

Happy Independence Day!



LWVUS Convention: An Incredible, Exhausting and Exhilarating Experience!!

Twenty-one League members from 10 local Leagues and LWV-Ohio attended the LWVUS Convention in Atlanta, June 11-15—an incredibly energizing, informative and action-packed five days. Included below: an overview of Convention, Ohio delegates' perspectives on a number of issues and a summary of action taken.

It was not all work and no play, however! We enjoyed ourselves at an Ohio reception Saturday evening and are pictured here on the Convention floor, poised to shout out one of our many “O-H-I-O’s.”



Leagues represented included Akron Area, Cincinnati Area, Clermont County, Cuyahoga Area, Delaware County, Hudson, Lake County, Metro Columbus, Shaker Heights, Tallmadge and LWV-Ohio.

Overview of Convention: Delegates were riveted by Convention speakers, including civil-rights leader and U.S. Rep. John Lewis; U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius; and a panel of 6 former LWVUS presidents who shared their experiences leading this influential organization. A wide variety of workshops and caucuses were offered daily, starting at 7:30 a.m. and ending at 10 p.m., on everything from networking to program-issue sessions; from engaging youth in elections to election integrity; from streamlining League operations to using online tools to connect with our communities. One workshop, “Grant Funded, Issue Driven,” focused on seeking and using grant monies to support EF educational and general advocacy activities and was co-hosted by LWV-Ohio President Meg Flack and LWV-Michigan President Jessica Reiser. Finally, there was plenty of action during the plenary sessions, as evidenced in the summary at the conclusion of this article. Videos of Convention will soon be posted on the LWVUS website in the [Convention](#) part of the For Members section. If you cannot directly access the site by clicking on the highlighted link, copy and paste the information below into your browser:

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Council_and_Convention&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=138&ContentID=15574

Ohio Delegates’ Perspectives: Ohio delegates from local Leagues share their thoughts about 1) what they’d like others to know about LWVUS and Convention; 2) what they thought was the most significant thing that happened at Convention; 3) thoughts on attending future state and national conventions; 4) moments of pride; and 5) concerns.

1. What would you like others to know about LWVUS and the LWVUS Convention?

ERICA GREER, LWV-Akron Area: I would want others to know how important it is to attend LWVUS convention. Not only do you get to network with and learn from other League members around the country, but you get a whole new perspective on what is possible in League. Attending caucuses and workshops, you see just how much other Leagues are accomplishing and this is so energizing. And attending plenary is a League education in itself – in how important program planning is, in how study and consensus work, and about being informed. When I attended my first convention in Minneapolis in 2006 was when I first really understood the entirety of League. The whole experience is energizing, motivating, inspirational – not to mention exhausting!

DIANA KINGSBURY, LWV-Akron Area: LWVUS is full of hardworking people who are interested in what local Leagues across the nation are doing! LWVUS represents well League ideals and does a great job advocating for our positions and that we have a rich history of being involved in the national political process.

Convention is an exciting, informative, and action-packed experience that should be required for League leaders to attend. Learning what happens across the country and at the national level is inspiring and a great way to jumpstart local League's activities.

FRED HEYSE, LWV-Cincinnati Area: The convention was a lot more work than it appeared from the main meetings agendas because there were so many opportunities for sharing and learning from others; everyone wanted to work common issues together, and the meetings started early (7:30) and ended late (10 PM or later)!

BARBI CRABILL, LWV-Metro Columbus: I would like others to know that the LWVUS is made up of women and men just like us, from every walk of life and from every corner of this great country. All came to convention with a common sense of purpose. I was so impressed at how passionate, articulate, and civil the delegates were.

ANN HENKENER, LWV-Metro Columbus: I was impressed by the passion of the Leagues presenting an issue in a workshop or a caucus. Whether it was saving the Great Lakes or assuring the right to vote to disenfranchised citizens, the sincerity and hard work in preparing the sessions was amazing. I was also impressed that the entire delegation voted to do not one but two studies in the next two years. The study of the role of the federal government in education was recommended by the board, and it was approved. The issue of the federal, state, and local governments privatizing services and functions that previously were done directly by the government was not a recommended study. Not because LWVUS thought it was not important but because it hadn't had a sufficient number of local leagues recommend it during program planning. Nevertheless, those leagues that felt passionately about the topic convinced the delegates that it was worthwhile to study two issues. And then, rather than leave it up to the LWVUS to figure out where to get the money to do the study, the delegates contributed over \$3000 on the spot, and many people volunteered to send in money for the study. The delegates also voted an additional 10 cents of PMP during the first year of the two year budget to pay for the additional study. Anyone who has been to convention knows how difficult it is to raise the PMP but the delegates put their money where their mouths were and provided funding for the study. I enjoy advocating for the league - but to do that with authority we need to study issues first and we will be tackling two complex but important issues in the next two years.

