



# THE NASHVILLE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Nashville

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[www.LWVnashville.org](http://www.LWVnashville.org)

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Time	Place	Description
<b>Wednesday November 16</b>	7:00 pm to 9:00 pm	West End United Methodist Church 2200 West End Ave. Nashville 37203	<b>Family of Abraham—Toward a Common Vision</b> This event is designed to start a conversation about the common bonds shared by the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish faiths. By sharing in this conversation of faith, culture, and values, members of each respective faith will be able to learn about their counterparts as well as forge friendships. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Sayyid M. Sayeed, PhD, who serves as the National Director of the Office of Interfaith and Community Alliances in the Islamic Society of North America.
<b>Friday November 18</b>	5:30 pm to 7:00 pm	First Amendment Center 1207 18 <sup>th</sup> Ave. South Nashville 37212	<b>Awards Ceremony for TN Redistricting: Map It Out!</b> A reception from will welcome League members, Legislators, and Map It Out! participants. The Award Ceremony begins at 6:00 pm. Twenty maps were submitted by high school students and individuals. Awards will be presented for the best Tennessee House map, the best Tennessee Senate map, the best Tennessee U.S. Congressional map, and the best high school overall package including all three maps.
<b>Monday November 28</b>	5:15 pm to 7:00 pm	E/Spaces, Inc. 4322 Harding Pike, Suite 417 Nashville 37205	<b>LWV Nashville Board Meeting</b> Guests are welcome at the League’s monthly board meetings. NOTE: Location is upstairs of the Belle Meade Publix on Harding Pike near White Bridge Road. Covered parking is available. Use the elevator bank to the office building (not grocery), exit on the 4th floor, then left off the elevator, and left again to the conference room.
<b>Monday December 5</b>	11:30 am to 1:00 pm	Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services Metro Center 50 Vantage Way Suite 250 Nashville 37228	<b>LWVTN Action Committee Meeting</b> Committee members will continue to prepare League priorities for the 2012 Legislative Session. For more information contact LWVTN Director Barbara Devaney ( <a href="mailto:bdevaney@comcast.net">bdevaney@comcast.net</a> ) or LWVTN President Margie Parsley ( <a href="mailto:mparsley99@comcast.net">mparsley99@comcast.net</a> ).
<b>Thursday December 8</b>	5:30 pm to 7:30 pm	The Simmons 3814 Richland Ave. Nashville 37205	<b>LWVN Holiday Party</b> Join the League for a festive beginning to the holiday season at the lovely home of Kay Simmons. Current LWVN members, Metro Council members, the Metro School Board and Dr. Register, Tennessee legislators who serve Davidson County and friends of the League will be invited. Mayor Karl Dean and Judge Aleta Trauger have been asked to speak.

### From Nashville’s President

This is certainly the year to do hands on work to safeguard democracy and effect civic improvement! The LWVN has accepted so many opportunities to become involved—whether one-shot projects or ongoing service—and we thank those of you who are participating in the work. The League has many other niches to fill so let me know if you have the time and

energy to roll up your sleeves ([GJoSinger@aol.com](mailto:GJoSinger@aol.com)).

**Libby Thurman** and **Lynn Williams**, Voter Service co-chairs, met with Davidson County Election Commission officials to submit the results of the August poll watching effort by LWVN. Not only did the officials express appreciation for the overview report, but asked if we could supply specifics for each polling place. The Commission is currently auditing all of their sites, and would like to add our specific information to their reports. We are making a difference in how Davidson County elections are run by being objective observers. We need everyone to join in the effort that will be continued next year, beginning in March 2012. Please plan now to schedule some time during early voting or on Election Day in March and in November. You can use e-mail to contact Libby ([libbysthurman@gmail.com](mailto:libbysthurman@gmail.com)) or Lynn ([lynn@lynnwms.com](mailto:lynn@lynnwms.com)). Plans are in the works for poll watchers' trainings to be coordinated with the Election Commission and we are pleased and excited about that.

The League is participating in an ongoing effort to assure that correct information about the photo ID requirement for voting gets to Tennessee voters. The law goes into effect on January 1, 2012. Election Commissions around the state have had town hall meetings and are working hard to spread the word about the new rules. The LWVN can help by making sure each one of us knows the requirements and then shares them with everyone we meet. We have the latest updates on our website ([www.lwvnashville.org](http://www.lwvnashville.org)) along with links to the Tennessee Secretary of State's website. If you know of a group that would like to have a program about Tennessee's photo voter ID law, the Election Commission is ready and willing to provide a speaker.

