engage in the democratic process.

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