

League of Women Voters
2013 Annual Report



Empowering the Vote in 2013





From the League President

It is a tremendous privilege to present the 2013 Annual Report of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF). The report highlights our programmatic activities throughout the calendar year, while the financial report covers our fiscal year from July 1, 2012, to June 30, 2013.

In 2013, the League deepened and broadened our historic work to protect and empower voters by continuing to fight against barriers to voting and by pushing forward with positive reforms.

From day one of the 2013 legislative sessions in the states, American voters were under constant siege, with new suppression attempts arising almost weekly, including restrictive photo ID requirements, attacks on voter registration and early voting, and purges of voter rolls. Yet the biggest blow came from the U.S. Supreme Court, which undercut the landmark 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA), our nation's most essential voter protection. Before the ink was even dry on the VRA decision, multiple states with long histories of

racial discrimination in voting moved to once again suppress the vote.

Voter empowerment has been the League's primary mission for over 90 years. But we have never done it with greater conviction and success than we did last year. The League rallied for the VRA on the steps of the Supreme Court and in the halls of Congress, and fought back, in states across the country, against attempts to restrict the vote and take power out of the hands of citizens.

But the League didn't stop there. We actively supported a significant number of pro-voter bills that were introduced in state legislatures in 2013. We released our own Election Improvement Agenda, that spelled out five common-sense reforms to improve access to the ballot box. These recommendations formed the basis of the specific election improvements that the LWVUS and several state Leagues provided to the Presidential Commission on Election Administration. In addition, both the Arizona and national Leagues were successful in defending the National Voter Registration Act before the Supreme Court, against

additional requirements imposed by the state of Arizona.

At the grassroots level, state and local Leagues registered tens of thousands new voters, focusing on young people, racial and ethnic minorities, new citizens, and other Americans least represented in the electorate and least often listened to by our government. In states where photo ID barriers were implemented, they spent countless hours helping voters understand the new requirements, drove them to Departments of Motor Vehicles, and, in some cases, even paid for the documentation needed to get an ID. In addition, VOTE411.org enabled state and local Leagues around the country to provide an unprecedented breadth of information essential for successful voter engagement in elections. Altogether, it was a truly massive effort. Because of it, countless citizens who otherwise might have been pushed to the sidelines were able to cast their votes and make their voices heard.

Elections that are fair, free and accessible for all are not achieved in a single year. And neither are

fundamental improvements to important public policy issues that affect the lives of all Americans. 2014 has already brought new challenges and new opportunities. There is much to do. The work the League did in 2013 demonstrates that League activists around the country will continue to be deeply engaged in improving our system of government at the federal, state and local levels.

I want to express my profound gratitude to our nearly 800 state and local Leagues and all the individuals whose hard work and dedication made possible the good work described in this report. The League will continue to work to ensure that Americans have — and participate in — the democracy they need and deserve.

In League together,

Elisabeth MacNamara

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



Empowering Voters: Defending Free, Fair and Accessible Elections

In 1920, when calling for the creation of the League of Women Voters to finish the fight for universal suffrage, Carrie Chapman Catt famously remarked, “The vote is the emblem of your equality, women of America ... the guarantee of your liberty.” Today, our “emblem of our equality” is at deep risk.



We are facing a systematic assault on voting rights in this country today. Since 2010, more than 30 states have enacted voter suppression laws, including restrictive voter photo ID requirements, purges of voter rolls, and restrictions on early voting, absentee voting and Sunday voting. The impact of these laws is significant: silencing the voices of those least heard in this country: women, racial and ethnic minorities, the elderly, young people and low-income Americans.

Nearly a century after the League helped win the franchise for women, our fight to realize the promise of universal suffrage is far from won. In 2013, League leaders, staff, supporters and

volunteers, through a vast array of coordinated activities in all 50 states, pursued every available avenue to protect and expand the right to vote and decisively close the door to voter discrimination.

Voter Protection

Entering 2013, the League clearly understood that the right to vote, and elections in 2014 and beyond, would be dramatically impacted by two impending Supreme Court cases.

