



The Houston *VOTER*

League of Women Voters – Houston Area

September 2011

FOCUS ON ISSUES

The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education

Friday, September 9, 2011

11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

African American Library
1300 Victory Street
Houston 77019



Speakers:

Annetra Piper, Houston ISD
and
Paula Almond, Humble ISD

Public Invited. No Admission Charge.

RSVPs are greatly appreciated.

A box lunch will be provided to those who prepay \$15.00 by Noon, Wednesday, September 7, 2011. Brownbag if you like.

Call 713.784.2923 with credit card number or mail checks to LWV-Houston, 4001 N. Shepherd Drive, Suite 213, Houston, TX 77018-5507

To pay online: <http://www.lwvhouston.org/html/contribute.html>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Linda Cohn

Attention, citizens! It's Election Season.

Houstonians are asked to research, reflect, arrive at an opinion and then cast a ballot to:

- *adopt or reject ten Texas Constitutional amendments;
- *elect a City of Houston Mayor, City of Houston Controller, and an entire Houston City Council;
- *elect a Houston Independent School District Board of Trustees; and
- *elect a Houston Community College Board of Trustees.

We Leaguers stand ready to help our fellow Houstonians with these important decisions. Our customary Voters Guides and Candidate Debates are already in production. I hope some of you will volunteer to lend a hand with these projects.

I hope all of you will do this: sometime in the next few days strike up a conversation about the election. Ask someone if they're registered to vote at their current address. Tell them that the registration deadline is October 11. Tell them that if they are over 65, sick or disabled they can apply for a mail-in ballot starting on September 9. Early voting runs from October 24 through November 4. Election Day is November 8.

Please tell them that the proposed new Voter ID rules they've been hearing about will not be in effect for this election. Nothing will change until 2012. Speak with friend, a relative, a work colleague, a fellow religious congregant, your doctor, your hairdresser or maybe even wait staff in a restaurant. Invite them to visit lwvhouston.org. It's the grass-roots civics we've been doing for 91 years. And doing it very well indeed.



What is League member Jo Ann Peschell doing? See page 3.

Local Experts Will Supplement LWVUS Education Study Papers At Focus on Issues Meeting on September 9, 2011

By Majorie LaFoe

“The Education Study: The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education,” is a national study by the LWVUS and will guide the League’s action in this area for years to come. Our September “Focus on Issues” meeting will be held at the African American Library, a new state-of-the-art facility housed at the Gregory School. It is located at 1300 Victor Street, Houston, TX 77019. The African American Library is part of the Houston Public Library system.

The September 9, 2011, meeting will have two dynamic speakers. Annetra Piper, Houston ISD Manager of Grant Development, will discuss the impact federal funding has had on Houston ISD as well as equity issues. Paula Almond, Associated Superintendent of Humble ISD, will present information on the Common Core Standards and Assessments.

Do you believe a well-educated citizenry is essential to protect liberty and the general welfare of the people? Are all children in the USA receiving an adequate education? Are the public schools in the USA highly decentralized with separate systems operated by the 50 states? Are all public schools funded sufficiently to

provide a rigorous curriculum in a broad range of subjects with well-trained teachers?

We will take consensus in unit meetings for both September and October. The September meetings will address the Common Core Standards and Assessments. The October unit meetings will address the Equity and Funding issues. To better prepare for these meetings you can read the LWVUS background papers on the LWVUS website.

The Education Study Background papers can be downloaded from:

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Public_Education&9Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=112&ContentID=16956 .

Shorter articles on the study are found at:

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Public_Education&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=191&ContentID=17596

PowerPoint summaries are available at: <http://ca.lwv.org/doc/2011-08-01-lwvus-education-study-common-core.pdf>

September is Human Trafficking Awareness Month

By Penny Milbouer

Human Trafficking Awareness Month 2011 launches August 30 at 10 a.m. at City Hall’s Rotunda at 901 Bagby Street. The Houston Rescue and Restore Coalition begins a series of activities with a proclamation from the mayor. For this event, there will be speakers on human trafficking in Houston. Topics include what is being done to fight it, and the struggle to return victims to freedom.

On Tuesday evenings in September films and speakers will focus on trafficking’s toll on labor, trafficked children, and the individual victim. To view the titles, descriptions, and locations of the films, [click here](#). For more September events, go to <http://houstonrr.org/news-room/human-trafficking-awareness-month-2011-htam/> .

On September 8, 2011, Children at Risk will host its annual Texas Summit on Human Trafficking, a full day conference featuring community leaders, law enforcement, service providers, and state legislators you must register (<http://action.voices.org/site/Calendar?id=102301&view=Detail>) to attend the conference to be held at Houston Community College: West Loop Center, 5601 West Loop South.

The federal government provides fact sheets about human trafficking – what it is, how to recognize the signs, how to report it (call the hotline 1-888-3737-888), what resources are available for victims, and much, much more. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/about/factsheets.html> .

The Department of Homeland Security has launched a campaign, “Don’t Be Fooled,” to warn undocumented aliens that human trafficking is a serious risk. Two new public service announcements, “Birdcage” and “Masquerade,” are being broadcast in television spots starting in July in the southeast part of the United States. These are eye-catching and dramatic.

On July 25, 2011, the White House issued its *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime.*, which focuses on the growing impact of international drug smuggling and transborder gangs. Included in the release is the statement, “Human smuggling and trafficking-in-person networks are growing more violent and lucrative, and exploiting the most vulnerable, especially women and children.”

