

LIVELY ISSUES
January 13, 2018
10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Appleton Public Library

Jeanne Roberts welcomed everyone and summarized national and state LWV programs: The 2018 biannual LWVUS convention will be in Chicago; we will have six local members attending. LWVUS plans to focus on core “Making Democracy Work” issues in the 2018-2020 biennium – voting issues, voter protection, voting rights act, bipartisan rights advancement, voter suppression, online voter registration and expansion of early voting. Here, we will continue to register voters especially in underserved communities. The Appleton League with Willems student marketing group will help with a marketing campaign to help reach young people.

LWVWI has TWO state-level programs:

1. Poverty, which State will support by providing a resource page for local Leagues, developing guidelines to help local Leagues conduct studies, and urging local Leagues to post their results on the LWVUS national clearing website. Poverty is a local issue, and should be studied at the local level. Advocacy is also local, for example focusing on a living wage.
2. The State and National Leagues recommend we focus on bringing more diversity into the League as a program although it's not traditional program – is this a membership issue or a program? Irene said bringing more diversity into our membership is not a study or a program, but it makes sense to encourage it.

Irene Strohbeen introduced our work on Local Program: it is our choice what we want to focus on in the upcoming year. She provided a League of Women Voters Process chart showing how we get from issues to a position. What we recommend out of this meeting will go to our annual meeting, and what comes out of that meeting will be what we study. We will form a position which we advocate on and Jeanne, as our president, will go to local bodies of government and speak on them.

Education Study Group Report

Jacqui Klimaszewski provided an update; this committee has been meeting regularly since September of 2017. There are other issues concerning education that didn't exist when the League position on education was first written. We explored what we need to address right now by devising a list of topics that were organized under different headings. We have developed a new outline on what is important to us and how we're going to proceed. We considered whether there are local, regional and national positions already to work from.

The committee is including the following topics in this study: Educational equity, diversity and class size, early childhood and career planning, closing the achievement gap, parent involvement, school accountability. The Education Study Group will be looking at charters, vouchers, testing, the category of teachers and school referendums. We are in the middle of this study and are anticipating this to be a 2-year study.

Jim Bowman provided additional comment: The Fox valley has approximately 36,000 kids in school. Appleton is the most significant school district because half of the student population is in Appleton (about 16,000). A problem is 37% of our kids are on free or reduced lunch and that has significant effects on learning. We're looking into nutrition and breakfast, and establishing exercise rooms which helps with learning; kids are less distracted in class when they have an opportunity to exercise. Another

concern is cultural diversity: Appleton has 5% blacks, 5% Hmong, and 10% Hispanic – each have different educational models and different parenting they come to school with. Give them the age-old algebraic problems, such as the speed of two trains, and apply them to the kids and if they've never seen a train and are not used to thinking about trains, they won't be as successful. It's evident cultural background affect the accuracy of the teaching environment and whether or not the students struggle.

Question: Do you find this study to have an overwhelming amount of study areas?

Jacqui: Yes, but we're try to see if things can fit into a logical place. We can generalize and assure equity with whatever that program may be. We're tweaking and changing to refine this study and compacting it for effectiveness.

Question: Betsy DeVos and the GOP are determined to overhaul the educational system to their standards– are you going to be prepared to go to bat against them?

Jeanne answered – the League has a very strong position at the national level. (Irene sent out a link for the national positions that you can study.)

Juvenile Justice Position Review

Helen Nagler led this effort and explained that initially the group had a difficult time focusing because they wanted to go larger. The latest study was 1991 and the League's current position is outdated and does not reflect current understanding and research on adolescent brain development. Past practices from the 1970's were found to not be effective. It is fortunate the review group was diverse with knowledge: We now have evidence-based knowledge that shows us that lower risk kids will correct themselves and if you treat them too aggressively, they will get worse. Helen also mentioned the social policy on human trafficking and had Katrin Patience (county supervisor, recently appointed to the Outagamie Health and Human Services Board) speak briefly on the closing of Lincoln Hills and what might happen to the kids. Milwaukee will get three group homes, Eau Claire will get one, and Appleton will get none. Each home can house 10 – 12 kids, but there will be 50 – 60 kids lost from the system.

