



# Dates & Data

Volume 89, Issue 6 February 2010

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS WINNETKA · NORTHFIELD · KENILWORTH

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The Illinois primary election is February 2. In addition to selecting party candidates for the November general election, important local issues will be on the ballot, including the New Trier High School Referendum. Remind your friends and neighbors to vote--every vote counts!

## **Women's History Month Luncheon**

The North Shore Leagues are pleased to announce that Elizabeth Brackett, PBS correspondent and author of *Pay to Play*, the recent book about ex-Governor Blagojevich, will be the featured speaker at the Women's History Month Luncheon on Saturday, March 6. The luncheon will be held at the Glen Club, 2901 West Lake Avenue, Glenview. Social hour is at 11:45, luncheon at 12:15, and Brackett's remarks at 1:00. The price is \$38 per person. Watch for your invitation to this always enjoyable event.



## *From the President*

Several very important issues that all League members need to support and actively promote/participate in this spring are The Illinois Fair Map Amendment initiative, the US Census, the February 2 Primary, and the Action Alerts that are sent to you from the US and Illinois Leagues.

The Census forms will be sent out no later than April. Please make sure that you complete and return your forms and encourage everyone you know to participate. Because the resulting Census count is the basis of our representative government and affects just about everything that is government-related, completing and returning the Census form is vital. Reapportioning of seats in the US House of Representatives and redistricting is based on the Census count.

This year the League is very involved in getting the Illinois Fair Map Amendment placed on the ballot in November. I recently sent you an email regarding the support of the State League for the Illinois Fair Map Amendment. This is an extremely important issue and a high priority for all League members. Please take a petition with you wherever you go and ask your friends, neighbors, co-workers, and everyone you talk with each day to sign the Fair Map Amendment petition. This endeavor is basic grassroots but without your help we cannot expect to get the real redistricting reform Illinois needs. Help us obtain enough signatures to get the Illinois Fair Map Amendment on the ballot in November 2010. Go to [www.ilfairmap.com/sign-the-petition/](http://www.ilfairmap.com/sign-the-petition/) for instructions and to download the petition.

### **Highlights of the Illinois Fair Map Amendment**

- \* Places map-drawing duties in the hands of an independent commission
- \* Allows de-nesting: Representative districts need not be contained within a single Senate district
- \* Requires a 2/3 majority vote of the General Assembly to approve maps submitted by the independent commission and does not allow the General Assembly to draw maps on its own
- \* Removes the Governor from the approval process
- \* Increases public transparency by requiring public hearings, public display of proposed maps, and allowing submission of maps by the general public
- \* Requires the commission to use neutral criteria that will specifically protect minority voting rights and eliminate unduly favoring a political party
- \* Removes the current tie-breaker provision and replaces it with fair resolution of map-making process. If the commission fails to produce an approved map, the Illinois Supreme Court would choose a "Special Master" to review all maps and data and draw the district boundaries.

Your board expected that 2008--a Presidential election year--would be busy. However, I think many of us are surprised at how very busy 2010 is, not only with the elections but also with the many League issues that require our work and support. Thanks to all of you for the important League work that you do--we need you! *Karen*

More information on the Illinois Fair Map Amendment (adapted from the Glenview League of Women Voters).

## THE ILLINOIS FAIR MAP AMENDMENT: WHY WE NEED IT

Under the present map drawn in 2001 by politicians, there have been 630 general election contests for seats in the Illinois House of Representatives and Illinois State Senate. Data from the Illinois State Board of Elections shows that:

- \* 4 percent of these contests were decided by 5 percentage points or less; only 27 percent of races were truly “competitive.”
- \* There was no challenger in almost 45 percent of the contests since 2001.
- \* There were 547 contests in which an incumbent was seeking reelection. Incumbents won 536 of those races with only 11 losses. Incumbents have a overwhelming 98% reelection rate.

### **The problem--Illinois' legislative mapping process is flawed and political**

- \* Under the existing system, legislators draw district lines behind closed doors.
- \* Which party draws the districts is decided by pulling the name of the party out of a hat.
- \* Districts are drawn to protect incumbents.
- \* Districts are drawn to protect friends and punish enemies. Power is entrenched in the hands of a few, and it's almost impossible to vote them out.
- \* Districts lack true competition.

### **The solution--A new, fair mapping process, based on a Citizens' Commission Proposal ( Illinois Reform Commission)**

- \* Legislators DO NOT draw maps--an independent commission does.
- \* Maps are drawn in open and transparent process, with public input.
- \* Specific criteria must be used to draw maps to protect minority voting rights and aim to eliminate partisan advantage.
- \* Map drawers may not unduly favor any political party. Maps are drawn for people, not politicians.

