



91st  
Annual  
Meeting  
Workbook

2011

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**Report to the Members**

**League of Women Voters of the  
Houston Area**

**91st Annual Meeting  
League of Women Voters of the Houston Area  
Thursday, May 19, 2011**

**Sosa Community Center  
1414 Wirt Road  
Houston, Texas 77055**

**5:30 p.m. Silent Auction and Dinner**

**6:00 p.m. Speaker—George Greanias, METRO President & CEO**

**6:30 p.m. Annual Meeting**

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*Quorum (Bylaws, Art. VIII, Sec. 3): We need 26 members present to conduct business at this meeting.*

**League of Women Voters of the Houston Area  
91st Annual Meeting  
Thursday, May 19, 2009**

**Order of Business**

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <b>Call to Order</b>  | Nancy Parra          |
| <b>Organization of Meeting</b>                                | Nancy Parra          |
| Appointment of Parliamentarian                                |                      |
| Appointment of Timekeeper                                     |                      |
| Appointment of Committee to Approve Minutes                   |                      |
| Adoption of Order of Business                                 |                      |
| Adoption of Rules   |                      |
| <b>Treasurer's Report</b>                                     | Barb Swartz          |
| <b>President's Report</b>                                     | Nancy Parra          |
| <b>Executive Director's Report</b>                            | Christina Gorczynski |
| <b>Presentation &amp; Adoption of Local Program 2010–2011</b> | Lynn Walshak         |
| <b>Presentation &amp; Adoption of Changes to the Bylaws</b>   | Leslie Taylor        |
| <b>Adoption of 2010–2011 Dues</b>                             | Barbara McCormick    |
| <b>Presentation &amp; Adoption of 2010–2011 Budget</b>        | Barbara McCormick    |
| <b>Awards</b>   | Linda Cohn           |
| <b>Nominating Committee Report</b>                            | Betty Oertel         |
| <b>Election of Officers for 2010–2011</b>                     | Nancy Parra          |
| <b>Recognition of Outgoing Officers and Directors</b>         | Nancy Parra          |
| <b>Presentation of New Board</b>                              | Nancy Parra          |
| <b>President's Remarks</b>                                    | Linda Cohn           |
| <b>Direction to Board</b> (I wish the Board would...)         | Linda Cohn           |
| <b>Announcements</b>  | Linda Cohn           |
| <b>Adjourn</b>  |                      |

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## **President's Report to the Members 2010—2011**

### **Nancy Parra**

The Houston Area League has accomplished many things this past year from fund raising to voter service to studies and programs. We began our year with a summer tour of the new Planned Parenthood Building, meeting with the CEO and other staff members. A busy summer culminated with our very successful fall fundraiser honoring the women in Houston's government, hosted by Mayor Bob and Elyse Lanier. Our fund raising activities this year went especially well, including our recent 2011 Repast honoring Beverly Kaufman and Sue Schechter.

In the fall, we partnered with several different organizations in producing voter service events, extending our presence in the community. We partnered with the American Society of Civil Engineers in sponsoring I-Day Houston, which included forums on infrastructure, a candidate meet and greet, and two debates. We cosponsored with the Center for Citizen Education at Rice University a County Clerk Debate, and with One Voice Texas, a Juvenile Justice Candidates Forum. We joined The Center for Houston's Future and The Institute for Sustainable Peace in holding the Candidate Café Dialogues.

We published and distributed over 50,000 Voters Guides for the November General Election, and we developed a new, interactive online voter guide that was accessible through the Vote411.org website. We answered the telephones at Channel 2 and answered hundreds of calls coming to the office during the election. We continued our voter registration services at the Houston Area Naturalization Ceremonies, registering over 14,000 voters. Our Voters Key was expanded to include school trustee information and was distributed to government officials, libraries and schools.

We formed a study committee and conducted a study on Human Trafficking, arriving at consensus. Our Focus on Issues meetings were well-attended and dealt with timely topics such as education, coastal issues, juvenile justice, redistricting and healthcare. We produced Updates on Issues or Facts & Issues monthly. We held a special Unit meeting on the LWVUS position on Arms Control. Fifteen people participated in Lobby Day, and we were able to speak with many of our representatives.

Our league received the LWVUS Online Engagement Award at the National Convention, and our online presence continues to grow. We have over 1,500 fans on Facebook and a very active Twitter account. Our web site has expanded, and the number of people using the site to pay for memberships and events and to make contributions continually increases. Organizationally, we updated our Bylaws to reflect our current structure, and we developed new policies common to most nonprofit corporations.

Our league completed its participation in two important LWVUS programs. For the program Connecting Future Legislators with Civil Society, Colombia and Brazil, we again hosted in October and November two fellows from Colombia, who interned in the offices of Council Member Ed Gonzalez and County Commissioner Sylvia Garcia. We also finalized the Youth Engagement Program, connecting with over 6,000 students at 24 Houston area high schools.

I have enjoyed serving as President of this wonderful organization for the past two years, and I want to extend a special thanks to everyone who helped make my tenure as President so innovative and successful—the League's Officers, Directors, and Committee Chairs; our Executive Director and Office Assistant, and all of the LWV-HA members who have participated and helped with our many activities. As we move forward with a new President and Board, I hope that everyone continues the momentum needed to expand our organization. We have achieved a great deal over the past two years, and we can continue to accomplish even more.

## Executive Director's Report 2010—2011 Christina Gorczynski

During Fiscal Year 2010-2011, I worked to see that all goals of the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area were achieved. The primary goals for this fiscal year were to strengthen the League's financial health, to increase visibility in the community, to build diversity in the League, to perform voter services during the November 2010 general elections, to complete a program study on human trafficking, and to improve strategic plans for the future. Although I participated in the planning and implementation of everything from the budget to the redistricting meeting to voter registration to office management, the following highlights the exciting, new programs that I completed as Executive Director during this fiscal year.

**Fundraising:** I developed a new fundraising events schedule. During the fiscal year, the League hosted a successful fall fundraiser on August 25, 2010 celebrating Women's Equality Day event at the Home of Mayor Bob and Elyse Lanier. In November, we hosted the Second Annual Second Hand Rose fundraising event at Ann Herbage's house. In December, we improved our End of Year giving program and used the model provided by LWVUS to develop a legacy giving program. For the remainder of the fiscal year, I worked closely with the Repast committee co-chairs, hosts, honorees and volunteers to organize the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Repast with a Pair of Political Pioneers. We brought in over \$100,000 from our fundraising events this year.

Additionally, I assisted the Development committee with grant writing, including identifying possible grants, building good working relationship with grantors, and writing grants in conjunction with the president and other LWV leaders. During January and February, I worked with a team of League board members to draft and submit grant proposals to HEI and the Simmons Foundation. We expect to hear from both grantors in the beginning of fiscal year 2011-2012.

**Youth Engagement:** During fiscal year 2010-2011, the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area prioritized Youth Engagement. In 2010, the LWVHA youth engagement program consisted of 30 events, including: high school presentations, specials events and individual service projects. Volunteers encouraged and registered thousands of young people to vote. On average 1 in 4 unregistered young people registered to vote when volunteers encouraged them. The League focused on speaking to small groups of young people, between 35-50 students at a time, based on the discovery that smaller assemblies were more effective for voter registration drives. Overall, the League has 11 brand-new, dedicated volunteers under the age of 30 who encouraged 5,861 young people and registered 1,493 to vote during the 2010 election cycle. To engage the newly registered voters, the League uses online communications to maintain contact them.

**Online Engagement:** Currently, the League has 1571 fans on Facebook, 458 followers on Twitter, and 3509 subscribers to Vertical Response. I will continue to build our online presence during the next fiscal year.

I thank all of you who participated in League activities this year, and I look forward to working with all of you during the coming year. We are in a stronger position financially than we were last year. We have an incredible volunteer army that includes brand-new volunteers from diverse communities. During our 91<sup>st</sup> year, I know that we will continue our commitment to public service and our mission to Make Democracy Work.

### Reports on Special Projects

#### **A Repast with Political Pioneers 2011—Sharon Cunningham and Ryan Leach, Co-Chairs**

The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Repast was held at the Four Seasons Hotel on Friday, March 25, 2011. Approximately 265 persons attended the luncheon where we honored Beverly Kaufman, a Republican who recently retired as Harris County Clerk, and Sue Schechter, a former state elected official and Democratic Party chair. Our Hosts were June Deadrick and Catherine Mosbacher. Miya Shay of KTRK, Channel 13, emceed the event and the Honorees were interviewed by Ernie Manouse of PBS. Miya and Ernie were new to the event, and both were sharp and entertaining. Thirty-nine current and former elected officials attended.

Interestingly, Beverly and Sue were the Hosts at our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Repast and 10 years later shared the stage as Honorees. We presented an award to Andrews Kurth, LLP to commemorate their tenth year as a Table Sponsor of the event.

While Sharon Cunningham and Ryan Leach co-chaired the event, our Executive Director Christina Gorczynski primarily led the effort. In addition to Sharon and Ryan, key roles were filled by Jackie Alfred, Linda Cohn, Sarah Schimmer and Jan Wilbur.

The event netted almost \$31,000. New contributor categories of Presidents Table tickets for \$250 each and Special Friends who purchased ten tickets to reserve a table for \$750 – 1,000 brightened the revenue picture while we experienced a reduction in the number of single ticket sales at \$75 each. Continental Airlines gave us two tickets which we auctioned for \$1600, and we sold the table centerpieces for additional income. Given the continuing economic downturn, which caused several of the League's corporate friends to cut back on their contribution, the results are very good.

### **Development—Jan Wilbur**

This fiscal year LWVHEF received the last of the three-year grant from Houston Endowment Inc. to hire an Executive Director. LWVHEF has applied for another three-year grant in the amount of \$240,000 to continue our work. LWVHEF also applied for a two-year \$30,000 grant from The Simmons Foundation. Both grants are pending.

