



# IN LEAGUE REPORTER

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ST. LOUIS**

**8706 Manchester Road, Ste. 104**

**St Louis, MO 63144**

**314.961.6869      [www.lwvstl.org](http://www.lwvstl.org)**

**FEBRUARY 2012**

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## PUT SUPERPACS OUT OF BUSINESS

The FEC is supposed to be the government agency that enforces campaign finance laws, but it isn't working and hasn't for a long time. 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. It's time to clean house and President Obama needs to do something about it.

Let's fight back against the big money pouring into political campaigns this year. Let's put the SuperPacs out of business. How? Sign the petition on the White House website urging President Obama to appoint new commissioners to the Federal Election Commission (FEC). NOTE: In order to successfully sign the [petition](#), you will need to create an account on [WhiteHouse.gov](http://WhiteHouse.gov) and respond to a confirmation email. For more information, go to [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) and click on Put SuperPacs Out of Business.

We need at least 25,000 signatures of support by February 10, 2012 in order to get a response from the White House. Don't just sign it yourself; post the [petition](#) on Facebook, Tweet about it and forward this message to all of your friends. Together, we can make sure that the votes of millions of Americans are more valuable to our elections than a big pile of money.

*This article is from the [LWV.org](http://LWV.org) website.*

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**Readers can find information about the Missouri February primary /Republican caucus in March on our website.**

## FEATURE ARTICLES

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## CALENDAR of EVENTS

Fri.	Feb. 3rd	3:00 pm	Privatization Study Comm.	Nancy Thompson's Home
Sat.	Feb. 4th	9:30-11:30 am	Education Study Comm.	League Office
Tues.	Feb. 7th-Sat. Feb. 11th		Unit Meetings	See page 10
Thurs.	Feb. 9th	10:30 am	Health Care Comm.	Cape Albeon
Tues.	Feb. 14th	7:00 pm	Environmental Quality Comm.	League Office
Wed.	Feb. 15th	6:00 pm	LWVSTL Board Meeting	League Office
Mon.	Feb. 20th		OFFICE CLOSED for PRESIDENTS' DAY	
<b>LOOKING AHEAD</b>				
Sat.	April 14th		Theatre Party	Page 8 for details
Sat.	April 28th		Annual Meeting	TBA
Sat.	May 5th		State Workshops	TBA

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENTS**

*February 2012*

**It's Election Time!**

Voter registration, requests for candidate and issue forums, the launch of VOTE 411 for the April 3<sup>rd</sup> municipal elections, and an uptick of calls to our Voter Service hotline at the office—election year 2012 has arrived!

We began work in earnest on Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup> and enthusiastic volunteers showed up to begin collecting candidate email address in order to enable them to enter their answers to questions directly into the VOTE 411 on-line system. Shane Anthony, our new partner from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch met with us to synch calendars, design a work plan and learn how League volunteers work on the Guide. We are excited about what VOTE 411 will provide voters: absentee ballot information, factual data on candidates, ballot measure information, and ID requirements. The most unique feature of VOTE 411.org is the polling place locator, which enables users to type in their address and retrieve the poll location and a personalized ballot with all candidate and ballot issue information they need to prepare to vote.

The Missouri League is working with us to produce Voters' Guides in the August primary and November general elections. A number of local Leagues will be entering information on elections in their areas throughout the year, and will work together to provide information on Missouri Assembly candidates and statewide ballot initiatives.

In addition to using the Guide, it is important that voters hear candidates and speakers on issues answer their questions face to face. We have already had requests for numerous candidate and issue forums. We have also been asked by Ritenour High School to spend part of Presidents' Day, February 20<sup>th</sup>, to talk about the voting process and issues that affect students.

We have our work cut out for us on advocacy in Jefferson City as well. Hearings on a Voter I.D. bill began this week, important changes in public school funding, an overhaul of the tax system that would result in regressive taxes that hurt poor and middle class families, and deep cuts in health care, basic social services, and environmental protection.