We also need members who are interested in registering people to vote. We are already getting requests for voter registration drives and we need everyone's help because these requests will become more numerous as the election nears. It would be ideal to have a separate committee to oversee our registration efforts. Our Voter Service chairs are willing and able to train you to do registration. They just cannot be everywhere at once and need help to fulfill community demand.

In addition to the wonderful opportunities regarding voting and elections, we have had fantastic speakers at our First Friday luncheons. Kudos to VP **Vickie Zeigler** for her tireless work in bringing these programs to fruition. Our latest discussion about immigration issues was organized by LWVN Human Needs Chair **Jan Sobotka**. It was informative and well attended by many Leaguers and community members. It builds on work done over a number of years by **Debby Gould** and **Karen Weeks** and going forward will help cement relationships based on common bonds with others in Nashville.

LWVN Health Care Chair **Patricia Stokes** and **Sue Bredensteiner** worked hard on the "Community Forum—Tennessee's New Health Insurance Marketplace" held in Hendersonville on November 7. Both worked with LWVN member **Craig Anne Heflinger**, a Vanderbilt professor, to formulate the program content and Patricia was a superb program moderator. The LWV of Hendersonville came out in force to register attendees and welcome community members including many small business owners who have special interest in the American Care Act and its implementation. A big thank you to LWVHV Co-President **Katrina Gay** for her Board's support and efforts. **Brian Haile** deftly represented the Haslam administration and explained to the audience the pluses and minuses of Tennessee building its own Health Care Exchange to provide insurance access to individuals and small businesses. Haile's slide presentation is available at <http://www.tn.gov/exchange> about halfway down the page following: "A presentation about Tennessee and the Insurance Exchange can be viewed here." A PDF of Craig Anne's PowerPoint about the health care needs of Tennessee small businesses is available on the LWVN website (<http://lwvnashville.org/Voter.html>).

Our work with Leagues across the country on the Education Consensus will have concluded by the time this *Voter* goes to press, and thanks to **Debby Gould** and her committee including **Karen Weeks** and **Ethel Detch** for presenting and conducting three meetings with meaningful discussions around what the federal government's role should be in education. Thanks also to all who took advantage of these meeting setting aside the time to inform yourselves on this timely topic and participate in the discussion. The results of the consensus will be available in the spring from the LWVUS.

In all, it is a great time to be in the League. And, even with all the work going on, we will make time for fun at our annual Holiday Party on December 8 at the home of Kay Simmons. Mark your calendar and come celebrate your League!

In League, *To Singer*

## LWVN Education Consensus: Federal Dollars in Local Schools—How Much is Enough?

Part II of LWVN Education Consensus took place on October 28 and a marathon double session on the evening of November 10. Committee member **Ethel Detch** and Metro Nashville Public Schools Executive Director of Federal Programs and Grant Management **Julie McCargar**, EdD, formerly Tennessee's Executive Director of Federal Programs, assisted League Education Director **Debby Gould** in offering a seamless transition into what role the federal government should play

in funding public education? How do we balance the responsibilities of local, state, and federal government to provide for strong educational systems in our country? Members ably addressed questions to determine equity in funding for local education as well as the balance between categorical and competitive grants. These were particularly timely questions for Tennessee as the state moves forward with ambitious education reforms. For new and long-time members, this is an excellent opportunity to see League grassroots processes at work. LWVN member **Lee Fairbend** assessed the program saying, “As a first-time participant in the League's consensus process, I must say that I was very impressed, both with the process, which I thought was well crafted, and the facilitator. Debby Gould not only knew the subject well, but called upon knowledgeable experts to expand on the information given. She was also adept at keeping the group on track in a reasonable manner.”

As follow up to LWVN consensus meetings, Education Director **Debby Gould** has provided us with some information about the issue of school vouchers to be addressed in the upcoming legislative session beginning in January 2012. House Bill 388 was introduced during the last session by Representative **Bill Dunn** and deferred to a Summer Study Committee for further discussion. On November 1, the House Education Subcommittee met to learn more about the pros and cons of school vouchers.

As proposed, the bill would give families in failing schools in the state's four largest school districts (Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, and Knoxville) an option of applying for a voucher that would pay partial tuition at a private school. Proponents of the bill have stated that it would provide parents with another recourse to help children enrolled in failing public schools. Opponents have described school vouchers as a money drain for public education and a subsidy for private schools.