LWVHEF applied to the Ray C. Fish Foundation for \$30,000 but was turned down because the foundation is not accepting any new grant applications and to KBR for \$10,000 in operating funds, which was not successful. We also received two LWVUS EF grants: \$5900 for Global Democracy and \$3600 for Youth Engagement. Income from the Fall Fund Raiser exceeded the budgeted amount by \$6,000.

## **Reports of the Vice Presidents and Their Committees**

### **Organization Vice President—Leslie Taylor**

Believe it or not, your organization takes quite of bit of organizing. Over the summer of 2010, we reviewed our filing system and made sure that board reports, minutes and the like for years past were printed and filed at the office. Next came the project of getting the directory compiled and print ready. We sent 13 boxes of old files to be archived at the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, which is a part of the Houston Public Library System's Special Collections Division. The chief archivist reported that the Houston LWV papers are often used by researchers. We also cleaned up some legal paperwork to make our change of name to the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area official with LWVUS and the Texas Secretary of State.

Thanks to Bee Franks-Walker for her work on locating meeting spaces, and Celia Chipman for working practically every week to get out membership renewal letters and updating the membership databases. Mary Lee Burrus and Alice May Berthelsen hosted a luncheon of unit leaders in the early fall both for feedback and planning. Unit attendance this year was strong in several units and holding its own in a few. We are getting better at tracking unit attendance.

We tried a few new locations for Focus on Issues meetings. Attendance at our two evening meetings was strong and our lunchtime meeting on Human Trafficking was also great. Overall attendance at Focus on Issues meetings this year was about double the attendance last year. The Sosa Community Center location on Wirt Road is fairly central to our membership and free. Thanks to Wayne Derrick for noticing the new building in his neighborhood. If you want a Focus on Issues meeting nearer your home, find a community center, bank or grocery store community room near you and let us know over the summer. Meeting places must be booked many months in advance and free locations are increasingly difficult to find.

New member Penny Milbouer jumped right in and lent her editing skills and experience to co-editing the VOTER

and keeping the website up to date. Penny tracked down many back Facts & Issues publications to post on the website. If you ever want to go back to restudy an issue, just go to [www.lwvhouston.org](http://www.lwvhouston.org) and tell all your friends about the great store of information available there.

The everyday running of the office is ably supervised by Christina Gorczynski, our executive director. Michelle Brown is the calm and courteous voice you hear answering our phones and taking your reservations for lunches. Several other organization projects are still on the back burner (and we have all those new policies to follow). There is plenty left to accomplish in my second year as your organization vice president. I need your help. Do not be shy. Volunteer tonight.

#### **Bylaws and Policy Committee**

The report of the Bylaws Committee was published in the March Voter and is found elsewhere in this workbook. The same committee worked on reviewing all existing policies of LWV-HA and the Education Fund. We surveyed IRS publications and many other sources to come up with a list of common policies adopted by most nonprofit corporations and 501(c) (3) entities. We adapted those policies to our own operations and put together a policy book so that all policies are accessible to board members, LWV-HA members and staff. A draft policy book was presented to the Board of Directors April 8 for a decision by the Board on April 29, 2011.

#### **Membership—Jan Wilbur**

As of March 31, 2011, the Houston League had 308 members, 24 of whom are household members. This compares with 374 members, 26 of whom were household members at this time last year. However, last year, our total membership included 78 Nationally Recruited Members (NRMs -- members who contributed to or joined at the national level). LWVUS phased out NRMs as of Dec. 31, 2010, since most NRMs did not join their local Leagues. We made every effort to get our NRMs to join the Houston League and several of them did, but the majority did not. Leaving out NRMs, the Houston Area League had 296 members last year compared with 308 this year.

#### **Voter Bulk Mailing Committee—Gwen Essinger**

We mailed our bulk mailing four times this year. We are saving money for the League by combining months. We also put the information on our LWV website. I hope that you have been receiving your LWV- Houston mail in a timely manner. Please let the League office know if you do not receive your mail in good condition. We always welcome new volunteers to help with our work. Our regular crew members are Ellen Goins, Millie and Louis Whittington and Lynn Walshak. Thank you to each of my volunteers and to Leslie Taylor for doing such a good job as editor.

#### **Advocacy Vice President—Laura Blackburn**

While the first half of this year was spent primarily doing the study on human trafficking, a number of letters were sent to our U.S. representatives and senators—regarding the Disclose Act, the START Treaty, public finance, clean air and EPA. Additional letters were sent with regard to climate change.

Thus far we have answered numerous Action Alerts from LWV-TX during the legislative session. Subjects covered included greenhouse gases, Voter ID, abortion rights and the appropriations bill.

Fifteen people went to Lobby Days—a great turnout! We were able to see almost all of our representatives and senators in Austin: 25 representatives and 7 senators. Thanks to all of those who went.

Locally, we were part of the effort to remove Harris County Environmental Services from the Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services Division. We were successful!

In addition, Jan Wilbur has worked with a number of LWV-HA members, who are attending the redistricting meetings and plan to interact with the City recommendations. We will know more about this effort by the Annual

Meeting.

A number of our members serve on Greater Houston Partnership committees—Jan Wilbur, Nancy Parra, Laura Blackburn, and Gwen Essinger. In addition, Linda Cohn has served on the LWV-Texas committee on redistricting.

Other organizations we have been working with include Air Alliance Houston, Houston Rescue and Restore Coalition, the Houston Galveston Area Council and One Voice Texas.

We have continued to meet with our Advocacy Team, encouraging all to advocate!

### **Community Relations Vice President**

Many thanks to the chairs and committees who made the 2010-2011 League year an excellent one for voter service and community outreach.

City Council Observer—Shirley Gibson  
Voters Guide—Sherle Frost Watson  
Voters Key Harris County—Marlene Cohn  
Voter Registration—Linda Cohn  
Debates and Forums—Aimee Turney and Nancy Hentschel

### **City Council Observer—Shirley Gibson**

Shirley attended most of the weekly sessions of Houston City Council. She wrote monthly reports for the VOTER and for the League Board to keep us apprised of matters coming before Council.

### **Voters Guide—Sherle Frost-Watson**

We published and distributed 52,000 *Voters Guides* for the 2010 November General Election. This year we used the new interactive software provided by LWVUS to contact the candidates and to receive their responses to our questions. The software provided the basis for the *411.org Online Voter Guide* that we produced and also provided the initial layout for the printed version of the guide. Sherry Collier, our graphics and layout person, found the new system very easy to navigate and said that she was able to get everything she needed about the candidates from the system.

We sent 257 invitations to candidates for the 135 races covered in Harris and Fort Bend Counties. For the 229 candidates in contested races, we received 215 responses, 192 of them with photos. The Fort Bend County candidates were included only in the *411.org Online Voter Guide* and not in the printed version. Thanks are due to Sharon Cunningham and to Travis Sheive for their many calls to candidates reminding them about completing the online questionnaire.

Our *411.org Online Voter Guide* was easy to navigate. After entering your street address, city and zip code and then clicking on Find My Races, a map with your address and a list of your districts were displayed. Candidates and their information were displayed by type of race. The software also enabled the user to select candidates and print a ballot. According to Google analytics, there were 35,871 visits to the Online Voters' Guide data related to Texas from 360 cities.

Both the online and printed voters guides turned out very well, and thanks are due to everyone who worked on putting the guides together and seeing that they were distributed. Sherry Collier sent an email to the Voters Guide committee that she will no longer be able to work on the guide, citing personal reasons. Sherry wrote, "After much long deliberation, I am sad to say this will have to be my last Voters Guide. I have struggled with this decision because working with all of you on this project has been a labor of love for me, but I believe it's time for me to let it go." We will all miss working with Sherry and the great job she did.

### **Voters Guide Marketing Committee— Cynthia Canales Gorczynski**

For the November 2010 general elections the League distributed 52,000 *Voters Guides* via corporate sponsors, nonprofit organizations, schools and libraries. This year, we were able to provide copies free of charge to: public and private high schools and universities; county and city multiservice centers; all of the Houston and Harris County public libraries; all locations of Neighborhood Centers, Inc.

We raised the following funds to cover the production and distribution costs: **\$10,945**

|                        |          |
|------------------------|----------|
| Corporate Sponsorships | \$10,450 |
| Member Donations       | \$400    |
| Non-Member Donations   | \$95     |

The final costs for production and distribution were: **\$8,520**

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Layout and data entry     | \$2,890 |
| Printing and Reproduction | \$5,630 |

### **Voters Key—Marlene Cohn**

We updated the content and layout of the Harris County Voters Key. This year the Voters Key includes information on the school trustees for the ISDs in Harris County, which was compiled by Stephanie Hrabar. The Voters Key contains names and contact information of all officials representing Houston and Harris County at the federal, state and local level. We printed 3,000 copies, which were distributed to attendees at our Repast Luncheon and to government officials, libraries and high school teachers. Additional copies can be obtained at the League office for a suggested donation of \$2.

### **Voter Registration—Linda Cohn**

We continued to provide on-the-spot voter registration at Houston Area Naturalization Ceremonies. In calendar year 2010, approximately 80% of Houston's newest American citizens entered the electorate within minutes of their oath. That tallies out to 14,418 new voters, each warmly welcomed to the body politic by an LWV volunteer.

In November, 2010, Mr. Don Summers, the newly elected and installed Harris County Tax Assessor/Collector and Voter Registrar, issued certain procedural directives that would have enfeebled this robust program. After significant discussion, both privately and in the public forum, Mr. Summers was persuaded that, in the absence of preclearance review by the United States Department of Justice (to date neither sought nor granted), the United States Voting Rights Act of 1965 forbids his intended adjustments. Our program shall endure.

We also offered voter services at every League-sponsored event throughout the 2010 election season and by invitation at various corporate, educational and public venues.