LWVUS Launches “I Promise” Clean Air Campaign

By Laura Blackburn

On July 26, LWVUS launched its “I Promise” campaign, calling on everyone -- citizens and elected officials and community leaders -- to ensure we have clean air. Clean air is a fundamental health right, but efforts to reduce pollution have been challenged as reducing jobs and requiring too much regulation. The opposite is true.

"Americans from all walks of life will be asked to make the 'Clean Air Promise,'" said Elisabeth MacNamara, president of the national League of Women Voters. "We are deeply concerned about attacks on EPA and health protections. Any action to block the EPA from updating Clean Air Act protections, or any delay on behalf of the Administration to avoid implementing new clean air and industrial pollution requirements, is an attack on the health of our children and families, plain and simple," she said.

LWVUS is leading the way among several environmental organizations (National Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, etc.) to present the “Clean Air Promise.” It has launched television ads as well as the “I Promise” people’s campaign.

Now Is the Time to Join New Houston League Activity

By Ann Wood

Your local League has joined with NALEO, Neighborhood Centers, Mi Familia Vota, the City of Houston, Univision, and La Raza in the campaign, *Ya Es Hora* (Now is the Time). This national, non-partisan Latino civic participation campaign encourages Latinos to participate fully in the US political process through voter education and engagement.

At Citizenship Workshops, staff and volunteers assist eligible clients with the paperwork needed to apply for citizenship. Volunteers start with breakfast and two hours of training under attorney Gene Wu. Then a volunteer is assigned an applicant. Most applicants speak enough English to pass the literacy requirements. Having non-Spanish speaking volunteers reinforces the importance of working on their language skills before their citizenship interview.

In the three months the Houston Area League has participated in the program, over three dozen League volunteers have taken part. One volunteer wrote, “I had the opportunity to help a man from El Salvador fill out his application. I spent about an hour talking with him, his wife, and two young daughters who were SO thankful for my help.

If you haven’t yet made the promise, take just a moment to do so at www.peoplenotpolluters.org.

I promise to protect America's children and families from dangerous air pollution.

Because toxics and pollutants such as mercury, smog, carbon, and soot, cause thousands of hospital visits, asthma attacks, and even deaths.

I will support clean air policies and other protections that scientists and public health experts have recommended to the EPA to safeguard our air quality.

CHART THE COURSE

Where to from here?

By Jan Wilbur

In October we have the opportunity to shape what the national and state Leagues focus on for the next two years in our biennial program planning meeting.

What are the most pressing issues our country and our state need to address in the next two years? Of those issues, which ones can the League, with its thoughtful, non-partisan, fact-based study, discussion, and consensus process shed the most light? Where can we make the most difference?

Is it the national economy? How to reduce gridlock in government? State economy? Job creation? Prison reform? Cost of higher education? Energy resources? Air and water quality? Human trafficking? Pay-day lending? Homeowners Associations? Water resources? Climate change? What is your hot-button issue?

Come to the October 13 League meeting to help CHART THE COURSE for the League for the next two years. This program planning meeting will be held at the Sosa Community Center, 1414 Wirt Road, Houston TX 77055. Refreshments will be available at 5:30 p.m. and the meeting begins at 6:00 p.m.

(Now Is The Time – cont’d.)

Their daughter even wrote me a little thank-you note before they left.”

Join us for the next workshop scheduled for August 27th. Email citizenship.workshop@lwvhouston.org to volunteer or to join the distribution list and we’ll contact you every time a workshop is scheduled.

Unit Meetings

Unit meetings are open to all League members and guests. At September and October Units, members will answer LWVUS consensus questions for the study on the role of the federal government in education. New members are encouraged to visit and join any unit they desire.

THIRD MONDAY

September 19, 2011
October 17, 2011

West Harris County Unit 1:30p.m.

Eagle's Trace
14703 Eagle Trace Dr., Houston, TX 77077
Call Joan Golding 281.596.0935 for gate access,
joanapg@aol.com

City Wide Evening Unit 6:00 p.m.

The Black Labrador
4100 Montrose Blvd., Houston, TX 77006
Jackie Friedman, 713.521.0702,
friedmanjj@gmail.com

Calendar

September 9	Ballot By Mail Applications
September 23	Board Meetings
October 5	Voter Copy Deadline
October 13	Program Planning
October 24	First Day of Early Voting
October 28	Board Meetings

Voter ID Speaking Tour Begins

A Special Project of the LWV Houston Education Fund to inform citizens about the new Texas Voter ID law has started a speaking tour. If you are active in any civic group, church, or super neighborhood and want to invite a LWV speaker to give a short presentation, please contact the League office or Leslie Taylor at lctaylor@earthlink.net.

Gwen Murphree died at age 90 in St. Augustine, Florida, on August 5. She was a member of the Houston League in the 70s and 80s. Gwen served as President of the Dickinson LWV and a member of both the LWV-TX and LWVUS boards. She authored the must-read *Meeting Manners*, "a guide to the mystery and confusion of conducting efficient, well run meetings."

THIRD TUESDAY

September 20, 2011
October 18, 2011

Spring Branch Unit 9:30 a.m.

The Buckingham, 4th Floor
8580 Woodway, Houston, TX 77063
Ellen Goins, 281.496.9344,
ellen_goins@yahoo.com

THIRD THURSDAY

September 15, 2011
October 20, 2011

Midwest Unit 10:00 a.m.

The Gerald Womack Bldg.
4412 Almeda, Houston, TX 77004
Yvette Calloway, 713.784.2923 (LWV office),
millieKBW@aol.com

Southwest Day Unit 1:00 p.m.

Alief Library,
7979 South Kirkwood, Houston, TX 77072
Rhoda Haddox, 713.667.5952,
lwv@lwvhouston.org

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