Helen pointed out that young adults don't reach maturity until 25+ years of age and they have a different mindset prior to that – what we need to do is re-write some hard drives before they become too hard. Once these kids are in the justice system, they are stuck; it's not only their problem, it's ours because it's our tax dollars covering the costs. Also, the effect of parental incarceration on kids is severe; kids need to be supported in many ways when their parents are incarcerated. What needs to happen is low-level offenders need to be diverted. Kids that don't belong in the juvenile justice system need to be kept out. It's all about the money.

Brainstorming on Potential Issues

Criteria: identify topics that--

We need to advocate on.

We have no position OR

We have outdated position.

We can have impact – government can do something

Timely

Resources available within LWV Appleton

IDEAS for Local Issues

Voting with dots: green/yellow/red as 1st/2nd/3rd priorities; only members voted,

- Education – update in progress
- Juvenile Justice (14 Green, 3 Yellow, 1 Red dot)—narrower focus? Change terminology to Youth? Services?
- Diversity in Membership
- Poverty – should be broken down into elements of childhood poverty, living wage, stable housing.
- Childhood Poverty (9 Yellow, 4 Red dots)
- Stable Housing (1 Yellow, 3 Red dots)
- Birth control accessibility.
- Water quality.
- Immigrants and refugees.
- Assaults on the first amendment and the media (probably not a local issue).
- Stable employment via more Business Coops: for successful working to be introduced to the area.
- Fox Cities Performing Arts and the Expo Center. The funding is a concern as well as impact on human trafficking and parking.
- Gun control and gun violence.
- Wetlands (may be part of water quality).
- Living wage
- Election turnout (2 Green, 2 Red dots)
- Natural Resources
- Alternative energy in the development of downtown Appleton
- Domestic Abuse

- Trails
- Library
- Wage Equality
- Homelessness (1 Red dot)
- Aging – care of the aging population – transportation – guardianship – healthcare (2 Green, 6 Yellow, 3 Red dots)
- Opioid crisis (2 Green, 1 Yellow, 2 Red dots)
- Safe injection sites
- The role of Local government in State & Federal Policy (1 Red dot)
- Affordable transportation (1 Red dot)

RECOMMENDED STUDY TO SEND TO BOARD:

Education study will continue another year as planned.

Replace current “Juveniles at Risk” position with new based on study of “Youth Advocacy and Justice.”

Notes from discussion:

We must consider if we have the wherewithal to add a second study for 2018-19...hopefully our new members will be interested in helping.

There was a brief discussion about a new name for the study; Juvenile Justice seemed offensive to some. No conclusions or new name. It will be brought before the Board for consideration. The concern is that a name change would change the meaning of the study. It was suggested to make a motion to call the study “Youth at Risk”. The title should be language of empowerment to replace Juveniles at Risk, perhaps Youth Advocacy to replace Juveniles at Risk from the 1991 study.

Someone said something about doing a study on Aging. Two years to get on the ball, you should start it now while you’re still young. We need to be educated. ADRC’s (Aging & Disabilities Resource Center) – there is a push to close them or privatize them.

Topics of highest interest were: Juvenile Justice, Childhood Poverty, Homelessness (one), Opioid Crisis, Election Turnout, Stable housing, Affordable Transportation, and Aging Care. Juvenile Justice will be the Recommended Study to be presented at the Annual meeting in May. Helen Nagler agreed to be the chair for the Juvenile Justice Study.

The League of Illinois is proposing the LWVUS support abolishing the Electoral College as part of the Making Democracy Work program for the 2018-20 biennium. An adhoc committee was formed to present information compiled by LWV-IL on Wednesday Feb 21st from 6 – 8 p.m. Irene Strohbeen, Sandy Rohde, and Barb Dorzweiler will present.

Final Announcements:

“Let People Vote”: On February 1 6:00-8:00 at the Menasha Public Library, Molly McGrath will talk about the difficulty in obtaining a photo ID to be able to vote. She will discuss the scope of the problem and solutions. Training will be provided on the following morning, February 2, for anyone interested to become mentors to help people get their photo IDs.

We should be proud that the League spearheaded the WI gerrymandering case that went to the Supreme Court; we should have Court’s answer by June or sooner.

The History museum has requested our help to develop a panel of people from various political parties to speak on “common grounds” about what brings us together plus how people are feeling disenfranchised. The motivation behind this is attempting to build some connections and bridging between people.

Jacqui announced plans for candidate information and forums for Spring elections: for school board, Appleton City Council, and a candidate information guide for the county board elections. There are too many county board candidates to have a forum so the candidate guide will need to suffice.