### **Debates and Forums Committee—Amy Turney and Nancy Hentschel**

For the November 2010 elections, LWV-HA partnered with the American Society of Civil Engineers in sponsoring I-Day Houston, a large scale voter service event at the George R. Brown Convention Center. I-Day Houston included forums on Houston's infrastructure, a candidate meet and greet and two debates between candidates for Harris County Judge and Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector. LWV-HA cosponsored a gubernatorial debate with the Harris County Department of Education that was preceded by a forum on county educational issues. We also cosponsored with the Center for Citizen Education at Rice University, a Harris County Clerk debate and with One Voice Texas, a Juvenile Justice Candidates Forum. We joined The Center for Houston's Future, the Association for Conflict Resolution, and The Institute for Sustainable Peace in holding the Candidate Café Dialogues.

### **Houston Housing Authority Elections**

LWV-HA helps to conduct and monitor the required elections at Houston Housing Authority venues. This year the Debates and Forums Committee covered elections at 8 of these sites.

## **Program Vice President—Lynn Walshak**

An interesting and informative **summer tour** was conducted for us by staff of the New Planned Parenthood facility, 4600 Gulf Freeway, off I-45 south, followed by lunch at a nearby Luby's Cafeteria. Peter Durkin, CEO of PP, welcomed us and discussed their new facility and the organization's reasons for relocation. PP is, like the LWV HA, both a 501c(3) and 501c(4) organization. The topic for **September** Focus on Issues, was Update on Education. Guest speaker was Representative Dr Alma Allen. She presented data and information about attitudes in Austin. There had been much publicity about the problems in our education system. Meeting was held in the IBC Bank, Community Room, 5615 Kirby Drive. Also in September, a very successful program was held at the George R. Brown Convention Center and Discovery Green. This program was initiated by the Houston Chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers that sought partnership from the LWV-HA for this endeavor. They wanted to promote the education of the public as to what a city's infrastructure is. Thus its title became I-Day. The **October** Focus on Issues was Coastal Issues Facing the Gulf of Mexico, at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 5501 S. Main St. Dr. John Jacob, Teas Sea Grant, Texas Cooperative Extension, made a presentation focusing on sea level rise, climate change, the pros and cons of the Ike Dyke, the loss of coastal wetlands and the potential impact of more hurricanes. Mary Ellen Whitworth and Carolyn Mata arranged the program. A Facts & Issues, Coastal Issues, facilitated members study in the Unit meetings.

**November**, the Annie E. Casey Foundation Juvenile Justice Alternatives Initiative was presented by Nancy Baird, the Initiative site coordinator. The meeting was held at SOSA Community Center, 1414 Wirt Road. The Initiative works to reduce juvenile crime and has resulted in dramatic savings for Harris County. Leslie Taylor arranged the program **December** was the annual recognition of newly elected officials. The reception was held at the Black Labrador Pub, 4100 Montrose Blvd. The event was co-sponsored with Women Professionals in Government. The annual Program Planning meeting in **January** had a great deal of enthusiastic discussion as the Program Committee Chairs made reports and proposals for new studies were put forth. The votes on new studies approved Voter Participation including early voting schedules and an Election Administrator for Harris County. Leslie Taylor, with considerable innovation, made arrangements for the meeting and catered lunch, in her office building on Navigation Blvd.

**February** is National Black History Month. Millie Walker made arrangements for a program titled Redistricting: Are You Being Represented? A great panel was obtained: Dr. Richard Murray, UH Hobby Center for Public Policy, keynote speaker; Rogene Calvert, Texas Asian-American Redistricting Initiative; Claudia Ortega-Hogue, Natl. Assoc of Latino Elected Officials; and Carroll Robinson, Natl. Assoc for the Advancement of Colored People. Mary Benton of KPRC-Channel 2 moderated the panel discussion on the importance of a transparent redistricting process. Meeting was held at Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center, 2020 Hermann Drive. **March** Focus on Issues covered Human Trafficking, led by Ed Gallagher and Ruben Perez, both Assistant U S attorneys of the Southern District. A number of law enforcement personnel were present, representing different government levels, and non-profit organizations officials, who contributed to the information presented. Meeting was held at the SOSA Community Center, 1414 Wirt Rd. **April** Focus on Issues was held at the United Way, 50 Waugh Drive, covering Health Care Legislation and impact of new health care legislation. George Masi, Executive Vice President and CEO, Harris County Hospital District, spoke on the changes at the Hospital District that are needed to conform to the new health care legislation. Freddy Warner, System Executive, Public Policy & Government Relations, Memorial Hermann Hospital, gave comments on hospital compliance issues and the latest information on the health care legislation in Congress and the Texas Legislature. A Facts & Issues: The Affordable Health Care Act - 2011 Update, was issued for Unit study. The **annual meeting**, at which new LWV-HA officers are to be elected, will be held at SOSA Community Center, 1414 Wirt Rd. **May** 19, 2011.

## **Children's Issues—Marlene Lobberecht**

Oral and written testimony was provided at the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) hearing regarding improvements to the Child Care Licensing standards. The League was represented in numerous Texas conferences regarding early childhood education, child abuse, child care issues/licensing child advocacy, child health/safety, and child nutrition/obesity. I completed an appointment on the House Interim Economic & Workforce Development Committee Work Group. Our charge was researching the child care subsidy system and

recommending systemic improvements. The findings resulted in the filing of one omnibus and three related bills. The Work Group continues to advise legislators on committee substitute wording throughout the legislative process.

One Voice Coalition:

LWV-HA members continued participation in One Voice Texas with a member representative serving on each of the Work Groups, and attending the Membership Open Forums. One Voice announcements and minutes were provided to the Board of Directors.

#### **Health Committee—Gwen Essinger**

We have not had committee meetings this year because we had completed all of our work in defining our position on health care.

We are having our Facts & Issues meeting on health care legislation on April 8. Our speaker is George Masi, Executive Vice President of the Harris County Hospital District. He will bring us up to date on the changes that the Hospital District has had to make to conform to the new health care legislation. Freddy Warner of Memorial Hermann Hospital will bring us up to date on the Texas Legislature and Congress. I will be attending the unit meetings in April to lead the discussion of the present health care legislation. There is no need for consensus.

I am also on the board of Health Care for All Texas. We meet monthly and are still working to get Single Payer or Medicare for All.

#### **International Affairs Committee—Marge O'Connor**

Because the National office of League of Women Voters was updating our position on Arms Control during 2010, the Committee spent 2010 researching new developments in Arms Control, as well as staying abreast of the changes in the national position. In preparation for the January unit meetings on Arms Control, the Committee put together an update and discussion of the issues that arise in this area. We sent resource people to each of the unit meetings. The discussions were lively but largely focused on the impact of Arms Control on our locale - specifically, personal protection.

This year the Committee is researching the doctrine of Right to Protect ("R2P"), so often discussed in the context of Libya and the Sudan.

Committee members are Millie and Louis Whittington, Joan and Bert Golding, Henry Horne, Laura Blackburn, and Pat Cunningham. Most Committee members are actively involved in international organizations such as the United Nations Association, the World Affairs Council of Houston and Great Decisions discussion groups.

#### **Natural Resources—Carolyn Mata**

The Natural Resources Committee members continued their involvement in several community environmental groups.

Programs

- October General Meeting, which featured a talk on Rising Sea Level by John Jacobs

Meetings and Conferences Attended

- Monthly RAQPAC (Regional Air Quality Planning Committee) at Houston Galveston Area Council
- Monthly meetings of the Harris County Flood Control District
- Quarterly meetings of the Galveston Bay Council
- Quarterly meetings of the Public Participation & Education Subcommittee and the Budget & Priorities Subcommittee of the Galveston Bay Council
- Quarterly meetings of Air and Climate Change Committees at Houston Partnership

#### **Human Trafficking Study—Laura Blackburn, Study Chair**

The League of Women Voters Houston Area undertook a study on Human Trafficking as approved at the 2010 Annual Meeting. The study committee published a Facts and Issues and presented a March Focus on Issues meeting. Committee members served as resource persons at each unit meeting. The following consensus was reached by the Units:

The Houston Area League of Women Voters is opposed to all forms of human trafficking: international and domestic, sex and labor, and adults and children. To reduce this form of modern-day slavery, we support stronger penalties for traffickers and stronger intervening care for victims, including housing, clothing, physical and psychological health care, and legal services. We support increased public and private funding for safe houses for minors and increased funding for training and education of law enforcement personnel and judges on how to recognize human trafficking.

Explanation of consensus:

In studying the proposed state laws offered this legislative session, our members supported:

- Changing the current second degree felony for compelling prostitution of a minor to a first degree felony
- Including human trafficking and compelling prostitution in 3g offenses
- Allowing involuntary termination of parent-child relationship in certain cases
- Adding prostitution, compelling prostitution, and aggravated promotion of prostitution to the list of what constitutes a “common nuisance”
- Building community awareness of how to recognize human trafficking, how to report suspected human trafficking, including but not limited to, promoting and publicizing the human trafficking hot line number – 1-888-3737-888

## **Proposed Rules for the Annual Meeting**

### **Composition**

Admission to the Annual Meeting is open to voting members, associate members and guests. Only voting members may vote.

**Quorum** (ART VIII, SEC 3, LWV-HA BYLAWS)

### **Debate**

Only voting members have the privilege of the floor. No person may speak twice until all who wish to speak have had an opportunity to do so. Each speaker shall identify herself or himself. Each debate speaker shall be limited to one minute, plus the time required to complete a sentence.

### **Closing Debate**

A motion to halt debate is stated as "I move the previous question." This motion, which must be seconded, is not debatable and must be put to an immediate vote. A two-thirds vote is necessary to adopt this motion. If adopted, debate is immediately ended, and the motion under debate is voted upon.

### **Voting Procedures**

A majority of those qualified to vote and voting shall constitute an election of officers. Nominations for officers may be made from the floor by any voting member at the appropriate time, provided the consent of the nominee has been secured.

### **Bylaws**

Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting, provided the amendments have been submitted to the membership in writing at least one month in advance.

### **Annual dues**

Annual dues are determined by a three-fifths vote of those present and voting.