Things happen fast in Jefferson City and we must be ready to respond to legislative alerts on bills as they move through the state legislature.

**What can you do to help?**

Volunteer to work on the Voters Guide.

Volunteer to work on candidate and issue forums.

Volunteer to work in the office on the many tasks that need to be done.

Support the Theatre Party to raise funds to do the League's important work.

Answer the call to donate to the League or the Information Service. No donation is too small!

Recruit 2 friends to join the League.

We are off and running in 2012! It is going to be quite a year.

Linda C. McDaniel

Kathleen Farrell

Co-Presidents

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 ☆ *"The task of* ☆  
 ☆ *leadership* ☆  
 ☆ *is not to put* ☆  
 ☆ *greatness* ☆  
 ☆ *into* ☆  
 ☆ *humanity,* ☆  
 ☆ *but to elicit* ☆  
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**SPRING UNIT TOPICS**

**FEBRUARY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS REPORTS ON CHINA**

**MARCH LOCAL OPTION**

**APRIL PRIVATIZATION STUDY**

**MISSOURI'S TABOR PASSED by MISSOURI HOUSE – CONTACT SENATORS**

By Amy Blouin, founder and director of the Missouri Budget Project

The Missouri House approved HJR 43 on Thursday. The measure proposes a constitutional amendment that is very similar to Colorado's TABOR (*Taxpayers Bill Of Rights*) amendment, which had devastating economic and budgetary impacts in Colorado. The Missouri proposal, as approved by the House would create a devastating lid, tying growth in the state's investment in services to a proven flawed formula of population growth plus inflation.

The Congressional Budget Office projects inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index to be 1.7 percent per year for the next several years and the U.S. Census Bureau projects Missouri's population to grow by 0.5 percent per year. HJR 43 would allow funding to grow by 1.5 percent about that, resulting in a 3.7 percent growth per year. By comparison, state revenue in FY 2013 is expected to grow by 3.9 percent. In other words, if Missouri currently had HJR 43 in place, projected funding for next year would already exceed allowable limits.

Although HJR 43 was amended for the lid to be implemented only after the state returns to FY 2008 funding and when the current K-12 school funding formula is fully funding, **those additions simply delay the inevitable crisis that has been proven to result under TABOR.**

**Some facts:**

- FY 2008 funding is approximately \$400 million higher than the FY 2013 forecast amount. By comparison, FY 2013 revenue is \$500-\$800 million short of the revenue needed to fund state services. As a result, allowing a return to FY 2008 levels does little to offset the impact of TABOR
- The Governor's proposed FY 2013 budget includes a \$90 million reduction in funding for 4-year colleges and an additional \$18 million reduction in funding for community colleges. The cut to higher education equals about 13.5 percent of the FY 2013 funding levels. Under a TABOR lid of 3.7 percent growth, **Missouri could never restore this funding without reducing another area of the budget.**
- Similarly, Medicaid costs have increased by approximately 8 percent in each of the last two years. Under a TABOR lid of 3.7 percent growth, meeting Medicaid's mandatory costs would require cuts in other services.

In addition, HJR 43 would exempt any voter-approved tax increase from the calculation only for the first year of implementation. Meaning, even if voters want to increase revenue for vital services, that increase would be eroded as well under the measure. **HJR 43 would lock Missouri into the current fiscal crisis indefinitely.**

**We don't yet have information on what the Senate will do with the revised measure. We urge you all to contact your senators as soon as possible to ensure their opposition.**

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**Colorado passed a TABOR constitutional amendment in 1992, designed to restrain growth in government. This led to drastic cuts in funding for education and public health programs, among others. In 2005 Colorado citizens voted to suspend TABOR for five years. That period was up in January 1, 2011. At this time, the issue appears to be in the courts, with challenges as to it's constitutionality being argued; in the legislature, there is an effort to make it more difficult to achieve a constitutional amendment.**

For additional information on this and other legislative issues, see [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org), a nonpartisan website. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy organization working at the federal and state levels on fiscal policy and public programs that affect low- and moderate-income families and individuals.