In June, the first case brought an important win for the League, voters, and our democracy. In *Arizona v. Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. (ITCA)*, the court upheld the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) while rejecting Arizona’s requirement that residents provide documentary proof of citizenship when registering to vote. Popularly known as “Motor Voter,” for the past 20 years the NVRA has opened up the democratic process to millions of Americans by requiring states to offer voter registration not only at social service offices and motor vehicle licensing bureaus, but also through the mail, which is critical to the League’s grassroots voter registration drives.

The League was instrumental in helping pass the NVRA in 1993, and in defending it last year. The Arizona League was a plaintiff in *Arizona v. ITCA*, and the LWVUS filed an *amicus brief* in the case, convincingly arguing that the NVRA remains critical in increasing access to the vote and adding more voices to our electorate.

The Secretaries of State of Kansas and Arizona quickly tried to circumvent the Court’s ruling, suing the federal Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to modify the national mail-in voter registration form to require documentary proof of

citizenship, which would effectively end registration by mail. The LWVUS and Leagues of Kansas and Arizona have intervened in the case, *Kobach, et al v. EAC*.

Multiple state Leagues also took action to ensure their states fully complied with the NVRA. The Leagues of Kansas and South Carolina started lawsuits challenging their respective states’ blatant non-compliance with the law, while the LWVUS and LWV of Florida filed an *amicus brief* with the U.S. Court of Appeals arguing that a last-minute, biased purge of suspected non-citizens by the state of Florida violated the NVRA.

The League was also a leader in ensuring compliance with the NVRA at the new state-based health care exchanges created under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Insurance exchanges offer a unique opportunity to reach millions of eligible voters, especially underserved populations. Leagues across the country sent letters and background legal information to state officials and provided testimony informing key stakeholders of their obligation to offer voter registration at the insurance exchanges, while the LWVUS submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services calling for the federal ACA application to be fully NVRA compliant. LWVUS also provided state-specific information about voter registration to federal “navigator” groups assisting individuals through the healthcare enrollment process.

Unfortunately, just one week after reaffirming the continued importance of the NVRA, the Supreme Court reversed course and gutted a critical component of the historic 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA), one of the key achievements of the civil rights movement. Despite overwhelming evidence that the VRA remains essential to protecting voters and safeguarding our democracy, the Court’s ruling in *Shelby v. Holder* overturned the law’s key requirement that requires specific states to “pre-clear” any changes to voting requirements or elections with the federal government.

In the lead-up to the VRA case, **League President Elisabeth MacNamara spoke at a well-attended rally on the steps of the Supreme Court**, while

many local Leagues attended national and regional rallies, placed letters to the editor and op-eds in newspapers, and hosted public forums and other events to educate citizens about the importance of the VRA and the *Shelby* case.

Mere hours after the *Shelby* ruling, several states previously subject to VRA preclearance moved to implement new restrictive voter suppression laws. The Texas legislature quickly advanced its photo ID requirement that had previously been blocked by the VRA, and its egregious redistricting plan that a federal court had rejected as racially discriminatory. North Carolina soon passed the nation’s worst anti-voter law, an omnibus bill that not only requires photo ID for voting, but also eliminates same-day voter registration and restricts early voting. Alabama and Mississippi also moved to implement voter photo ID laws that had not previously secured pre-clearance, and several other states would follow suit before the year’s end.

The League immediately responded, urging Congress to take decisive action to restore the VRA to full effectiveness. The LWVUS worked with members of Congress and their staff throughout the year, **mobilized our grassroots activists** to submit more than 30,000 letters to their Senators and Representatives, and was a lead sponsor of the 50th Anniversary March on Washington on August 24, which brought thousands of people to the Lincoln Memorial to celebrate the 1963 March on Washington and call on Congress to protect the right to vote.

The message got through. In January 2014, the U.S. House introduced bipartisan legislation, the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014, that would protect the rights of all voters by repairing the damage inflicted to the VRA by the Court’s naïve *Shelby* decision. The League is urging Congress to quickly pass this legislation and safeguard our democracy.

While federal legislation is essential to protecting and restoring voting rights, with voters being disenfranchised **now, the League refused to wait for Congress to act.** In 2013, the seventh year of the League’s groundbreaking Public Advocacy for

Voter Protection (PAVP) Project, **the LWVEF ramped up our voter protection work in states across the country, providing an unprecedented level of strategic advocacy, legal, field organizing and communications assistance to help Leagues** in states like Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin combat new draconian voter suppression measures.