### **Budget**

The budget requires a majority vote.

### **Voting Procedures**

Voting procedures for program adoption are described in "Adoption of Program."

### **Governing Rules**

The Rules contained in "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised" shall govern in all cases to which they are applicable and not inconsistent with the Bylaws.

## 2011–2012 Adoption of Local Program

### Adoption of Program

Program adoption consists of presentation, discussion and debate, and voting.

1. Recommended new program -- new items suggested by the members and recommended by the board.
2. Non-recommended items -- issues suggested by the members but not recommended by the board...

Some board guidelines for recommending items are member interest and potential for active involvement; local scope; timeliness in terms of community interest and political climate; impact of League involvement.

**Recommended New Program:** Presentation will be by item, following which questions for clarification may be asked. Debate and discussion will not occur until all program items have been presented, as indicated in the agenda. Each program item will be debated and voted on in the order of original presentation.

**Non-Recommended Program:** Following presentation of the above recommended new program, any member may move consideration of a non-recommended item provided *the president has been notified prior to the presentation of the recommended new program*. Only items previously proposed to the Board may be presented. Two copies of the motion of consideration should be given to the secretary. The member moving consideration is allowed three minutes in which to state the reasons. Questions for clarification may then be asked. The vote on the motion to consider will follow immediately. A majority vote is required to order consideration of the non-recommended item. Items voted consideration will be allotted time in the period set aside for discussion and debate of proposed new program items.

**Amendments:** Amendments to the wording may be made for the purpose of clarification, emphasis, or editorial change. Amendments may not enlarge the scope or change the meaning of the item. Further action will be postponed until the time set for adoption.

### Recommended New Program

The board recommends one new local program study, Increasing Voter Participation in Harris County.

Focus: A study on ways to increase voter turnout in Harris County

Scope: Study the current voting patterns in Harris County and formulate ways in which voter participation can be increased, such as:

- Identify current voting statistics for Harris County, based on race, nationality, gender, income and education.
- Identify current statistics on early voting in relation to the overall voting statistics.
- Determine whether early voting hours and locations favor certain segments of the population over others
- Research whether early voting actually means that more people vote or only that more people vote early
- Consider whether an Election Administrator for Harris County separate from the County Clerk's office would promote more solutions to increase voter participation.
- Identify successful solutions and processes that can lead to greater numbers of voters especially among populations with low voter turnout.
- Promote awareness of the importance of voting especially among populations with low voter turnout.

Rationale for League of Women Voters Houston Area Study: Harris County and the Houston Area in particular have very low voter turnout, among the lowest in big city areas. This is especially true for certain segments of the population, such as the Hispanic and Asian populations, and among certain age groups, such as college-age voters and young, black males. Since some of these populations are among the fastest growing in Harris County, it is imperative that these population groups become involved in the political process through voting.

It has been proposed that increasing early voting opportunities may increase voting among these segments of the population based on the theory that current early voting hours and locations favor senior citizens, business people with flexible schedules and professionals who get time off to vote. However, an Op-ed column in the *NYT* of October 25, 2010, "Voting Early, but No So Often," concludes that early voting only means that more people vote early not that more people vote. It has also been suggested that an Election Administrator for Harris County separate from the County Clerk's office would promote more solutions to address low voter turnout.

Given the current low-voter turnout in the Houston Area, reasons for this phenomenon should be analyzed more thoroughly and successful solutions identified and promoted.

Chair: Ana Cummings; Co-Chair: Wayne Derrick

## **Report of the Bylaws Committee to League of Women Voters of the Houston Area**

Presented to the October 29, 2010, Board Meeting and approved for submission to the membership with minor changes.

The committee suggests the following changes to the bylaws:

Article I Sec. 1 and throughout: When abbreviation is used, it will be “LWV-HA” and “LWV-TX.”

Whenever the bylaws state that information should be “sent” to the membership, change to “made available.” These are found in:

ARTICLE VII. Sec. 3.  
ARTICLE IX, Sec. 3.  
ARTICLE X Sec. 3(b)

Article IV. New language:

Sec. 5. THE TREASURER. The treasurer shall see that monies are properly collected and deposited in authorized financial institutions designated by the board of directors, and that current true and accurate financial records with full and correct entries made with respect to all financial transactions of the organization are kept. The treasurer shall see that financial obligations of the LWV-HA are met and that monies are disbursed only upon order of the board or in accordance with the adopted budget. The treasurer shall present statements to the board at their regular meetings and present a report to the annual meeting. The treasurer shall make certain that appropriate internal controls are established and followed. The treasurer shall annually arrange for a financial review committee, a professional review, or audit of the books, as the budget allows.

Rationale: The treasurer no longer collects and receives monies and makes deposits. The treasurer no longer keeps the roll of membership. These revisions allow for other types of review of the books in addition to a formal audit.

Article V. New language:

Sec. 3 VACANCIES – change heading to VACANCIES & REMOVAL

Add to end of Section 3: At any regular or called special meeting of the board of directors, any one or more of the officers and/or directors may be removed by a two-thirds vote of all of the directors presently in office. Any officer or director whose removal has been proposed shall be given at least ten calendar days notice of intent to take such action and an opportunity to be heard in person at the board meeting where the potential removal is to be discussed.

Rationale: The current bylaws have no method for removing an officer or director who has neglected his or her duty in office or whose conduct tends to injure the good name of the organization, disturb its wellbeing or hamper it in its work. Under the current bylaws removal would have to be conducted under Chapter XX of Robert’s Rules of Order, which calls for a cumbersome procedure involving an investigating committee, referral of charges, and a formal trial.

Article V. Board of Directors

New provision after the first paragraph of Sec. 5 MEETINGS

Special meetings may be conducted by electronic means, such as telephone conference call, video conferencing or email. The use of electronic meetings shall be reserved for those issues needing a decision before an in-person meeting is scheduled. Procedural rules shall be established by the Board.

Rationale: Texas law requires that corporations provide for electronic meetings in the articles of incorporation or the bylaws if this type of meeting is to be held. This addition would give the Board the option of having electronic meetings when emergencies arise or quick action is necessary. The suggested language is modeled after the LWWUS bylaws.

Minor Change: Sec. 7 Indemnification.

Correct typographical error in the reference to Article 1396-2.22A.

Add reference to federal law granting immunity: “and the Volunteer Protection Act (42 U.S.C. § 14501 *et seq.*)”

#### ARTICLE VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Suggested revised language:

**Sec. 2. POWERS.** The executive committee may make decisions not affecting major League policy and may conduct emergency business between board meetings. The executive committee shall act as the committee for the recruitment of any executive director. All decisions made by the executive committee must be ratified by the board at its next regular meeting.

#### ARTICLE VII. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Sec. 4 Add a new sentence at the end:

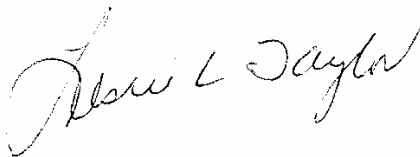
The budget may be adjusted by a 2/3 vote of the board throughout the year if necessary.

#### ARTICLE IX.

Sec. 1 Take out “immediately following the annual meeting.”

Sec. 2. Take out “from the units, and.”

Respectfully submitted,



Leslie Taylor, chair. Committee members: Marlene Lobberecht, Barb Swartz, Laura Blackburn, Nancy Parra, Leslie Taylor.

Submitted to the board on October 29, 2011.

## Current Positions

### Government

#### City Government (1993)

1. Support a strong Mayor/Council form of government with the following components:
  - elected Mayor who is chief administrative officer of the city; who appoints all department heads subject to approval of Council; who has the power to remove department heads and staff members; who presides over Council and votes on all Council business but does not have the power of the veto.
  - a City Council which functions as a strong legislative branch; has direct input into the formulation of the agenda for Council meetings; participates fully in goal setting for and in the development of the annual budget; can independently establish standing committees; has access to a centralized council research staff which can research issues for Council as a whole; and has adequate access to legal counsel and services of the legal department.
  - an elected City Controller who is independent of the Mayor and City Council.
2. Support a City Council electoral structure that provides for:
  - members elected both at-large and by single-member districts.
  - a majority of the members elected from single-member districts
3. Support a City Council of optimal size that is determined by criteria which insure:
  - representation of all citizens
  - accountability
  - accessibility
  - effectiveness
  - affordability
4. Support of single-member district lines based substantially on population and which also:
  - ensure that minority rights are not diluted.
  - reflect geographic common sense.
  - maintain the integrity of neighborhoods.
  - create districts which are compact, contiguous, and continuous in shape.
5. Support 4-year terms for the offices of Mayor, Controller, and City Council with staggered terms for Council.
6. Support for a special election to be called to fill a Council vacancy when ten months remain in a two-year term or twenty months remain in a four-year term.
7. Oppose term limitations for elected officials. Support of appropriate measures, or “escape clauses,” which will enable citizens to vote for candidates of their choice if term limitations are in effect. (1991/1992)

**History:** The League last updated this position in the 1990's.

**Action:** In 2010, the League monitored the task force named to look at term limits and make recommendations. Since the elimination of term limits was specifically prohibited from being considered, the League supported two-four year terms with an escape clause that would allow a candidate to run after having been off council for one term. Council received the report of the task force but took no action.

#### City Charter

Support a complete revision of the city charter of Houston. (1974)

#### Financing City Government

1. Support financial policies that:
  - are guided by sound principles of fiscal responsibility and operational efficiency;
  - provide current revenues sufficient to support expenditures;
  - are based on concepts of appropriate long range planning methods;
  - are based on diversified sources of revenue.
2. Specifically support:

- the use by the city of additional sources of revenues in order to decrease the reliance on property taxes for funding the General Fund Budget;
- the maintenance of debt service costs for all types of financing at a level not to exceed 20% of the General Fund revenues;
- the maintenance of a General Fund undesignated ending fund balance whose level will be a minimum of 5% of the total expenditures less debt service costs;
- the setting of user fees and charges by the city at levels sufficient to recover the costs of providing those services, except for those services associated with provision for the general welfare and common good;
- the development of financial and management processes and systems which result in operational efficiency and cost containment. (1989)

**History:** The study was undertaken to formulate a position on the policies and principles basic to financing City Government, beyond the budget process, and give the LWV-HA the means to address such concerns as the city's over-dependence on property taxes for funding the operating budget, its need to maintain a healthy emergency fund balance, the level of city indebtedness beyond investment in capital improvements, and others.