**LEGISLATIVE NEWS**

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**LWVSTL REGISTERS NEW VOTERS !!**

The registration of new voters, under the leadership of Carol Portman, registered approximately **1200 new voters in 2011**. The most active registration took place at Naturalization Ceremonies for new citizens. Volunteers worked at 36 ceremonies, registering 1165 out of 2270 new citizens. In addition, registrations were carried out at Jennings Senior High School, a Forest Park Com. College Class that Linda McDaniel taught, AmeriCorps/Grace Hill, and Harrah's. The team sent completed registrations to 28 counties.

For accomplishing this monumental work, a devoted crew deserves kudos from all of us. Volunteers included: Stefany Brot, Evelyn Buretta, Lori Calcaterra, Esther Clark, Jim Clark, Marj Courtney, Joan Esserman, Susan Fluegel, Joe Kleeman, Rea Kleeman, Linda McDaniel, Cindy Mitchell. Carol Portman, Mary Beth Reynolds, Sydell Shayer, Judith Smart, Catherine Stenger, Billie Tebeau, Carol Tieg, Pam Todorovich, Carol Washburne, and K. Wentzien

*WINTER WONDERLAND*

We warned everyone who volunteered for Winter Wonderland to dress warmly—we didn't mention umbrellas!

Everyone spent the evening balancing an umbrella as we collected money from the cars going through Tilles Park to see the Christmas light display. There were lots of cars and lots of carriages! People were having a great time even with the continuing rain.



A really big thank you to all who worked that night to earn \$500 for the League. They post the name of the organization collecting that night but some people miss it and ask what group is working and we are proud to say The League of Women Voters!

We had 2 new members, Shari Heath and Catherine Stenger, who worked with us and they joined right in with our other great members thanking people for coming and wishing them a Merry Christmas. We hope they will be with us often and enjoy our events.

Another big thank you to Julie Behrens who put out the clipboard at the luncheon and encouraged people to sign up to work. It's always a great time when Leaguers get together.

The Leaguers at Tilles Park were Mary Ellen Brucker, Becky Clausen, Shari Heath, Elise Joerger, Denny Joerger, Linda McDaniel, Marty Ott, Mary Beth Reynolds, Catherine Stenger, and K Wentzien.

See you next year!

Barbara Elbrecht, Chair

## PRIVATIZATION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES STUDY

### **Privatization: The Public Policy Debate**

Produced by the Privatization of Government Services, Assets and Functions Study, 2011

©League of Women Voters

The purpose of this article is to provide a description of the evolution of the public policy known as “Privatization.” Privatization is a movement to deregulate private industry and transfer many government services, assets and functions to the private sector.

### **Claims and Concerns**

Those promoting privatization claim that:

- the private sector can provide increased efficiency, better quality and more innovation in services than the government;
- a small government will reduce costs to the taxpayer; and
- less regulation will provide a better environment for businesses, thus creating more jobs.

Those concerned about Privatization suggest the following:

- Profits: The mandate to make a profit will endanger public safety and reduce services available to the general public.
- Costs: There will be increased costs to consumers.
- Transparency and Accountability: Private companies will lack transparency, adequate oversight and accountability.
- Corruption: There will be increased corruption between government and for-profit, private companies.
- National Defense: Privatizing sectors such as ports, utilities and defense can result in foreign control and will put the country at risk in the event of war.
- Inequality: The scale of privatized programs will result in chronic high unemployment, low wages and abusive labor practices, leading to growing inequality between the wealthy and poor.

### **Larger than the United States**

The privatization movement is an international movement. Outside the United States, prominent divestitures of government assets have included Russia’s natural gas (Gazprom), Bolivia’s municipal water system in Cochabamba and the United Kingdom’s British Rail. Inside the United States, privatization has taken the form of deregulation, e.g., the deregulation of the financial services industry, redistribution of the taxes “burden,” e.g., efforts to reduce individual taxes on capital gains and inheritances, and reductions of corporate taxes; and privatization, the shifting of government programs to the private sector, e.g., the prisons and highways.