The LWV of Virginia was instrumental in defeating two anti-voter bills that would have made it more difficult for organizations like the League to register voters, created more onerous photo ID requirements and made absentee voting more difficult, and also risked removing eligible voters from the rolls. The Virginia League testified before key committees, corresponded with the governor, and reached out to legislators on both sides of the aisle.

The League also went to court to **overturn restrictive photo ID laws** in Pennsylvania and Texas, and discriminatory voting laws and redistricting maps in North Carolina and Wisconsin. The LWV of North Carolina's federal lawsuit argues that the state's anti-voter law will restrict voter registration and voting for hundreds of thousands of citizens, particularly racial minorities, and asks the court to bring North Carolina back into preclearance under the VRA.

While most media attention was paid to state-level attacks on voting rights, when the Supreme Court undermined the VRA it also opened the door to local changes to election laws and practices that can dramatically impact access to the polls.

As a **true grassroots organization**, the League of Women Voters has volunteer activists in hundreds of communities who are **always on alert for any changes that could put voters at risk**. For example, in Carrollton, GA, the League was instrumental in exposing and stopping a plan to reduce the number of polling places from six to three without adequate prior public input. The local League rallied partners, held discussions with city and county officials, and convinced the County Commission to **reverse its potentially disenfranchising decision**.

Election Administration Reform

At a time when Americans are struggling to surmount unprecedented voter suppression, **it is essential that the voting process itself be fair, free and accessible**. The reality, however, is that our nation continues to suffer from an under-resourced, desperately outdated and increasingly complex election system that contributes to critical problems like low voter turnout and the underrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities and low-income individuals at the polls.

In January 2013, the LWVUS participated in a U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) roundtable on the 2012 elections in Washington, DC. The League shared stories about long lines, confusion over what, if any, identification was needed to vote, registered voters not being listed on voter rolls, and election results that took days to determine the winner. With the 2014 and 2016 elections looming, the League called for sweeping election administration reforms that will bring America's election system into the 21st century.

In June, LWVUS President MacNamara testified before the House Administration Committee in support of the goals of the Voter Registration Efficiency Act, which would require state motor vehicle departments and elections officials to work across state lines to ensure more accurate voter registration records, while cautioning that certain provisions within the bill could result in inaccurate and unfair removals of eligible voters from the rolls.

In September, the League released our **Election Improvement Agenda** report, a comprehensive plan for building election systems that better serve voters. Based on insights and field reports from the League's nearly 800 state and local volunteer teams nationwide, **the report highlights five common-sense reforms to improve access to the ballot box**: Permanent and Portable Statewide Voter Registration, Improved Polling Place Management, Expanded Early Voting, Secure Online Voter Registration, and Electronic Streamlining of Election Practices.

Leagues also provided valuable input to the Presidential Commission on Election Administration (PCEA). League advocates in Colorado, Ohio, and Pennsylvania testified at regional PCEA meetings, the LWVUS submitted written testimony, and the California League participated in a multi-day "listening session" that produced in-depth recommendations for the Commission. The LWVUS urged the PCEA to endorse proactive reforms known to increase turnout and improve voters' experiences and, in January 2014, welcomed the PCEA's report as offering several badly needed fixes for the problems plaguing America's elections, including our recommendation for all states to provide in-person early voting.

Nowhere have the endemic troubles in our nation's election system been more repeatedly on display than in Florida. In 2012, more than 200,000 eligible voters may have been turned away by long lines that forced voters in some precincts to wait upwards of nine hours, a problem largely caused by a new law reducing the state's early voting hours.

Spurred by the public outcry that followed the election, the Florida legislature passed a comprehensive election reform bill and the Florida League was involved in the entire process, reaching out to Supervisors of Elections, mobilizing League members to write letters to the editor of their local newspapers, hosting press conferences, and meeting with key lawmakers at the Capitol. Ultimately, the Florida LWV helped ensure the final bill included important provisions that restored Florida's early voting period from eight to 14 days and increased the number of early voting sites.