During a lengthy hearing the legislators heard from the Ohio Secretary of State about the implementation of their state's school voucher program. **Dr. Jesse Register**, representing the four large school districts in the state, made a statement outlining the reasons why all four school systems oppose the proposed school voucher program.

At times discussions among committee members were both passionate and contentious. Education Chairman Montgomery urged the committee to do extensive fact finding before considering this bill. It was clear, however, that many committee members had already formed their opinion.

In light of League interest in funding and equity issues in education, this piece of legislation concerning school vouchers will merit careful monitoring during this upcoming legislative session.

## Dollars & Sense

by LEE FAIRBEND, CAROL MCSWINEY, AND MARIAN OTT

This month LWVN Finance Director **Carol McSwiney** shouts out to members, saying: “Many thanks to all of you who have made a contribution to the Nashville League's Operating Fund, as we certainly always need to pay our expenses. By the time you read this, you have received a fundraising letter from President Jo Singer and me, asking for your support. On behalf of our wonderful organization, I thank you for your consideration and am hopeful that you will be able to help us in this fund drive, however small or large an amount. If perchance you have not received the letter, please give me a call at 385-1502.”

To help us understand the interrelationships of League dollars, LWVTN Treasurer **Marian Ott** explains how our dues support the state organizations and come back to benefit the LWVN. “The role of the LWVTN is to provide leadership on state issues. Similarly as with the local leagues, the per-member-payments from local leagues are not sufficient to cover the expense. The major expense of the LWVTN is the lobbyist; additional contributions are solicited specifically for the lobbyist to encourage donations. These contributions supplement other funds, such as the per-member-payments, to enable the LWVTN to afford the lobbyist. Of course the LWVTN also provides leadership in state issues through the LWVTN Action Committee and Fall Conference and Spring Council, which highlight state issues.

“The LWVTN maintains a general liability policy that covers all local leagues, and saves LWVN approx \$300 per year. In addition, the LWVTN also administers the Education Fund saving local leagues dollars and paperwork to process use of income from that separate fund.”

And wrapping up our monthly focus on League monies, LWVN Treasurer **Lee Fairbend** reminds us that: “In any organization, it's important to have sufficient oversight of the financial records. Oversight of our financial records is fairly simple but thorough. Due to the size of our budget, we are encouraged to have a fiscal review every year—a process far less rigorous than an audit, but just as important to our members to insure that funds are being handled properly.

“I'm happy to report to you that this year's review, which looks at all of our financial activity including bank accounts, bills

and government reporting, for the past fiscal year, July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011, was well received. Thanks to Sue Bredensteiner and Carol McSwiney for lending their services to this task on September 20.

“Of course, the Nashville League's Board receives a report on the financial status each month. This includes copies of the balance sheet, income statement, and budget to actual report. Since all members are welcome at board meetings, you too can have a peek at the finances! Which reminds me, as a member of the League you are welcome, at any time, to request copies of the financials. And, at this time of year, all Leagues are asked to file a brief report with the IRS, which I have just done.”

## Voter Service

Committee Co-chairs **Libby Thurman** and **Lynn Williams**, along with LWVN President **Jo Singer**, recently presented the “Poll-Watching Observation Summary Report from the August 2011 Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Election” to the Davidson County Election Commission. The report is available on the LWVN website:

[http://www.lwvnashville.org/files/lwv\\_poll\\_watcher\\_report2\\_.pdf](http://www.lwvnashville.org/files/lwv_poll_watcher_report2_.pdf).

Looking forward, the Committee is actively recruiting volunteers for a poll-watching project that will be conducted during the March 2012 presidential primary. This is a non-partisan project to observe the implementation of the Photo Voter ID law in Davidson County precincts during March and November 2012 elections. Training, coaching, and check-lists for observers will be provided. A final report of observations will be published online and presented to officials. Are you available for a poll-watching shift during early voting (February 15 through February 28) or on Election Day (March 6)? Please contact Libby Thurman ([libbysthurman@gmail.com](mailto:libbysthurman@gmail.com) or 497-4942) or Lynn Williams ([lynn@lynnwms.com](mailto:lynn@lynnwms.com) or [615-383-0778](tel:615-383-0778)) to participate.