### **History**

In the 1970s, disillusioned with the Progressive Era vision, leadership in the increasingly global private sector became more active, asserting that burgeoning tax rates and government regulations of industry were inhibiting free trade. Efforts were launched to dismantle many Progressive programs such as restrictions on financial lending, elimination of worker’s compensation, elimination of control over food and environmental safety, and a revamping of the tax system by elimination progressive taxes and replacing it with a flat tax.

## Competing Theories (Privatization con't)

Milton Friedman: The intellectual inspiration behind the public policies to privatize in the United States has come from the Public Choice and Property Rights schools of thought. Prominent leaders advocating these theories include Milton Friedman, the Chicago School of Economics, and Fredrick Von Hayek whose book, *Road to Serfdom*, warned of the growing welfare state. The basic assumptions include:

Democratic political systems have inherent tendencies toward government growth and excessive budgets.

Expenditure growth is due to self-interested coalitions of voters, politicians, and bureaucrats.

Public enterprises necessarily perform less efficiently than private enterprises.

The more individuals stand to gain from tending to their property, the better it will be tended.

John Maynard Keynes: The dominant economic theory after WWII was that of John Maynard Keynes. Keynes believed that to break a depression, the government needed to stimulate demand. It was necessary to get money into the hands of consumers to jumpstart growth. Businesses would not borrow and build if no demand was in sight, no matter how low the interest rates might go. Keynesian theories were later refuted by economist Milton Friedman and this dispute is at the core of the ongoing debate regarding how to break the current recession/depression.

## Privatization in Practice

The key strategies as to how to downsize government and transfer programs to the private sector are described as:

Privatization by attrition

Cessation of public programs and disengagement of government from specific kinds of responsibilities. Examples might be the U.S. postal system.

Transfer of assets

Direct sale or lease of public land infrastructure, and enterprises. Examples might be federal and state parks, state-owned liquor stores and the proposed privatization of public libraries.

Contracting out (public/private partnerships) or vouchers

Instead of directly producing some service, the government may finance private services, for example through contracting out or vouchers. Examples might be charter schools, prisons.

Deregulation

Deregulation of entry into activities previously treated as public monopolies. Examples might be utilities, water, waste management, air traffic control and ports.

## Role of Government

The public agenda of privatization requires a close examination of the proper relationship between the government, business and civil society. What should the role of government be in protecting the environment, helping the poor, defending the nation, providing justice, ensuring democracy, protecting public health, ensuring public safety, providing education, promoting a thriving economy, and ensuring safe work environments and a living wage? Our country must seek a pragmatic balance between social and economic returns.

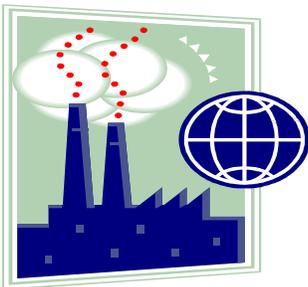
## SEWERS OVERFLOW: THE PROBLEM

Basically there are two types of sewer systems within the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District (MSD). St. Louis City and the adjacent St. Louis County area have a combined sewer system. That means that both wastewater and storm water go into the same pipes and are carried to treatment plants. The major portion of St. Louis County is on a separated system. That means that wastewater goes into one set of pipes to treatment plants and storm water is conducted through another, separate system.

**COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOWS (CSO):** In a combined system, overflows occur when the amount of water going into the pipes overwhelms the system and water is discharged directly into rivers, streams or lakes. They were built to allow some water to be discharged into streams as a safety valve to prevent water from flooding basements and streets during high rain events. The systems were designed to carry more water than the combined wastewater and normal rainfall demands. However, as development continued and more land was built on or paved over, the pressure on the systems increased. During moderate to high rain events, more stormwater may enter the systems than they were designed to carry. The aging of the systems also contribute to overflow problems. Other causes of overflows include power failures and blockages. Combined sewers were first built in St. Louis in the 1850's. At first, all water was discharged directly into the rivers. Later, plants were built to treat wastewater. It is estimated that there are 772 such combined systems in this country, largely in the northeast and Great Lakes areas.