The same month, the League of Women Voters of New York secured a similar victory, **successfully advocating for crucial early voting legislation**. It was a vital step forward for a state that has one of the nation's lowest voter participation rates, and it demonstrated that bipartisan solutions to voting issues are possible. Among other state League victories, Maryland expanded early voting, and Illinois, Virginia and West Virginia implemented online voter registration.



Voter Registration, Education and Mobilization

In 2013, **League volunteers in communities across the country made a massive effort to empower citizens to register and vote**. Leagues conducted grassroots voter registration campaigns across the country, focusing primarily on the hardest-to-reach new voters, including young people, racial minorities and new citizens, who are underserved by traditional registration efforts and consequently left on the sidelines of the election process. Increased voter registration and participation in these communities is essential to building an electorate that more fully represents the diversity of our nation and a government more responsive to all its people.

As part of our efforts, the **LWVUS re-issued a Power the Vote Challenge** to all state and local Leagues to 1) host at least five registration drives; 2) host or co-host at least one candidate forum/debate; 3) pursue an online voters' guide; 4) meet with local elections officials to discuss their plans; 5) identify five key media contacts and communicate monthly with them; and 6) help get out the vote as Election Day approached. By the end of the year, Leagues had risen to the challenge in these ways and more.

Youth voter registration was a focal point of the

League’s efforts. Young people now make up a major subset of the American demographic and have the potential to affect the outcome of every election. However, they remain significantly underrepresented within the electorate, with lack of registration being a primary barrier to their participation.



To fill the gaps in youth voter registration, local **Leagues across the country have especially helped high school and community college students register to vote.** In February 2013, the LWVEF released an update of our popular training manual for high school voter registration drives, *Empowering the Voters of Tomorrow: Developing Winning High School Voter Registration Programs*. The new and improved manual features a step-by-step guide for conducting effective high school voter registration drives for organizations, educators and students interested in inspiring and empowering young Americans to register and vote.

To reach additional underrepresented voters, LWVEF staff provided ongoing guidance to Leagues conducting naturalization ceremony work in key states and was once again the leading on-the-ground participant in National Voter Registration Day. On September 24 alone, thousands of volunteers from nearly 300 Leagues in more than 45 states registered an incredible more than 10,000 voters. The League was also the central planner of a marquee event at Bryant Park in New York City. Featured speakers included LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara, actress America Ferrera, and Mike Ryan, Executive Director of the NYC Board of Elections.

A lack of information on the candidates, issues and election processes is a key obstacle keeping many underrepresented groups of voters from the polls. Fortunately, **there is no better national source of election-related information than the League’s VOTE411.org website.** An indispensable resource for voters, VOTE411 is used by the media, thousands of League partner organizations and hundreds of League volunteer teams to provide voters with all the information they need to successfully cast a ballot and have it counted.

In 2013, the League used VOTE411 to provide an **unprecedented breadth of localized, nonpartisan information** about the candidates and ballot issues, polling place hours and locations, early or absentee voting rules, local and state voting requirements and regulations, and an improved online voter registration tool. The site hosted 100% more candidate information and received 40 percent more visits, than in the last off-year election cycle in 2011. Celebrities like Eliza Dushku, America Ferrera, Doug Benson, Gary Gulman and Bonnie Raitt tweeted about VOTE411, generating millions of views.

Campaign Finance Reform

The Supreme Court’s 2010 *Citizens United* decision opened the floodgates for unnamed special interests and deep-pocketed donors to pour hundreds of millions of dollars in secret into our nation’s elections and drown out the votes and voices of ordinary Americans. In 2013, **the League of Women Voters fought to protect our electoral and political systems from big money corruption and keep citizens at the center of our democracy.**

The LWVUS sent letters urging members of the U.S. Senate and House to bring sunshine to America’s elections by closing gaping loopholes in campaign finance disclosure laws and to maintain current federal contribution limits. Additionally, in July, the League sent a letter to the U.S. House opposing legislation that would repeal the presidential public financing system.

The League also urged President Obama to

fulfill the promises he made to repair the Federal Election Commission (FEC), which is utterly failing in its obligation to enforce campaign finance reform laws. In June, the League welcomed the President’s nomination of two new FEC commissioners, which would bring the agency back to full strength and restore its mandated balance of three commissioners from both the Democratic and Republican parties. In August, the League urged the FEC Chair not to approve the agency’s new Enforcement Manual until the new nominees were confirmed, to ensure that no decisions were made on a partisan basis.