### **The process--Citizen Initiative**

- \* Two ways to change the system – through the legislature or through the citizens.
- \* Legislature will not change the system--citizens must.
- \* Need 500,000 signatures of registered voters by end of April. Voters must sign a petition specific to their election authority, usually the city or county.
- \* Signatures get the IL Fair Map Amendment on the November 2010 ballot for voters to decide.
- \* If the people vote for the new IL Fair Map Amendment, it will become law and we will finally have a redistricting process that is transparent and fair.

## 2010 Census: Answers to Ten Frequently Asked Questions

1. When can I expect to receive a Census questionnaire?

You will receive the census questionnaire in mid-March.

2. How long is the questionnaire?

It contains 10 questions and should take 10 minutes to complete.

3. What are the questions?

1. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment or mobile home on April 1, 2010?
2. Were there any additional people staying here April 1, 2010 that you did not include in Question 1?
3. Is this house, apartment, or mobile home owned by you or someone in this household, rented, or occupied without payment of rent?
4. What is your telephone number?
5. Please provide the name of each person living in the household.
6. What is the sex of each person living in the household?
7. What is the age and date of birth of each person living in the household?
8. Is the person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
9. What is the person's race?
10. Does this person sometimes live or stay somewhere else?

Note: Some of these questions have been shortened. Full wording on the official website of Census 2010

4. How do I return the completed questionnaire?

Return it in the postage-paid envelope provided.

5. And if I don't return the form?

You may receive a visit from a census taker, who will ask you the questions from the form.

6. Do I have to talk to the census taker?

Yes. Your participation in the 2010 Census is vital and required by law.

7. How will my son/daughter who is away at college be counted?

Your son/daughter should be counted where he/she sleeps most of the time and, in this case, that would be at college.

8. Are only U.S. citizens counted?

No. Everyone is counted, including babies.

9. Could I get in trouble with the Immigration Service?

No. Your information is kept confidential. Not even the President of the U.S. can see it.

10. What is the purpose of the Census?

Data collected during Census 2010 will be used for the allocation of federal dollars among the states for social and human service programs. Your community loses \$1200 per year for every person not counted. The census is also used for determining the apportionment by state of the 435 seats in the U.S House of Representatives.

## **NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL LEAGUE**

### **Congress Must Finish Health Care Legislation**

League urges quick response to nation's health care crisis.

### **Supreme Court Ruling Undermines Basic Pillar of Democracy in U.S.**

League calls decision to allow unlimited corporate funds in campaigns 'constitutionally irresponsible' and a 'tragic mistake.'

### **League Urges House to Complete Work on Health Care Reform**

League President Mary G. Wilson sent a letter to the House of Representatives urging them to do what is necessary to finish work on health care reform in order to send a bill quickly to the President for his signature.

### **ACTION ALERT: Stand Up Against Weakening the Clean Air Act**

### **League Opposes Amendment Attacking Clean Air Act**

The League and coalition partners sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid urging opposition to Senator Murkowski's amendment attacking the Clean Air Act.

Click on each headline for complete information.

## **NEWS FROM THE STATE LEAGUE**

### **State Convention planned for 2011**

Plan ahead--Convention is coming next year--and coming to our area!

The LWVIL Convention will be held June 10-12, 2011, at the Skokie Holiday Inn. The state League will be counting on many of our League members to be part of the Convention Local Arrangements Committee. Many jobs will be available, such as ushers, microphone monitors, doorkeepers, credentials verifiers; this will be a terrific opportunity for League members to enjoy the convention experience even if they aren't delegates.

Note: Especially since Nancy Marcus, one of our WNK League members, is President of the State League, let's all pitch in and help. Convention is a lot of fun, as well as work for the local Leagues--we need your help. Be sure to put it on your calendar.

## Save these dates

### **February**

Great Decisions  
Mondays 1 PM  
Winnetka Library

### **February 1**

Board meeting  
9 AM coffee  
9:15 Meeting  
Winnetka Park  
District office,  
540 Hibbard Rd.

### **February 2**

Primary election,  
including New Trier  
High School  
referendum

### **February 6**

LWVIL Issues Briefing  
8:30 AM - 3 PM  
University Center,  
525 S. State St.,  
Chicago

### **March 6**

Women's History  
Month Luncheon  
11:45 AM  
Glen Club,  
2901 West Lake Ave.,  
Glenview

## NEWS FROM THE WNK LEAGUE

### **Great Decisions/Great Discussions**

The Great Decisions discussion group meets on Mondays through February at the Winnetka Public Library at 1 PM. The topics for 2010 are Special Envoys, Global Crime, US-China Security Relations, Global Financial Crisis, Peacekeeping, Russia and its Neighbors, Kenya and R2P, and The Persian Gulf.

### **Members welcome at board meetings**

Members are always welcome at meetings of the League board. Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held at the Winnetka Park District office, 540 Hibbard Rd. Check "Save these dates" for dates and times.