SUSAN JANKITE, LWV-Cuyahoga Area: I would want future delegates to know that the agenda order is very significant and to pay special attention during the initial plenary session. I think addressing the PMP early on would help others understand the ramifications of adopting studies, whether board recommended or not, as opposed to local leagues experiencing "sticker shock." As Linda pointed out, the proposers of the study wanted to enjoy our success and get to work but, oops, what do you mean there's a bill? It was clear the board was not willing to adjust the budget should the PMP increase not pass and future delegates will need to be aware of this.

JANET KERSHAW, LWV-Cuyahoga Area: I found the convention to be energizing! I have been active in League for many years at the local, grassroots level, but convention gave me a much better understanding of the operation of League at the national level. All of the discussions were interesting, but I did find the resolution process to be somewhat confusing.

BARBARA BARLOW, LWV–Shaker Heights: There are two things I want people to know about the LWVUS: that it is a grassroots organization that is alive and well in spite of or perhaps because of the changes in American society and culture since its inception 90 years ago; and that the convention is an important way to experience the intelligence, civility, creativity and comraderie of the League and to be able to contribute at a national level to its work.

LINDA LALLEY, LWV-Shaker Heights: I continue to think the national convention is a wonderful training ground for future League leaders. Most attendees I know come back energized by the caucuses and floor fights, and brimming with new ideas from the workshops and the networking. Each convention seems to have a special moment, and for me in 2010, it was listening to all the national presidents representing almost 40 years of League history. Absolutely inspiring!

JOHN LALLEY, LWV-Shaker Heights: It was a treat to get "inside the room" for a change at the national convention. I think as many people as possible should go because it gives you a broader perspective, that there is much more to the League than just the local or even state group. I think that would increase your pride and passion for membership.

2. What do you think was the most significant thing that happened at Convention – and why?

DIANA KINGSBURY, LWV-Akron Area: It's difficult to choose just one thing, but the caucuses do stick out as being really engaging. It was interesting to see the topics that local Leagues are interested in, and sitting in on sessions that are designed by Leagues for Leagues was really something.

FRED HEYSE, LWV-Cincinnati Area: Approving the study for examining the Federal role in Education was monumental to me; the Federal Government has inserted itself into Education with no constitutional nor financial support! It is certainly time for LWV to explore this in our classic thorough manner and come to a solid position on this role.

BARBI CRABILL, LWV-Metro Columbus: Significant to me was the resolutions process, with adoption of very exciting resolutions preceded by the caucuses which provide delegates with information on the issues on which they would be voting, adoption of concurrences, and approval of 2 very significant studies that were approved by the delegates.

It was very moving for me listening to John Lewis. I worked in Atlanta in 1971 and had the pleasure of meeting him at that time, and he's still "getting' in the way!". Finally, I was inspired watching the former national presidents, hearing what was accomplished during each of their terms and listening to their insights of what's going on today. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

SUSAN JANKITE, LWV–Cuyahoga Area: It's hard to pick out what is most significant, but my vote would probably be for the resolution processes and getting a first hand lesson on how not to form consensus questions (i.e., the National Popular Vote).

BARBARA BARLOW, LWV–Shaker Heights: I was very happy to see the delegates approve support for an improved medicare for all. It's important for us to continue to press for improvements to health care after the passage of the initial Health Care Reform bill earlier this year.

3. Would you recommend that others attend the state and/or national League conventions in the future? If so, why?

ERICA GREER, LWV-Akron Area: I would recommend that anyone planning to or thinking about taking a leadership position in League attend convention. There are excellent training workshops, but besides these, you are also immersed in the process of League, and we all know how important process is to League. And even if you aren't interested in a leadership position, attending convention will amaze and energize you, and you will take that back with you to your own League. It just might be contagious! And if you can't afford LWVUS convention, don't overlook state convention – it is also a marvelous experience!

DIANA KINGSBURY, LWV-Akron Area: I would definitely encourage any interested person who is or would like to be actively involved in my local League to attend a state or national convention. Knowing all of the things Leagues are capable of doing is really inspiring.

FRED HEYSE, LWV-Cincinnati Area: I would recommend that any member that can possibly go to conventions - either state or national - follow through and take the opportunity. These events may not be the smoothest and simplest operations, but they certainly help me appreciate that we are not just a local league trying to improve local government; rather we are truly a three-level league all sharing in improving government not only locally, but also state-wide and nationally.

BARBI CRABILL, LWV-Metro Columbus: I think that others should be encouraged to attend state and national conventions to get the bigger picture – Ohio and Columbus aren't islands unto themselves. There are many engaged leagues out there at the local and state levels, several of which bring their issues to convention where they have to explain it and provide detailed background information and research, advocate for it in the halls and defend it on the floor. I think members of our local leagues who are interested in advocacy should definitely be encouraged to attend these conventions.

BARBARA BARLOW, LWV–Shaker Heights: I think attending the LWVUS convention is a must for all persons active in their local leagues. It was my first and I hope not my last. It certainly made me decide to attend our own Ohio state convention next May. We live in complex times and it is easy to be overwhelmed to a point of inaction.