In October, the Supreme Court began hearing oral arguments in the most important campaign finance case since *Citizens United*. At stake in *McCutcheon v. FEC* are the aggregate limits on an individual’s total contributions to political candidates or party committees. The removal of these limits would allow one person to make a \$3 million donation to multiple candidates or parties, giving big money donors even greater influence over our elected officials at the expense of voters and average citizens. It would likely also open the door to a cascade of challenges to other types of contribution limits and leave our political system wide open to corruption.

Earlier in the year, the League submitted an *amicus brief* in the *McCutcheon* case urging the Supreme Court to uphold the aggregate contribution limits. On October 8, as the case began, the LWV of Iowa helped lead a demonstration in front of the Iowa State Capitol Building urging the Court and federal and state lawmakers to protect and restore safeguards against big money corruption of our elections and system of government.

While awaiting the court’s ruling, in December, the League welcomed a proposed new rule from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to curb illegal

partisan political activities by 501(c)(4) non-profit organizations. The League sees the proposed rule as **an important first step towards limiting the dark money** unleashed on America’s elections by *Citizens United*, and submitted comments to the IRS to ensure that nonpartisan election information activities like those at the core of the League’s mission, including voter registration, will be protected.

Redistricting Reform

Representative democracy depends on voters freely choosing their elected officials, not elected officials choosing their constituents. **The League of Women Voters is a leading advocate for transparent and accountable redistricting processes** and an end to the partisan practices that serve incumbent politicians and special interests, not citizens.

In June, a court in Raleigh, NC, heard clear evidence detailing how North Carolina’s hyper-partisan 2011 redistricting plan was intentionally designed to protect incumbents and dilute the influence of voters, especially African Americans. The gerrymandered districts led to widespread confusion and hundreds of voters receiving the wrong ballots. The LWV of North Carolina is a plaintiff in the case and is asking the Court to require the state legislature to craft a fairer, more representative redistricting plan.

A better vision of how to draw congressional districts was provided by the LWV of California, which released a report in June, “When People Draw the Lines,” highlighting the success of the first California Citizens Redistricting Commission in making the line-drawing process more nonpartisan and representative for the 2012 elections. The report provides important lessons for other states exploring redistricting reform.

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"I believe the LWV has a very significant part in promoting democracy all over the world and plays a very essential part in pursuing critical and important issues."
Onnolee Trapp,
Portola Valley, CA

Empowering Citizens: Advancing Critical Issues

While empowering voters was one of our top priorities, the League of Women Voters took the lead on a number of other critical issues in 2013. Though nonpartisan, **the League has a long and proud history of speaking out for the public interest.** Before taking a stand, League members engage in careful research and study all sides of an issue. Once consensus is reached, hundreds of thousands of League members and supporters in communities across the country passionately advocate for issues at every level of government. This unique grassroots network enables the League to drive change for the good of our nation and all its people.

Climate Change and Clean Air

In 2013, the League was an **unrelenting advocate for action to address climate change.** At the beginning of the year, League members sent thousands of grassroots letters to the White House calling for leadership to protect the climate, ran a full-page ad in the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* during President Obama's visit to the islands, urging him to set tough standards for power plants under the Clean Air Act, and was an official partner in the February 17 "Forward on Climate" march in Washington, DC, the nation's largest-ever rally for climate action.

The League also engaged in the fight against the catastrophic Keystone XL Pipeline, which would threaten the safety of drinking water, promote bad energy policy, and increase the pollution that contributes to climate change. The LWVUS and Nebraska League joined the "All Risk, No Reward" Coalition to stop the proposed pipeline. The coalition ran nationwide television ads, the Nebraska League testified at a State Department hearing in April, and the LWVUS submitted

thousands of letters to the President and U.S. State Department voicing our concerns about the pipeline's detrimental effects on the public's health.

In May, the League urged the U.S. Senate to maintain funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), cosponsored a U.S. House briefing on the Clean Air Act and climate change, and, together with 18 different Leagues, submitted comments to the EPA Science Advisory Board on the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," on drinking water resources.