**CONSTRUCTED SEPARATED SEWER OVERFLOWS (CSSO):** In a separated system, sewer overflows occur when there is more water in the wastewater pipes than the pipes can convey. Storm water gets into the wastewater pipes in a number of ways. Aging or damaged pipes and connections can allow storm water to infiltrate the wastewater system. Sometimes downspouts or drains that collect rainwater are connected inappropriately to the wastewater system. Overflow points, called constructed separate sewer overflows, were built into the system to act as safety valves to prevent backups into basements during heavy storms. To warn the public of these overflows, signs have been posted at the point of overflow and downstream. At many points, overflows seldom occur but under the Clean Water Act they must be addressed.

MSD was created in 1954 and is made up of 79 previous sewer systems. It is the fourth largest sewer district in the country. Most of the overflows were built before the District was created. Between 1992 and 2010, the District removed 300 overflows at a cost of 2.3 billion dollars.



To protect the health of residents of the District and the viability of our streams, the District must continue to address the problem of sewer overflows. The problem is a complex one. Not all sewer overflows pose the same risk or are the result of the same conditions. Different overflows will require different solutions. In future articles, we will discuss some of the approaches the District is taking and will initiate to mitigate the overflow problems.

Environmental Quality Committee

COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOWS

## *Save the Date for the Annual Theatre Party*

Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*

Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>

Reception 12:30 & Performance 2:00

Mark your calendars now for the League's annual Theatre Party. This year we are celebrating spring rather than fighting the winter weather with an April afternoon performance of William Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale* produced by Mustard Seed Theatre at Fontbonne University. This is one of Shakespeare's psychological dramas, a story of jealousy, betrayal, murder and forbidden love. Director Deanna Jent has set this production in modern day Seattle and the wilderness of Alaska featuring Native American myth and music.

The Mustard Seed Theatre has received much critical acclaim this year and Jent's original play, *Falling*, the story of a family's struggle with autism, has been selected to be presented off Broadway in New York later this year.

Look for a formal invitation to support the League by attending and sponsoring this League tradition. Tell your friends to join us for a wonderful afternoon.

## LWVUS SETS PRIORITIES

Every year at the January board meeting the League of Women Voters of the United States chooses priorities for the coming year. This year they asked local Leagues to let them know what we felt the national priorities should be. They are legislative and action priorities and generally limited to three, but others are selected for tracking and action if warranted. There are several factors or criteria used in the selection process (the same ones used by local Leagues): is there member interest and understanding, is action to be at the federal level, are other organizations working on the issue, is it timely, and are these issues the best use of limited resources of the national and local League?

At the January units we discussed program planning for the national level and priorities. We had very lively, interesting discussions. We had consensus on the following three priorities: funding of the UN, issues of the Supreme Court, Citizens United decision and the follow-up of campaign finance reform and voter ID. We will know by the end of the month what priorities were selected.

A report of LWVUS program planning will be in the next In League. The two units held on Thursday had to be cancelled in January because of snow, but they have agreed to extend their February units so their comments will be included in our report to national.

IN LEAGUE REPORTER

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

In February the International Relations Committee (IR) will make its yearly presentation to the St Louis units and we encourage all of you to come to your units. Our focus this past year has been on China. We know several of you have visited China, and we would hope to have your input during the discussion. China is in the news almost every day: many trade issues, currency problems, family planning edicts, foreign relations including its influence over North Korea and within oil- and mineral-rich Africa, and of course issues on many fronts with the United States. From the Nixon era on there has been a heightened awareness of this communist country of over a billion people. Our IR thought we should examine this country which promises to play a more important role in our lives as the years go by.