**Action:** No action has been taken on this position in recent years.

### **Budget Process**

1. Support a budget process that meets these criteria:
  - is based on long range planning;
  - provides for thorough budget review and evaluation;
  - has well defined channels for citizen input and review.
2. Specifically support:
  - a budget format that provides for budget controls and accountability and provides for analysis that reflects policy goals and directions;
  - a budget process that is regulated by well defined timelines for each step of the budget process, and that these timelines are written into the city's code of ordinances, and that these timelines should provide for adequate timing for public study and input with each step;
  - a budget process that encourages public participation by such specific means as:
    - public meetings on budget policy and issues held by the mayor and council members in different sections of the city;
    - publishing a brief budget summary in newspapers that would include important budget revenues and expenditures and highlights of major policy changes;
    - availability of the proposed budget when given to council with provision for a number of copies available to the public at cost;
    - giving adequate notice of all proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making all public records accessible.
    - notice of all hearing dates.
  - a budget process that provides for testimony by the individual citizen at the public hearing or as provided for by state law prior to the adoption of the proposed budget. (1988)

**History:** This position was first reached in 1975. It was updated in 1988 to emphasize public input, long range planning, and availability of budget documents a budget calendar; and support for integrating the Capital Improvement Budget with the Operating Budget.

**Action:** Much of what the League advocated has been achieved, and no action has been taken in recent years.

### **Capital Improvement Budget**

Support the consideration of the capital improvement budget along with the operating budget. (1988)

### **Libraries**

Support measures to insure adequate library facilities for Houston area residents, including merger of city and county systems and the regional library concept. (1969)

**History:** When this study began in the late 1960's, libraries were few and of low quality. Library budgets were politically easy to cut.

**Action:** Since 1969 this position has been used to lobby City Council for needed funding. We have also worked with other groups seeking increased library hours and personnel. There have been significant improvements. Although merger of the city and county library systems has been politically impossible, the two systems do cooperate.

### **Annexation/Disannexation**

1. Support annexation by Houston of the Ship Channel Industrial Districts, with negotiation of short-term contracts in the interim. (1977) The LWV-HA recognizes the importance to the city of Houston of the power to annex additional geographic territory in order to protect its economic base and to provide a government which addresses regional needs. However the League feels that Houston should exercise this power within the following guidelines: (1979)
  - Checkerboard patterns should be avoided;
  - No unincorporated areas should be left surrounded by the city (except those within the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of another city);
  - Houston should not pass over economically depressed areas as it proceeds with annexation;
  - Houston should plan annexation in advance in order to make sure that city departments are prepared for expanded services;
  - Houston should notify residents of areas to be annexed in advance and give them the opportunity to help plan how needed services will be provided and/or coordinated with facilities already in place;
  - Houston should provide services related to public health and safety services immediately upon annexation, and set a schedule to provide other services within a reasonable time;
  - Houston should provide adequate levels of services to all annexed areas, and this should be done without extra assessments to residents of areas where such assessments would be a severe burden. These should include: improving streets and drainage to a level at which services can be provided to people living on those streets; and provision of city water and wastewater service within a reasonable time if the area has no adequate facilities;
  - establishes an impartial board to weigh the importance of annexation to the health of the city and the ability of the city to accommodate the needs of the area. (1979)
2. Support a comprehensive planning process for growth, open spaces, and capital investment in the ETJ, recognizing the possibility of eventual annexation of these areas. (1979)
3. Support the adoption of a subdivision ordinance for the city and the ETJ. (1979)
4. Support policies encouraging development within the city limits. (1979)
5. Support a policy encouraging water districts to consist of a single parcel of land. (1979)
6. Support a long-range policy of annexation and the adoption of a policy for annexation and disannexation to include:
  - legal clarification of circumstances under which disannexation would be permitted;
  - a review board, preferably at the state level, to hear cases of disputed annexations and disannexations;
  - a requirement for an annexing city to establish a baseline for the provision of municipal services to be maintained in all parts of the city and provided to newly annexed areas at the same level. (1983)

**History:** The last use of this position was for the annexation of Kingwood in the 1980's.

**Action:** No action has been taken in recent years as no annexation has taken place.

### **Comprehensive Planning**

1. Support planning in Houston's extraterritorial jurisdiction through:
  - the development of goals and priorities for Harris County by assessing the needs of the total community with maximum public participation;
  - central planning coordination and implementation tools for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;
  - development of a uniform performance building code for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;
  - feasibility studies for the consolidation of planning services between municipalities and Harris County;

- increased use of Harris County of the planning services of the Houston-Galveston Area Council, and the development by H-GAC of practical services reflecting the planning needs of Harris County. (1976)
2. Support the development and adoption of a long-range flexible, constantly updated, comprehensive plan, developed with adequate citizen input. This plan should include:
- the coordination and centralization of the planning process in Houston, with the strengthening of a central planning authority;
  - the development of goals, objectives, and priorities for Houston through a process which assures maximum public participation;
  - a broad-based planning commission with members with diverse backgrounds and expertise;
  - a comprehensive plan which includes economic, social, and environmental concerns as well as physical development;
  - public involvement in the planning process at the neighborhood level, and public hearings on proposed plans;
  - an explanation to the public by the City Council of why any given plan is or is not adopted; (1976)
  - a strong role for the City Planning Commission, committed to the full range of powers granted it by the city charter, and to the coordination of its work with an equally strong Planning Department; cooperation between the private and public planning entities, with public participation throughout the process;
  - vigorous enforcement of current regulations, and the enactment of additional ordinances which focus on civic concerns such as traffic congestion and storm water runoff; preserve and improve the quality of life in Houston neighborhoods;
  - the use of growth management techniques such as performance standards, impact fees, and both short-term and long-term capital improvements budget planning;
  - a city ordinance requiring the setting aside of land for open space and parks. (1984)

**History:** Studies in 1976 and 1984 addressed the lack of long-range planning in both the City of Houston and Harris County and coordination or planning between the City and the County.

**Action:** LWV-HA has consistently lobbied for a zoning ordinance for the City of Houston. In 2003, the League joined with the Blueprint Houston project to promote public participation in comprehensive city planning.

### **Public Defender**

The board approved the following position statement: The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area supports measures to create and then adequately fund and adequately staff a public defender office for Harris County. The league supports and encourages court administrators and judges to continually assess and improve the system of appointing private counsel to represent those indigent defendants who are not represented by a public defender. The league supports efforts to monitor and adjust workloads of both public defenders and appointed counsel with the goal that each indigent defendant receives competent legal advice and representation.

**History:** This position was adopted in 2009. A notebook of research materials and electronic copies of research materials are available at the LWV-HA office.

**Action:** Soon after taking the position, the League testified before Commissioners Court to applaud its application for a grant from the Texas Task Force for Indigent Defense and followed the revision of the grant application.

### **Tax Abatement & TIRZ**

The LWV-HA supports the use of tax abatements and tax increment reinvestment zones in the Houston region with appropriate oversight and public input

The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area supports tax abatements as an economic development tool in competitive site situations to attract new “magnet industries” and to retain existing businesses and encourage them to upgrade and provide new jobs.

The League also supports tax abatement as an environmental incentive, for historic preservation, and to revitalize blighted areas. Tax abatement contracts should be analyzed for public benefit and rigidly monitored for compliance and should be terminated if contract terms are not met.

The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area supports Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs) with appropriate oversight and analysis by the governmental jurisdiction(s) involved and community input, to develop or redevelop blighted areas, for land use management, and for economic growth in tax base.

For both tax abatements and TIRZs, the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area supports:

1. Annual collection and dissemination of objective data.
2. Regional cooperation.
3. A mandatory public hearing for meaningful and timely input on whether a proposed contract should be granted.
4. Regular re-evaluation of criteria in light of broader community planning goals. (2006)

**History:** The League originally studied tax abatements in 1996. Our position was restudied and TIRZs were added to the study in 2006.

**Action:** The 2006 study revealed that both the City and the County had tightened up the requirements and the monitoring of tax abatements, and no action has been taken under this position since then.

**Ethics:** Support of effective ethics regulation with strong enforcement.

**History:** This position was adopted in 2007.

**Action:** In 2008, Laura Blackburn served on the Citizens Task Force on Ethics established by County Judge Ed Emmett. The League lobbied for a bill in the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature that would have closed the “revolving door” and prohibited county officials from lobbying for a certain period of time following the termination of their county employment. The Governor vetoed the bill.

## Natural Resources

### Parks and Recreation

Support measures to insure acquisition, maintenance, and development of public lands in the Houston area by:

- comprehensive planning for public lands in Harris County to meet National Parks and Recreation Association standards;
- adequate funding;
- adoption of an objective priority planning policy;
- investigation of legal ordinances to facilitate parkland acquisition and contribution of land and money by developers;
- maximum cooperation and coordination of park services and planning between city and county;
- maximum use of schools and churches for program development;
- opposition to long-term private and public leasing of public lands. (1970)

**Action:** Since 2002, the League has been a member of the Houston Quality of Life Coalition and has supported the coalition's goals. In recent years the League has lobbied for more aggressive land acquisition and water conservation policies by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept and for additional funding for the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

### Transportation

Support comprehensive transportation plans which include:

- best land use of land and access to employment, cultural, civic, medical, educational, and other facilities;
- public participation in the early planning stages; (1971)
- a well-balanced, environmentally sensitive, multi-modal transportation system which includes buses, rail, and well-regulated paratransit (jitneys, etc.);
- cooperation and funding of joint ventures among the different transportation agencies – Highway Department, Metro, and city and county;
- use of highway funds in the following order of priority:
  1. maintenance
  2. new construction
  3. public mass transit
- limited use of user fees such as toll roads to help fund development and/or construction of a transportation system. (1985)

**History:** The League has historically been concerned about mobility and studied the issue several times in the 1970's and 1980's.