The League's efforts to build a groundswell of public support for action paid off in September, when President Obama announced the first-ever federal carbon pollution standard for new power plants. This is a game-changer for the climate, as power plants are our nation's single-largest source of carbon pollution. In November, the LWVUS and Leagues across the country testified at EPA Listening Sessions and urged the agency to quickly implement the new standards.

Health Care Reform

The League of Women Voters believes all persons deserve quality, affordable health care. **The League**

lobbied hard for passage of comprehensive health care reform and has worked tirelessly since to defend the Affordable Care Act (ACA) from repeated efforts to undermine the new law.

Last May, League supporters submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in support of the ACA's requirement that all insurance plans provide no-cost access to contraception as basic preventative care. The League urged the agency to keep the religious exemption to the so-called "birth control mandate" narrow in order to preserve contraceptive coverage for women without co-pays.

In preparation for the opening of the new Health Care Exchanges established by the ACA, state and local **Leagues across the country worked with government agencies,** health care providers and advocates to educate the American people about the new law's benefits and provisions. The LWV of Orange-Durham-Chatham (NC) held a series of meetings on the ACA and created a speakers bureau to spread the word about the law, while the LWV of Texas issued an informational booklet to help Texans as they sign up for the insurance exchanges.

State and local Leagues are also at the forefront of efforts to ensure that their state legislatures work with, not against, the ACA in bringing health care coverage to all. The Tennessee League is a plaintiff in litigation aimed at overturning a last-minute rule issued by the state that would compel anyone providing information on the ACA to undergo a background check. The LWV of Florida, in concert with hospitals and other health care providers, lobbied to convince state lawmakers to reverse their opposition to the expansion of Medicaid under the ACA.

"Why not?! We're one of few organizations that sensibly approaches our need in the U.S. to renew our democracy. We work in communities to address local, state and national issues at the heart of democracy."

Louise P. B. Petering,
Fox Point, WI

Gun Safety

America faces an epidemic of gun violence. It is long past time to protect the public. Since 1990, the League has lobbied for common sense solutions to gun violence, including banning assault weapons, requiring all dealers to run criminal background checks at gun shows, placing limits on magazine size, and opposing laws that grant special legal protections to the gun industry.

In 2013, we helped lead a nationwide push on this issue. The League sent a letter to the U.S. House in support of new gun control legislation, submitted testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights urging action to address the gun violence plaguing our nation, and **mobilized our supporters to call on their Senators** to implement vital gun safety measures.

While disappointed by the lack of action at the federal level, **the League helped win a significant**





victory in Connecticut. Following the tragic mass shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, the League of Women Voters of Connecticut's members participated in community forums, organized petition drives and letter campaigns, sent letters to the editor, held meetings with their local and state officials, and attended the March for Change rally for stricter gun laws at the State Capitol. With this strong public outpouring, state lawmakers passed sweeping new restrictions on assault weapons and ammunition magazines similar to those used in the Newtown shootings.

Immigration Policy

The League of Women Voters was founded upon the belief that our democracy is enhanced by a diversity of voices. Immigrants have helped weave the fabric and identity of our nation. Now we must help those living in the shadows become a part of our great nation. The League supports comprehensive immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for immigrants currently in our country, provides for the timely reunification of families, and ensures that all persons receive fair treatment under the law.

In April 2013, the LWVUS sent a letter urging

members of the U.S. Senate to address this crucial issue. When the Senate passed the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act with a strong bipartisan vote in June, members of the League's Grassroots Lobby Corps visited their congressional offices to urge the U.S. House to pass these much-needed reforms and strengthen our nation and society by providing a clear path to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.

Judicial Independence

In September, **the LWVUS announced a new partnership with the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ)** on the "Informed Voters; Fair Judges" civic education project. The project aims to increase public knowledge about a number of issues, including the role of judges and courts in our American tripartite system of government, the importance of state-level courts, and how a state's judicial selection and election systems work. Education is critical, as lack of knowledge threatens fair and impartial courts — the cornerstone of American democracy. The state Leagues in California, Florida, Kansas, Ohio and Tennessee are actively engaged in this project.