Training and orientation will be provided in January 2012. The committee hopes to make the March 2012 poll-watching effort extensive, since it will be the first election after implementation of the Photo Voter ID Act. The Committee is searching for an enthusiastic undergraduate or graduate student studying communications, public relations, journalism, political science, or a related field to carry out a public relations strategy and help to guarantee the success of our poll-watching project. This person will work under the direction of LWVN Voter Services committee co-chairs, both of whom hold advanced degrees in related fields. Required competencies include social media, press releases, and making contact with news and editorial outlets. Please forward this information to any interested parties or contact Williams or Thurman if you know of a student who meets these qualifications.

Finally, the Nashville Storm, Nashville's minor league football team, has expressed interest in setting up voter registration tables during home games of the 2012 season. This is a great opportunity to register voters, but we need your help to make it happen. If you are interested in registering voters at Nashville Storm home games, or would like more information, please contact us as listed above.

## A Photo Montage of the LWVN Month

### LWVN Education Consensus, Part II



**November First Friday—What’s Your Take on Immigration**

with **Avi Poster**, Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Nashville; **Nathan H. Ridley**, director of Government Relations at Bradley, Arant, Boult, and Cummings, and **Stephen Fotopulos**, executive director, Tennessee Immigration and Refugee Rights Coalition.



**Community Forum—Tennessee’s New Health Insurance Marketplace**





## Observer Corps

New for 2011—An Observer Corps E-Mail Member List! The LWVN is organizing our Observer Corps through email mailings. Observer Corps members will receive e-mails reminding them about Metro Government meetings as well as State Government meetings when the Legislature reconvenes in January. For example, Metro Council meets the first and third Tuesdays at 6:30 pm at the Metro Courthouse, One Public Square. Members are not obligated or committed to attend meetings, but may choose to attend whenever it is possible. The League is concerned about several important issues this year, including the state budget, education, and photo voter IDs. We can use your help monitoring meetings and keeping our members and the public informed. Please check out the Observer Corps page on our LWV Nashville website (<http://lwvnashville.org/ObserverCorps.html>). If you would like to be added to the official Observer Corps, you may phone (297-4145) or e-mail Barbara Gay ([barbara.b.gay@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.b.gay@gmail.com)).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### COMMUNITY CINEMA AT THE NASHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Community Cinema is a public education and civic engagement initiative that utilizes free, public screenings of documentaries produced by the Independent Lens to motivate public discussions of critical social issues. Co-sponsored by the Nashville Public Library, Nashville Public Television, Nashville Film Festival, and Hands On Nashville, these screenings are scheduled on Saturday afternoons each month in the auditorium of the main branch of the Nashville Public Library (615 Church Street). It is also possible for groups (think LWVN) to arrange additional viewings of films.

This year, a series of films are focusing on the international issues of “Women and Girls Lead”—an appropriate topic for League members. Two of these films might be special interest to LWVN members. Please contact Education Director **Debby Gould** if you are interested in joining a group to view and discuss these films ([debbygould@bellsouth.net](mailto:debbygould@bellsouth.net)).

**December 17** at 3 pm: Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai  
Maathai received the Nobel Peace Prize for her transformational work of planting trees in Kenya.

**January 14** at 3 pm—Daisy Bates: First Lady of Little Rock

Bates led the charge to desegregate Central High School in Little Rock in 1957.

**THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

The League of Women Voters of Nashville gives a special shout out to **E|SPACES**—a new kind of office—designed for people who work from home, their cars, coffee shops, hotel lobbies, in other words mobile, connected professionals. This attractive business center combines the functionality of state-of-the-art offices with a wide variety of work and meeting spaces that offer the aesthetics of a comfortable, inviting, and professional community. Meeting rooms can be scheduled in advance. The LWVN appreciates the opportunity to hold our monthly meetings at **E|SPACES**, 4322 Harding Pike, Suite 417, Nashville, TN 37205 (615.777.8514; [info@espaces.com](mailto:info@espaces.com)).

**ATTENTION:** *The Nashville Voter* became a digital publication in Spring 2010. If you have received this copy of the *Voter* in the mail, it means the League of Women Voters of Nashville has no recorded e-mail address for you. Please help us by sending your e-mail address to [LWVNash@gmail.com](mailto:LWVNash@gmail.com). This will ensure you receive all LWV newsletters, event invitations, meeting announcements, and Call to Action alerts. Thank you, *Voter* Editor Sue Bredensteiner ([suebred@mindspring.com](mailto:suebred@mindspring.com)).