**Action:** LWV-HA and Houston-Galveston Area Council lobbied with other groups to pass enabling state legislation for a city referendum to establish a transit authority.

### Flood Control

Support comprehensive long-range planning for flood damage avoidance in Harris County by considering:

- all alternative methods for flood damage avoidance;
- the effect of future development on flooding patterns;
- the full effects of stream modifications;
- the flood plain as a multiple use resource, especially its role as a natural retention system which reduces and delays peak flows;
- economic, social, and environmental factors, especially water quality. (1978)

**History:** At 11 feet above sea level, there is no place in the Houston area that might not be under water in a 5 inch rain. New flood maps were finalized in 2005. Some areas (e.g., Bellaire) have been expanded; others reduced.

**Action:** The League has a member on the citizen Harris County Flood Control Task Force (the chairperson is the League representative). Several League members representing other organizations are also members of the Task

Force, which meets quarterly. The Harris County Flood Control District does a good job planning as defined by our position except, perhaps, in considering “the effect of future development on flooding patterns,” which is governed by Houston and Harris County, not the Flood Control District.

### **Solid Waste**

Support a long-range solid waste management plan which emphasizes:

- recycling and development of new technology;
- separation of solid waste at the source;
- judicious use of incineration and landfills;
- effective land use principles;
- control of air and water pollution;
- regional planning;
- promotion of public education efforts;
- citizen participation. (1972)

**History:** The League began studying solid waste issues in response to federal, state, and local statutes, and because of controversy arising from the operation of the Holmes Road incinerator.

**Action:** In the past, LWV-HA has lobbied for reduction in packaging so less waste is generated, for greater use of recycled materials, and for economic incentives which enable recycled materials to compete effectively with “virgin” materials. No action has been taken on this position since the late 1990's.

### **Toxic Substances**

Support:

- the protection of public health with special concern for sensitive populations as the primary factor in determining regulatory action and decision-making involving toxic substances, with economic costs a secondary consideration;
- a policy requiring industry and unions to fully inform employees and the public of potential risks of toxic substances, both in the work place and the community;
- informing the public of any possibility of adverse effect of toxic substances via clear labeling, public forums, public access to information, and articles and programs in all media to help make informed choices;
- regulating the transportation of toxic substances by:
  1. enforcement of safety, speed, and inspection regulations;
  2. establishment of realistic schedules, routes, and work practices to protect the public health;
  3. requirement of complete and informative labeling on the transporting vehicle, whether hazardous product or waste;
- stronger regulatory efforts to control hazardous pollutants in air and water by frequent re-examination of laws and regulations as new information is developed through research, and by enlarging existing regulatory agencies, as necessary, even at increased costs to the taxpayers. (1983)

**History:** Passage of the Toxic Substances Control Act in 1976 spurred LWV-HA's examination of the hazards of toxic substances in Texas' Gulf Coast region. After several general meetings, the 1983 consensus was reached.

**Action:** League members have served on the Toxic Substances Task Force and the Houston Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). Members now serve on the Environment Committee of the Greater Houston Partnership. In 2005, we testified before Houston City Council and the Texas Senate Natural Resources Committee, urging stronger laws and enforcement of laws on air quality.

### **Building Codes in Coastal Areas**

Support the most up-to-date building codes possible for coastal areas, taking into account future storms of increasing intensity and frequency as well as cost. Building codes should take into account elevation, roofs and windows and should be strictly enforced at every governmental level. It is viewed that Category 3 protection is appropriate for this area.

## Social Policy

### Administration of Justice

Support the removal of certain areas of human behavior from criminal prosecution: sexual activity between legally competent consenting adults, gambling, adult access to pornography, use of alcohol. (1975)

Support measures for rehabilitation of offenders, which would include:

- punishment or penalties which fit the crime;
- more equitable punishment;
- alternative arrangements to placement of juveniles in state schools which would include small, family type units close to home with effective supervision and qualified personnel;
- provisions for pre-trial release such as are incorporated in the present (1974) Harris County Pretrial Release Program.

**Action:** The League has lobbied for repeal of Penal Code 21.06 to decriminalize consensual sexual activity between adults and participated in programs to educate the public about voting rights of ex-felons.

### Bilingual Education

- Support educational legislation, policies, and programs that take into consideration the following:
- The purpose of bilingual education should be to teach every limited-English proficient (LEP) student to read, write, and speak English as soon as possible while maintaining academic achievement.
- The basis on which the effectiveness of bilingual education should be determined are:
  1. how quickly transition into English is made;
  2. standardized testing results of academic achievement, using valid data that can be confirmed.
- Factors that negatively influence the academic achievement of LEP students are:
  1. limited supply of qualified, committed teachers;
  2. high mobility of students' families;
  3. economic hardships;
  4. low educational expectations of the teachers, family, and the children.
- The factors can be mitigated by:
  1. consistency of curriculum among school districts;
  2. adequate resources available from the Texas Education Agency;
  3. working with families and teachers to raise educational expectations;
  4. creating new avenues for recruiting additional teachers who are qualified and committed.
- Because of the preservation of ethnic cultures is the responsibility of the home and other institutions, funding for bilingual education should be focused on the acquisition of English proficiency.

**History:** LWV-HA conducted a two-year study of bilingual education in the Greater Houston Area to review and evaluate federal and state laws, funding mechanisms, and policies as well as how programs are being implemented and the criteria used for evaluating the success or effectiveness of the programs. A position was adopted on April 24, 2000.

**Action:** No action has been taken in recent years.

### Child Abuse and Neglect

Support the requirement for schools to honor parental written requests not to use corporal punishment on their children. (1989) Support the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools. This is a local position only.

**History:** The Child Abuse and Neglect study was begun in Houston in 1988. The Committee soon discovered that child abuse and neglect should be a state issue. At the LWVT convention held in Houston in 1990, the study was adopted as a non-recommended item and was studied locally by LWV-HA members under the guidelines of the LWVT. The child care issue was studied that same year as a recommended LWVT item.

**Action:** In recent years, the League has lobbied for child abuse prevention programs to be restored with health care provided for all our children in protective care; caseworker caseloads to reflect the national standard of

12 to 18 cases per worker; and for Children's Protective Services (CPS) to be adequately funded with the latest technology.

### **Domestic Violence**

Support efforts to:

- increase community awareness of the incidence of domestic violence;
- establish a process for keeping records on domestic violence calls, responses, charges, and dispositions;
- provide special training of police and special squads to deal with domestic violence;
- establish crisis intervention teams and provide aid to the victims;
- encourage the District Attorney's office to prosecute charges of domestic violence;
- encourage sensitivity to the problem of domestic violence throughout the justice system;
- encourage increased cooperation between agencies that deal with the problem;
- make counseling available for all members of a household involved in domestic violence. (1983)

**History:** LWV-HA has had a position on domestic violence since 1983.

**Action:** LWV-HA was part of a coalition that successfully lobbied for setting up the Domestic Violence Unit in the District Attorney's office and League members volunteered in the office in the 1980's and early 1990's. The League supported the anti-stalking law that was revised in the 1997 Texas Legislative session. No action has been taken since then.

### **Education**

1. Support measures to improve educational accountability program in the school districts of the greater Houston area, with:
  - shared responsibility of educational accountability at all levels of the educational process, including the Texas Legislature, the Texas Education Agency, local school boards, administrators, teachers, pupils, parents, and the community.
  - state legislative accountability for fair and equitable funding;
  - teacher accountability for knowledge of competency in the subjects they teach;
  - student accountability for conduct and attitude;
  - community accountability for knowledge of election issues;
  - community involvement in accountability programs;
  - comprehensive student evaluations including methods other than standardized testing;
  - parental input in the evaluation process of the school district personnel. (1978)
2. Support equal access to quality education, including:
  - providing opportunities for students to learn to function in our pluralistic community;
  - offering and encouraging the achievement of academic skills which enable each child to function at his/her highest potential;
  - providing superior programs and teaching which take into account the needs of the individual pupil;
  - offering superior programs in college preparatory and occupational/vocational training;
  - providing free transportation as an integrative tool for those requesting it;
  - student transfer policies which preserve existing integration;
  - magnet-alternative schools;
  - closing under-utilized schools;
  - combinations of the above. (1976)

**History:** LWV-HA adopted its education positions in the mid-1970's in response to perceived inequities in school funding and educational opportunities. In 2002-03, committee members restudied the LWV-HA position on education.

**Action:** Action since has included monitoring state legislation on school finance (especially vouchers), and the impact of the religious right on education through affiliation with the Texas Freedom Network. The school tax base impact of tax abatements was considered in the 2006 LWV-HA Tax Abatement study that found only limited

use of tax abatements by school districts. The League has consistently opposed vouchers and supported adequate education funding.

## **Health**

1. Support the establishment of comprehensive, culturally appropriate, and inclusive public health services for Houston Area residents. These services should be accessible to the public in terms of cost and location. Clients should understand available services. Emphasis should be given to preventive and primary care.
2. Support joint planning and coordination to eliminate duplication and gaps in health services and to improve the availability and quality of care including:
  - Centralized regional governance to pool resources and increase effectiveness;
  - Collaborative efforts by city, county, and non-profit public health care providers including programs to disseminate information enabling users to better manage their care; and
  - Channels for consumer input into health planning.
3. Support measures to control the escalation of health care costs including:
  - Increasing the insured population;
  - Accessing all available matching funds;
  - Utilization of local public and private funds to pay Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) premiums/Medicare Part B premiums for indigent elderly;
  - Increasing the number of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), school clinics, and other clinics that deliver comprehensive medical services so that care is delivered in the most appropriate setting, thus lowering the use of expensive emergency room services;
  - Area-wide coordination of electronic health records including immunizations to be accessible by all health care facilities;
  - Area-wide coordination of highly specialized care involving expensive equipment; and
  - Utilization of para-professionals such as nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, and dental hygienists.