Empowering the League: Strengthening the League of Women Voters

That the League of Women Voters **remains relevant and vital nearly 100 years after our founding** is a testament to our unwavering commitment to reinvestment, integrating new tools and technologies, and recruiting and training new leaders, activists and volunteers.

To energize the League at every level and empower us to better serve our communities and our democracy today, and **with an eye to our 100th birthday in 2020**, a few years ago, the League launched our Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) Program. In April 2013, the League conducted our 4th annual Ruth S. Shur Leadership Institute, a three-day training program for 28 exceptional League leaders selected to act as national MLD coaches.

Last year, **the League completed the rollout of the MLD Program to all 50 states and the District of Columbia.** By the end of 2013, volunteers from more than 300 Leagues were being coached by over 150 state coaches and 22 Shur Fellows, sharing information, ideas and best practices to increase the League's membership, visibility and impact. Several state Leagues, including Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Texas, also conducted their own "in-state" trainings for local Leagues. The MLD's impact is already apparent, with noticeable membership increases in participating Leagues.

The success of the League's new Young Person's Task Force (YPTF) is also infusing a new excitement into the organization. Launched in 2013, the YPTF is an exciting effort to recruit the next generation of League leaders and ensure the League's long-term membership sustainability. The YPTF prepared materials to aid Leagues in attracting young members, and hosted a webinar in

October focusing on how Leagues can create a lasting presence on college campuses across the country to **introduce a whole new generation of Americans to the great work of the League.**

The League also launched an **improved "member section" of our website**, lwv.org, to make it easier for our members around the country to find the information and resources they need to strengthen the League network and make their voices heard in their communities.

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“For over 50 years I have been very proud to be a member of the League of Women Voters and I am encouraged by the increased participation by women (and men!) who are joining together to support this vitally important organization. For all of us, the League has been a valuable source of unbiased, non-partisan research and accurate facts we can use as a base for our decisions and actions where we can be the most effective. It has been especially thrilling to see the League in action on a federal government level, making a real and important difference.”

Lillian Lovelace,
Santa Barbara, CA

Looking Ahead: *Empowering the Future*

If there is a silver lining to **the unprecedented attacks on voting rights in 2013**, it is an increased awareness that the right to vote is the very foundation of American democracy and, as citizens, we cannot take it for granted. In fact, after years of hard work, 2013 might be the beginning of the turning of the tide: **for the first time in years, multiple states passed new laws that expanded access to the election process.** In 2014 and beyond, the League of Women Voters will continue fighting in Washington, DC, state capitals, and communities around the country to create a national groundswell of support to not only defend, but expand, the franchise to more citizens.

Below are some of the League's highest priorities for the months ahead:

- **Renew and restore the Voting Rights Act (VRA).** The Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014, which has been carefully crafted to

repair the damage to the VRA inflicted by the Supreme Court, is an important first step, and the League is mobilizing our grassroots network to put pressure on Congress to take common sense, bipartisan action to protect the right to vote.

- **Fight ongoing battles against voter suppression and discrimination** in Alaska, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin and any other state where threats to voters emerge. These efforts on the ground are vital to protecting the right to vote and expanding the electorate for the mid-term elections and beyond.
- Move forward with League lawsuits to **force state leaders in Kansas and South Carolina to fully comply with the National Voter Registration Act**, and investigate possible



legal action against states, including Colorado and Hawaii, that have indicated an unwillingness to provide voter registration through their insurance exchanges.

- **Push for urgently needed pro-voter reforms**, including expanded early voting, online voter registration, better polling-place management, and permanent, portable voter registration in states, including Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon and Pennsylvania.
- **Register more than 100,000 new voters in all 50 states**, primarily from underrepresented populations. This year, the League intends to sign up a record number of new voters by continuing groundbreaking collaborations like National Voter Registration Day, forming closer partnerships with local elections officials, and expanding our Youth Voter Registration Program with registration drives at 250 schools in at least 15 states.
- **Prepare millions of voters to participate in the November mid-term elections**, including by providing detailed information on candidates and elections in no fewer than 35 states on VOTE411, holding more candidate debates and town forums, and helping more eligible citizens obtain the ID and documentation they need to cast a ballot.
- **Fight to stop the flood of secret money into America's elections**, including as a participant in the critical *McCutcheon v. FEC* case before the Supreme Court, by lobbying Congress to bring disclosure to our nation's elections, and by advocating for the IRS to move forward with proposed plans to curb illegal politicking by nonprofit organizations.
- **Protect our future from the impacts of climate change.** The League is pressing President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry to reject the permit for the destructive Keystone XL Pipeline, while League members across the country are



making their voices heard in support of the EPA's groundbreaking carbon pollution standard for new power plants.