**We will not have an IR meeting as such in February.** In March we will examine proposals for our next topic of study; therefore, we invite any Leaguer interested in international studies to join us in selection process for our next subject.

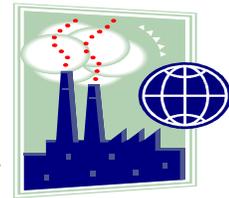
We meet on the second Friday of each month at 10 a.m. at the St Louis County Library HQ on Lindbergh. All are welcome – please join us.

Judith Smart, IR Chair

## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

EQ will meet Tuesday, February 14th at 7 pm at the League office. Contact Mickey Croyle ([mcroyle@wustl.edu](mailto:mcroyle@wustl.edu) or 314.395.7876) with suggestions or questions.

*Mickey Croyle,*  
Chair



## EDUCATION COMMITTEE



The Education Committee will meet on Saturday, February 4, 2012 at 9:30-11:30 am at the League Office. The committee has chosen three legislative issues of interest, funding- Education Foundation Formula, Charter Schools, and Student Transfer Policies. All members are welcome. If you plan to attend, please contact Marty Ott prior to February 4. In case of inclement weather and cancellation, you will be notified.

*Marty Ott, [martyott06@yahoo.com](mailto:martyott06@yahoo.com)*

Chair

## HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE

The Health Care Committee will meet at Cape Albeon on Thursday, February 9th, at 10:30 am in the private dining room. Call Katharine Kilpatric at 636.861.7148 if you have any questions relating to directions to the meeting place or if you plan to attend. Cape Albeon from Highway 270 and Dougherty Ferry: go west on Dougherty Ferry to Lake Bend Drive, (after you cross Big Bend) left on Lake Bend Drive and you are there.

*Katharine Kilpatric, [kkilpatric@yahoo.com](mailto:kkilpatric@yahoo.com)*

Chair



## PRIVATIZATION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES STUDY COMMITTEE

The study committee will meet on Friday, February 3rd at 3:00 pm at my home. Call 314.932.4904. All are welcome.

*Nancy Thompson, Chair*



COMMITTEES



## MEMBERSHIP

Address Changes:

Frances Hall  
11716 Hidden Lake Dr. #10  
St. Louis, MO 63138-1759

Jan Schoenfeld  
8600 Delmar Blvd. #8B  
St. Louis, MO 63124-1962

### TRIBUTES & MEMORIALS

In honor of Janet Fales' birthday from Barbara Harris, to LWV St. Louis

### IN MEMORIAM

**Violet Swallow, a member since 2004, passed away on December 18, 2011. Her son wanted us to know that she enjoyed reading all of the news about the League.**

### VOLUNTEER CORNER

Winter brings out the best in our volunteers. If you have some time to spare for the League we would love to have you. Please contact our volunteer coordinator, Barbara Harris at 314.968.3609 or [IMBJH@charter.net](mailto:IMBJH@charter.net).

Thanks to:

Esther Clark, Becky Clausen, Janet Fales, Kathleen Farrell, Agnes Garino, Betty Ann Gilbert, Mickey Hall, Barbara Harris, Pat Jones, Linda McDaniel, Nancy Miller, Cindy Mitchell, and Judith Smart who helped since our last newsletter. If we neglected to mention anyone, please let us know and we will acknowledge you in the next newsletter.



### From the Executive Director's Desk - Anna Mennerick

Here we go again, it is election season. All the best of the election cycle roller coaster without having to run for office myself. The presidential primaries are much more interesting than we thought they should be. The Missouri caucuses are much less defined than we had hoped they would be. And, our April municipal elections including candidate forums and voters guide are much closer than we realized they could be.

What I look forward to most of all is the spirit of cooperation we share as we pitch in together to provide these important services to voters. You may not get the chance to hear the gratitude directly, however, I often do. Please know non-partisan information is desired by and appreciated by many in our community. Thank you for all you do to help citizens make informed decisions when they go to the polls.

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