**History:** The LWV-HA study evaluated the existing health care providers, distribution, and services in light of increases in the number of uninsured residents, over-crowding in public hospitals, and ever increasing reliance on emergency rooms to provide primary care services at prohibitive cost.

**Action:** LWV-HA has lobbied to prevent cuts in the Hospital District budget. In 2002, LWV-HA opposed shortened hours for city clinics. League members served on a committee to study public health care in Houston and issued a report in 2005. Also in 2005, LWV-HA lobbied for a Hospital District budget that realistically addressed the demand for services.

## **Housing**

1. Support equal opportunities for all Houstonians with emphasis on additional well-managed, low-cost housing and continued support of existing positions:
  - a minimum housing code used in conjunction with existing building, fire, health, and sanitation codes;
  - adequate provisions for enforcing these codes, and any relocation of families necessary through such enforcement, to be the obligation of the city;
  - completion of a workable program for land use and housing for more orderly growth of the city, thus leading to qualification for federal assistance;
  - encouragement of private investment in low-cost housing and the use of private initiative to seek new ways of housing the needy. (1971)
2. Support a substantial increase in low and moderate-income housing stock expenditures for Houston and Harris County above the 26% and 30% of Community Development Block Grant funds allocated in 1990. The League believes that Housing Assistance should be the top priority of Community Development Block Grant funding. We support equal priority for Capital Improvements and Economic Development.

**History:** Our housing position was prompted by serious rental housing quality deficiencies in the 1970's. The Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) position arose from concerns that insufficient funds were being devoted to low and moderate housing as opposed to economic development.

**Action:** LWV-HA used its position to work with Houston City Council to create a housing code, which led to

improvements in rental housing stock. No action has been taken on this position in recent years.

### **Mandatory Homeowner Associations**

The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area supports changes in Texas law governing mandatory homeowner associations which would provide:

- Protection against foreclosure on homesteads.
- Priority of payments so that assessment payments apply first to assessments and then to non-assessment items.
- Secret ballots in homeowner elections.
- Adequate safeguards against fraud to assure uniform, honest and accurate election results.
- That the Texas Open Meetings Act and the Texas Open Records Act cover homeowner associations. (2008)

### **Sexuality Education and Reproductive Services**

1. Support comprehensive sex education in all public schools in Harris County, including:
  - greater parental involvement;
  - broadening curricula;
  - student access to specifically educated nurses, counselors, and teachers;
  - greater use of city and county educational programs;
  - programs to help parents open discussions with their children. (1982)
2. Support adequate, easily accessible, publicly funded family planning services to meet the community's needs, including:
  - confidentiality of all clients;
  - efficient scheduling of family planning services;
  - advertising;
  - adequate funding;
  - adequate, accessible facilities. (1982)
3. Support equal access to legal and medically sound pregnancy termination services for all residents of Houston and Harris County, with government funding and/or a combination of government/private funding available for low and moderate income residents. (1982)

**History:** This position was adopted in 1982.

**Action:** The LWV cooperates with Planned Parenthood at all levels to keep Roe v. Wade, or freedom of choice, the law of the land. The League supports providing foreign aid for family planning. In 2002 wrote letter to US senators urging ratification of CEDAW (Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women) treaty.

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS HOUSTON AREA PROPOSED 2011—2012 BUDGET

Budget Committee: Barbara McCormick, Chair, Laura Blackburn, Linda Cohn, Christina Gorczynski, Nancy Parra, Barb Swartz, and Leslie Taylor. Figures for the LWVHEF budget are presented for information only; the LWVHEF budget is approved at the June Board meeting.

| INCOME                   | LWVHA  | 2010-2011 | LWVHEF  | 2010-2011 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2011-2012 | 2011-2012 |
|--------------------------|--------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                          | 10 MO. |           | 10 MO.  |           | Total     | Proposed  | Proposed  | Proposed  |
|                          | Actual | Budget    | Actual  | Budget    | Budget    | LWVHA     | LWVHEF    | Total     |
| Dues                     | 14,791 | 20,000    |         |           | 20,000    | 20,500    |           | 20,500    |
| Focus on Issues Meetings |        |           | 524     | 4,000     | 4,000     |           | 1,080     | 1,080     |
| Holiday Reception        | 1,755  | 1,500     |         |           | 1,500     | 1,750     |           | 1,750     |
| Program Planning         | 328    | 700       |         |           | 700       | 400       |           | 400       |
| Annual Meeting           |        | 1,750     |         |           | 1,750     | 1,500     |           | 1,500     |
| Silent Auction           |        |           |         | 1,500     | 1,500     | 1,000     |           | 1,000     |
| Repast                   |        |           | 47,010  | 52,000    | 52,000    |           | 52,000    | 52,000    |
| Fall Fundraiser          |        |           | 20,615  | 12,000    | 12,000    |           | 15,000    | 15,000    |
| Other Event              | 1,171  | 1,500     |         |           | 1,500     | 1,500     |           | 1,500     |
| Member Donations         | 13,247 | 3,000     | 2,270   | 4,000     | 7,000     | 3,500     | 3,500     | 7,000     |
| Nonmember Donations      | 325    |           | 320     | 500       | 500       |           | 500       | 500       |
| Corporate Donations      |        |           | 76      |           | 0         |           | 300       | 300       |
| Hershey Foundation       |        |           |         | 1,000     | 1,000     |           | 500       | 500       |
| LWVUS Grants             |        |           | 9,461   | 10,500    | 10,500    |           | 1,000     | 1,000     |
| Grants                   |        |           |         | 30,000    | 30,000    |           | 80,000    | 80,000    |
| Voters Key               |        |           | 5,014   | 4,000     | 4,000     |           | 5,000     | 5,000     |
| Voters Guide             |        |           | 10,945  | 10,000    | 10,000    |           | 20,000    | 20,000    |
| Publications             |        |           |         | 200       | 200       |           |           | 0         |
| Member List Sale         |        |           |         |           |           | 1,000     |           | 1,000     |
| Tax Refunds              |        |           | 5,144   |           | 0         |           |           | 0         |
|                          |        |           |         |           |           |           |           | 0         |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>      | 31,615 | 28,450    | 101,379 | 129,700   | 158,150   | 31,150    | 178,880   | 210,030   |
|                          |        |           |         |           | 0         |           |           |           |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>          |        |           |         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Rent                     | 1,600  | 2,562     | 6,200   | 7,688     | 10,250    | 1,450     | 8,150     | 9,600     |
| Maintenance              |        | 300       | 297     | 250       | 550       | 15        | 85        | 100       |
| Telephone                | 455    | 525       | 1,672   | 1,575     | 2,100     | 375       | 2,125     | 2,500     |
| Office Supplies          | 277    | 625       | 385     | 625       | 1,250     | 150       | 850       | 1,000     |
| Software Updates         |        |           |         |           |           | 75        | 425       | 500       |
| Postage                  | 88     | 950       | 58      | 950       | 1,900     | 150       | 100       | 250       |
| Insurance                | 438    | 500       | 672     | 700       | 1,200     | 180       | 1,020     | 1,200     |
| Equipment                |        |           |         | 100       | 100       | 180       | 1,020     | 1,200     |
| Equipment Maintenance    |        |           |         | 300       | 300       | 30        | 170       | 200       |
| Focus on Issues Meetings |        |           | 780     | 3,500     | 3,500     |           | 1,240     | 1,240     |
| Holiday Reception        | 1,430  | 1,000     |         |           | 1,000     | 1,500     |           | 1,500     |
| Program Planning         | 352    | 700       |         |           | 700       | 400       |           | 400       |
| Annual Meeting           | 166    | 2,000     |         |           | 2,000     | 1,000     |           | 1,000     |
| Lobbying Activities      |        |           |         |           |           | 200       |           | 200       |
| Membership               | 269    | 100       |         |           | 100       | 500       |           | 500       |
| Member Finance Drive     | 167    | 50        | 176     | 300       | 350       | 350       | 350       | 700       |
| Directory                | 397    | 450       |         |           | 450       | 400       |           | 400       |
| VOTER                    | 479    | 700       | 545     | 700       | 1,400     | 700       | 700       | 1,400     |
| Annual Meeting Workbook  |        | 300       |         |           | 300       | 300       |           | 300       |
| Board Orientation        |        |           | 138     |           | 0         |           |           | 0         |
| Convention/Council       |        |           | 1,034   | 1,000     | 1,000     |           | 1,200     | 1,200     |
| Voter Registration       |        |           | 23      | 250       | 250       |           | 250       | 250       |