- **Complete the update of the League's database** to make it easier for state and local Leagues to engage with and serve their members, volunteers and supporters. The new database will strengthen the League's capacity to create change at every level.

Just as they have done for 93 years, **passionate, talented League members, supporters, activists and volunteers** in nearly 800 communities in all 50 states will keep doing their part to make our democracy work for all its citizens.

League of Women Voters: Consolidated Statement of Activities

| Year Ended June 30, | 2013 | 2012 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Unrestricted activities | | |
| Revenue and support | | |
| Grants and contributions | \$4,855,251 | \$4,190,094 |
| Per-member payments | 1,308,066 | 1,295,025 |
| Mailing list rental income | 220,059 | 233,164 |
| Convention and council registration and other fees | 54,375 | 221,492 |
| Investment income - Note C | 777,493 | (195,989) |
| Contributions in lieu of per member payments | 97,761 | 105,261 |
| Publication sales and other income | 19,574 | 19,035 |
| Change in value of annuity agreements - Note E | (1,637) | - |
| | 7,330,942 | 5,868,082 |
| Net assets released from restrictions - satisfaction of program restrictions - Note I | 844,832 | 1,242,535 |
| Total revenue and support | 8,175,774 | 7,110,617 |
| Expense | | |
| Program services | | |
| Communications - Note K | 945,043 | 834,745 |
| Election services | 848,050 | 626,686 |
| Civic engagement | 259,483 | 501,536 |
| Member services | 461,262 | 444,099 |
| Advocacy | 357,222 | 376,675 |
| Convention and council | 107,444 | 249,765 |
| Judicial independence | 41,538 | 161,149 |
| International programs | 478,783 | 129,090 |
| Total program services | 3,498,825 | 3,323,745 |
| Supporting services | | |
| Fund raising - Note K | 2,606,441 | 2,433,452 |
| General and administrative | 1,221,363 | 1,222,881 |
| Total supporting services | 3,827,804 | 3,656,333 |
| Total expense | 7,326,629 | 6,980,078 |
| Change in unrestricted net assets | 849,145 | 130,539 |
| Temporarily restricted activities | | |
| Grants and contributions | 603,041 | 1,051,730 |
| Investment income - Note C | 98,753 | 62,000 |
| Change in value of pooled income fund | (14,119) | |
| Net assets released from restrictions - Note I | (844,832) | (1,242,535) |
| Change in temporarily restricted net assets | (157,157) | (128,805) |
| Change in net assets | 691,988 | 1,734 |
| Net assets, beginning of year | 6,066,236 | 6,064,502 |
| Net assets, end of year | \$6,758,224 | \$6,066,236 |

Thank You!

The League is grateful for each of our supporters. No matter what size the gift, every dollar makes a difference in making democracy work! Below, it’s our honor to recognize the individuals, organizations, foundations and corporations who have contributed \$1,000 or more during the past fiscal year, July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013.

Leaders for Democracy

Leaders for Democracy demonstrate their commitment as the League’s most committed and generous supports with annual contributions of \$1,000 or more. In return, they receive special benefits and recognition. For more information about *Leaders for Democracy* or to make a contribution, please visit www.lwv.org or call the Development office at 202-263-1355.

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Catt Legacy Society members are providing for the League's future by including the League's future by including the League in their estate plans, and in return, receive special benefits throughout the year.

There are several ways to participate: name the League in your will; participate in our pooled income fund; obtain a charitable gift annuity; designate the League as a beneficiary of an insurance policy, IRA or trust;

or contribute using other planned giving vehicles.

For more information on how to leave a lasting legacy, or to let us know that you have already included the League in your estate plans, please call the Development office at 202-263-1355.

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