

IMPACT REPORT 2015/2016



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®



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LETTER FROM THE LEADERSHIP



The two years leading into the 2016 general election season brought both tremendous challenges and new opportunities to the League of Women Voters of the United States.

The 2016 election would be the first presidential election since the U.S. Supreme Court's 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* decision gutted crucial federal protections under the Voting Rights Act, inviting covered states to pass new voter suppression laws.

At the same time, the flood of outside political spending—much of it from anonymous donors—ushered in by the Supreme Court's 2010 *Citizens United* decision grew even larger and more corrupting to the integrity of our elections.

Partly in response to these very visible threats to our democracy, millions of Americans turned to the League in recognition of our reputation as the nation's leading nonpartisan organization defending voters' rights and expanding citizen participation in our democracy.

With the support of state and local Leagues and hundreds of thousands of committed members and supporters across the country, the League launched programs to protect the key structures of American Democracy.

We are pleased to present this 2015-2016 Impact Report highlighting the contributions to democracy made across the country.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Wylecia Wiggs Harris'.

Wylecia Wiggs Harris
Chief Executive Officer
League of Women Voters
of the United States

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Chris Carson'.

Chris Carson
President
League of Women Voters
of the United States

OUR MISSION



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



DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

Whenever Congress debates a campaign finance bill, Congress or the states propose cutbacks in voter registration and voter protection laws, or legislatures redraw legislative districts, the League of Women Voters is there, defending voters' rights and fighting to make sure our elections reflect the voice of the people, not special interests, wealthy campaign donors or self-interested politicians.

The two years leading up to the 2016 general election season kept the League especially busy on all fronts. We organized a massive national movement to bring pressure on Congress to repair the Voting Rights Act after the landmark law was gutted by the U.S. Supreme Court's *Shelby County v. Holder* decision in 2013.

The *Shelby* decision essentially gave a green light to states covered by the Voting Rights Act to impose draconian laws deliberately designed to make it harder for millions of Americans to register and vote, especially in communities of color, and among older voters, younger voters and people with limited income. *Shelby* was the greatest setback to voters' rights in generations, and the League will not rest until the full power of the Voting Rights Act is restored.



The League continues to lead the fights in Congress to expand voter participation through such reforms as online voter registration for all and automatic voter registration, and to block rollbacks in the very successful National Voter Registration Act.

The League also seeks to make the Federal Election Commission a more effective body, strengthen existing law that bars ostensibly independent Super PACs from coordinating with candidates and increase disclosure requirements on outside political spending.

At the state level, the League was on both offense and defense, leading fights to expand access to the ballot in some states and against new voter suppression laws in other states. We stopped passage of onerous new voter ID laws in seven states, protected early voting and same-day registration in five states and expanded access to the ballot through online registration and same-day registration in over twelve states. State Leagues also continued their ongoing battles against racial and partisan gerrymandering.



CITIZEN ACTIVISTS— THE REAL STRENGTH OF THE LEAGUE

The strength of the League is rooted in the commitment of thousands of grassroots members and supporters like you.

In the past year alone, thousands of League supporters took action on our most important issues:



- Contacting their Congressional Representative in support of the Stop Super PAC-Candidate Coordination Act, which would strengthen existing law requiring Super PACs to be independent of candidates.
- Pressuring their Congressional delegation to repair and modernize the Voting Rights Act after a key section of that landmark law was gutted by a 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision.
- Writing their Senators and Representative in support of the Federal Election Administration Act, which would establish a new and more effective government agency to enforce campaign finance laws.
- Signing a petition to President Obama urging him to ensure that federal health insurance exchanges under the Affordable Care Act offer voter registration services in compliance with the National Voter Registration Act.
- Signing a letter to President Obama calling on him to end offshore oil and gas drilling off the Arctic and Atlantic coasts.
- Improving and expanding access to voter registration. Between 2015 and 2016, online voter registration laws were passed as a direct result of those efforts in Florida, Iowa, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

- Testifying before the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in support of its Clean Power Plan to set first-ever carbon pollution limits on existing power plants.
- Submitting over one hundred thousand public comments to the EPA regarding its plan to protect our planet and public health by limiting carbon pollution from power plants.
- Joining hundreds of thousands in New York City for the People's Climate March, the largest climate march in history. 162 similar events were planned in countries across the world, including the United Nations Climate Summit.



When the League speaks, Washington listens—and our most effective voice comes directly from supporters like you.



ADVOCATING IN COURT

Whenver their rights are threatened by discriminatory laws or government action, voters know they can turn to the League as their advocate in court. These are a few of the legal battles we fought from 2015 into 2016:

- In Washington, D.C., the League sued the executive director of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission after he unlawfully approved a request from several states to require documentary proof-of-citizenship when voters register under the National Voter Registration Act.
- In Kansas, the League joined the ACLU and other plaintiffs in a lawsuit successfully challenging that state's refusal to register voters who applied at the DMV without documentary proof-of-citizenship. They followed up with a lawsuit challenging that state's attempt to cut voters from the rolls by giving them only a short window to provide proof of citizenship documentation if they failed to do so when first completing their voter registration form at either the DMV or through the mail.
- In North Carolina, the League successfully took on one of the most draconian voter suppression laws in the country, which a federal court would eventually conclude targeted voters in communities of color "with almost surgical precision."



- In Ohio, the League challenged a 2014 law that eliminated the popular "golden week" when voter registration and early voting overlapped, and also filed an amicus brief in a different suit that successfully challenged the state's purging of hundreds of thousands of voters from voter rolls.
- In Tennessee, the League followed up on the decision in the Ohio purging case and urged the state to alter its now-illegal purging system.
- In Wisconsin, the League continued its years-long battle against the state's burdensome new voter ID law that blocked thousands of voters from casting ballots.
- In Florida, the League rushed to court and forced an extension of the voter registration deadline to accommodate voters impacted by the pre-election hurricane. The League also joined the successful effort to block the purging system in Florida that came too close to an election.

The legal process is often long and difficult, but the League will stand in court to defend voters' rights through every step of the process.



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2016

Unrestricted Activities	2016
REVENUE AND SUPPORT GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS	\$2,805,636
PER-MEMBER PAYMENTS	1,276,899
COUNCIL AND CONVENTION	304,066
MAILING LIST RENTAL INCOME	202,990
PUBLICATION SALES AND OTHER INCOME	3,592
INVESTMENT INCOME	6,727
TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT	4,599,910
EXPENSE	
PROGRAM SERVICES	
COMMUNICATIONS	809,923
ELECTION SERVICES	5,500
MEMBER SERVICES	472,193
ADVOCACY	331,997
COUNCIL AND CONVENTION	294,333
TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES	1,913,946
SUPPORTING SERVICES	
FUND RAISING	1,938,778
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE	728,669
TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES	2,667,447
TOTAL EXPENSE	4,581,393
CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS	18,517
NET REALIZED AND UNREALIZED LOSS ON INVESTMENTS	(37,859)
CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	(19,342)
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(19,342)
NET ASSETS, JULY 1, 2015	1,178,752
NET ASSETS, JUNE 30, 2016	\$1,159,410

THANK YOU!

The League’s success is made possible by the tens of thousands of 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, it is our privilege to recognize the individuals, foundations and corporations who donated \$1,000 or more during the fiscal year July 1, 2015 – June 20, 2016.

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