|                             | LWVHA         | 2010-2011     | LWVHEF        | 2010-2011      | 2010-2011      | 2011-2012     | 2011-2012      | 2011-2012      |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| EXPENSES                    | 10 MO.        |               | 10 MO.        |                | Total          | Proposed      | Proposed       | Proposed       |
|                             | Actual        | Budget        | Actual        | Budget         | Budget         | LWVHA         | LWVHEF         | Total          |
| Youth Engagement Project    |               |               |               |                |                |               | 10,000         | 10,000         |
| Voters Guide, printed       |               |               | 8,520         | 8,000          | 8,000          |               | 12,000         | 12,000         |
| Voters Guide layout         |               |               |               |                |                |               | 4,000          | 4,000          |
| Voters Guide online         |               |               |               |                |                |               | 1,100          | 1,100          |
| Voters Key                  |               |               | 3,000         | 2,700          | 2,700          |               | 3,000          | 3,000          |
| Facts & Issues              | 117           | 100           | 267           | 1,100          | 1,200          | 120           | 1,320          | 1,440          |
| Voter ID Project            |               |               |               |                |                |               | 15,000         | 15,000         |
| We Support                  | 63            | 280           |               |                | 280            |               |                | 0              |
| Voters Service Events       |               |               | 1,013         | 1,000          | 1,000          |               | 8,000          | 8,000          |
| Fall Fundraiser             |               |               | 2,164         | 2,200          | 2,200          |               | 4,000          | 4,000          |
| Repast                      |               |               | 6,213         | 19,000         | 19,000         |               | 22,000         | 22,000         |
| Annual Report               |               |               |               | 300            | 300            | 15            | 85             | 100            |
| Public Relations            |               |               | 194           | 420            | 420            |               | 200            | 200            |
| Dues to Coalitions          |               |               | 675           | 1,000          | 1,000          |               | 725            | 725            |
| Member List Sale            |               |               |               |                |                |               | 1,000          | 1,000          |
| LWVUS Grant Expenses        |               |               | 5,398         | 3,710          | 3,710          |               | 200            | 200            |
| Exec. Dir. Salary           | 6,316         |               | 31,180        | 43,600         | 43,600         | 4,750         | 42,750         | 47,500         |
| Admin. Asst. Salary         | 2,736         | 8,200         | 13,814        | 12,200         | 20,400         | 8,400         | 12,600         | 21,000         |
| Payroll Taxes               | 1,056         |               | 5,496         | 6,300          | 6,300          | 2,180         | 6,555          | 8,735          |
| Auto Expense                |               |               | 145           | 200            | 200            | 35            | 205            | 240            |
| Staff Development           |               |               |               | 500            | 500            | 50            | 50             | 100            |
| Professional Services       | 1,244         | 1,200         | 1,516         | 1,200          | 2,400          | 4,200         | 4,200          | 8,400          |
| LWVUS PMP                   | 4,061         | 4,100         | 4,061         | 4,100          | 8,200          | 4,200         | 4,200          | 8,400          |
| LWV-TX PMP                  | 3,008         | 3,000         | 1,504         | 3,000          | 6,000          | 3,200         | 3,200          | 6,400          |
| Web Site                    | 96            | 400           | 466           | 1,050          | 1,450          | 400           | 1,100          | 1,500          |
| Bank & Pay Pal Charges      | 420           | 515           | 672           | 650            | 1,165          | 500           | 665            | 1,165          |
| Credit Card Lease           |               |               | 368           | 600            | 600            |               | 600            | 600            |
|                             |               |               |               |                |                |               |                |                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>25,235</b> | <b>28,557</b> | <b>98,646</b> | <b>130,768</b> | <b>159,325</b> | <b>36,005</b> | <b>176,440</b> | <b>212,445</b> |
|                             |               |               |               |                |                |               |                |                |
| <b>Income Less Expenses</b> | <b>6,380</b>  | <b>-107</b>   | <b>2,733</b>  | <b>-1,068</b>  | <b>-1,175</b>  | <b>-4,855</b> | <b>2,440</b>   | <b>-2,415</b>  |

## Report of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee presents the following slate for the Annual Meeting Election:

### **Officers (2011-2013)**

|                         |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| President               | Linda Cohn      |
| Program Vice President  | Jan Wilbur      |
| Advocacy Vice President | Laura Blackburn |

### **Officers One-Year Term (2011-2012)**

|                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Community Relations VP | Jacqueline Alfred |
| Secretary              | Mary Lee Burrus   |

### **Directors (2011-2013)**

Dr. Davetta Daniels  
Jacqueline Davis Gilmore  
Marcia Miqueloto  
Millie Walker

### **Directors One-Year Term (2011-2012)**

Ryan Leach  
Wayne Derrick

Officers and Directors continuing for the year 2011-2012

Officers

|                             |               |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Treasurer                   | Barb Swartz   |
| Organization Vice President | Leslie Taylor |

Directors

Gwen Essinger  
Penny Milbouer

### **Nominating Committee 2011-2012**

Nancy Parra, Chair  
Alice May Berthelsen  
Ellen Goins

Submitted by the Nominating Committee

Betty Oertel, Chair  
Ann Herbage  
Penny Milbouer  
Barbara Schwartz  
Millie Whittington

## Biographies of the New Nominees

**President: Linda Cohn** signed up as a member of the LWV in November 2004. Sam Keeper had her trolling for unregistered voters by January 2005. Ann Wood and Linda became Voter Registration co-chairs two years later. Her comment is “It’s been splendid.”

**Community Relations VP: Jacqueline Alfred** is a fundraising and development consultant with her own firm, JA Consulting. She served as president of the LWV-HA (1989-1991) and the Greater Youngstown (OH) League (1980-82). She also served both Leagues as a director and vice president. As *Voters Guide* editor in Houston and Youngstown, she worked to develop the *Voters Guide*’s popular newspaper format. She has worked on League study committees and voter service projects, including the special workshop for Speakers Bureau members. In 1994, she chaired the League’s 75th Anniversary Celebration. Alfred has worked on every Repast with Political Pioneers luncheon and has served as co-chair and chair of the event.

**Advocacy VP: Laura Blackburn** is a long-time Leaguer. She was first president of LWV-HA from 1973-1975, then again from 2007-2009. She served on the LWV-TX board for a number of years, working mostly on natural resource issues and then becoming Program vice president of LWV-HA. She has been serving as Advocacy vice president for the last year. Lobbying on issues is her very favorite thing; studies are next! She spent a great deal of the past year chairing the Human Trafficking Committee while it developed the study and consensus. She also served as the Air and Climate Change chair for LWV-HA as well as for LWV-TX. Her hope is that more and more women of all ages, but particularly those entering retirement, will realize what leadership opportunities there are in the LWV.

**Program VP: January Wilbur** has served the League most recently as Membership chair and Development Committee chair. Her service to the local League has included stints as president of LWV-HA; vice president of the Program, Advocacy, and Community Relations committees; as well as chair of the Voters Service, Tax Increment Finance, committees; and co-chair of the and Redistricting committee. She has also served on the State Board as Program vice president, Financing State Government chair, Financing Public Schools chair, and Human Relations chair. She has also served on the Nominating Committee for the national League board. She is a community activist and community organizer devoted to the League and its mission.

**Secretary: Mary Lee Burrus** returned to the League about ten years ago after retiring as an event planner at Rice University. She has a particular interest in promoting engaging discussions of current issues at League unit meetings and to that end has resurrected the briefing session to help educate discussion leaders. And because she enjoys energetic discussions she also belongs to three book groups!

**Director: Ryan Leach** is a first term board member. He has been involved in Houston politics since he completed law school in 2006. He served as chief of staff for Houston City Council Member Sue Lovell. In 2010 he became general counsel of Pasadena Independent School District, where he returned to his roots in education, a field that he and his entire family of teachers have in common. Ryan also served on the board of the Bering Omega Young Professionals and is also heavily involved in the Victory Fund. He is also involved in helping with our Repast.

**Director: Marcia Miqueloto** was born in Quito, Ecuador South America. She graduated with a degree in French and English in 1969 and immigrated to the USA on a student visa in 1970. She received a degree as bilingual secretary from Gulf Coast College before returning to Ecuador. She worked at the American Embassy in the Peace Corp division as an administrative assistant to the Peace Corp Director. She moved to Houston in 1978. She married and worked several years as secretary for the Houston League of Women Voters. In 2004, she received a Texas Broker real estate license.

**Director: Jacqueline Davis-Gilmore** is a native Houstonian with B.A. and M.A. in speech communications. She earned a graduate certificate in women’s studies from the University of Houston and a graduate degree in professional leadership from Rice University.

She is in her tenth years as a professor of speech communications at Lone Star College-North Harris and is a 2010 Research Scholar Award recipient for classroom research initiative project. She is a member and executive board member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated and a board member for the Houston League of Women Voters. She also sits on the Human Trafficking committee.

She is founder and president of Jolan Communications, which focuses on helping women and females with skills in leadership, resume-writing and interview, and interpersonal communication. Jacqueline is a board certified anger therapist.

**Director: Wayne Derrick** is an engineering graduate of Rice University and worked in the petrochemical industry until retirement. He is a returning board member of the League. He is interested in improving elections in Texas and has been an election judge many times in order to better understand the election process. He especially wants to increase voter turnout and is aware of many possible improvements used in other states. He is also a volunteer in the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Houston.

**Director: Dr. Davetta Daniels** is a career educator. After a successful tenure of 32 years in the Houston Independent School District, this retired principal remains very active and vigorous in her community. Education afforded her an opportunity to travel to places, e.g., South Africa, London, Amsterdam, Brazil, and most major cities in the U.S. Dr. Daniels works tirelessly to mentor young people. She serves on the William A. Lawson Institute for Peace and Prosperity, is vice president of the Tierwester Civic Club, is active in the NAACP and had been very active at the Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church for over 30 years. She considers herself a spiritual being who loves people and aspires to do her part to leave the world a better place. She is committed to using her life to make a difference in the life of others.

**Director: Millie Walker** joined the League in 2009 and has served as a board member for a year. She has also been active with the Advocacy and Development committees. She served as co-chair of the League fall fundraiser and contributed to the research, writing, and development of the *Focus on Issues: Redistricting Update*.

#### **Nominating Committee**

**Nancy Parra, chair**, is outgoing president of the Houston Area League, completing her term in May 2010. Previously, she served as Organization vice president for four years. She represents the League on the Galveston Bay Council, which guides the Galveston Bay Estuary Program, and serves as chairman of the Council's Public Participation and Education subcommittee. Nancy worked in the software industry for over 17 years and is now retired from BMC Software.

**Alice May Berthelsen** is a fifty-year member and past president of the LWV-HA and a strong supporter of the League. She served as president 1967-69, 1972-73, and 1995-96.

**Ellen Goins** has been a member of LWV-HA for 12 years. She has been discussion leader and is currently unit leader of the Spring Branch unit. She enjoys going to the League Focus on Issues meetings and then exchanging points of view with the members of this unit.