Conventions allow us to see how we can come together and act. I want to see us educate more young women in the values and methods of the League.

4. Was there anything that happened at LWVUS Convention that made you proud to be a League Member and/or want to ask others to join?

ERICA GREER, LWV-Akron Area: I was extremely proud to be a League member when we passed the Marriage Equality concurrence unanimously! That was really a special moment for me.

DIANA KINGSBURY, LWV-Akron Area: The former presidents' panel was excellent! Seeing what past LWVUS presidents accomplished was a testimony to how respected this organization actually is! All of the convention proceedings revealed how the unique, nonpartisan nature of the League can really make a difference within the political system. That made me very proud! I wouldn't hesitate asking others to join!

BARBI CRABILL, LWV-Metro Columbus: Finally, I was very impressed with the civility of the arguments and the passion with which delegates made their arguments for and against. I am grateful for the opportunity to attend the LWVUS convention representing Metro Columbus and meeting all the wonderful leaguers from around Ohio.

SUSAN JANKITE, LWV-Cuyahoga Area: Just about everything that happened at the convention made me proud, helped me refocus and put a lot of things into place for me.

BARBARA BARLOW, LWV-Shaker Heights: I loved meeting many of you and others from around the country and learning about what everyone is doing. Gave me a lot of food for thought. I think the panel of past presidents of the League was incredibly motivating. It really let me know how high profile the LWVUS has been at the national level and how it has contributed to the shaping of American policies.

5. Concerns:

FRED HEYSE, LWV-Cincinnati Area: I was deeply upset with the outgoing board's positioning of all resolutions and consensus changes - the board never positioned any item with respect to its impact on League resources, both financial and human resources. It was too easy for the delegates to pass too many resolutions that will not ever be followed through - and therefore left the real, final decision-making to the new board with little guidance from the delegates at the convention. In this respect we copied the worst behavior of our US Congress that we love to criticize, but we created no better model to brag about!

JANET KERSHAW – LWV-Cuyahoga Area: My major concern at both the national and state level is the "dreaded PMP". Our dues are at \$60 and we are getting some push back from current and potential members at that level. I feel that League needs to evaluate the financial structure of the organization as a whole.

BARBARA BARLOW, LWV–Shaker Heights: I was disappointed that the resolution for the study of privatization was passed in its current form. It was not well defined and it may take a full two years just to carve out some aspect of privatization for study. It will also cost money that we did not budget for. I would strongly recommend that we focus on the study of privatization in Social Security and Medicare (the latter already having been privatized to a significant degree). This would be a reasoned extension of our stance on HealthCare.

LINDA LALLEY, LWV-Shaker Heights: I am worried that the resolution process has gotten out of control over the years, and has begun to circumvent the program planning process. In my directions to the Board, I asked them to consider imposing a rule that *all* resolutions must be presented to the entire membership sufficiently in advance to allow for deliberation via a blog-type venue. One of the hallmarks of the League is our deliberative process that allows for consideration of all aspects of an issue. I am afraid this process has been lost with the manner in which we now treat resolutions.

I also asked the national Board to consider a bylaw amendment expanding the number of delegates eligible to attend the national convention. With our shrinking membership, the maximum number of delegates is also shrinking, making a convention a lot of work for, and expense covered by, a declining number of people.

JOHN LALLEY, LWV-Shaker Heights: I think the convention process is getting a little out of kilter. If she has said it once, Linda has said dozens of times that one of the great things about the League is the study process, and the deliberative nature that considers all perspectives before reaching a conclusion and taking a position. It also prevents the League from jumping into a situation about which it may not be fully informed, or adrift from Leaguers' expertise. After watching the parade of resolutions get passed last week, I left with the conclusion that the deliberative process is being hijacked by the (shall we say) zealots who come only to advocate for their specific position on a specific issue. People get swept up in the enthusiasm of the moment and crazy things happen. I would bet that if the Department of Peace resolution had come before the group on Monday afternoon, even that would have passed. I think this is definitely something that needs to be addressed before the next convention.

SUMMARY OF 2010 LWVUS CONVENTION ACTIONS

For more information on the following, click on the link below to see LWVUS's Daily Convention Reports and the [Convention Program and Workbook](#) . If you cannot link directly, cut and paste the following you're your browser

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Convention_Workbook&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=183&ContentID=15454

A. Bylaws

Delegates approved changes to the LWVUS bylaws, including:

1) *Biennial Budget*: The use of a 2-year budget / process rather than the current one-year budget / process to allow for a 2-year financial roadmap that corresponds with board terms, etc.

2) *Council*: Wording that would allow LWVUS to hold its biennial Council in ways other than the traditional on-site meeting. This could include webinars, streaming or other methods of expanding opportunities for members to participate.

B. National Program for 2010-2012

Delegates' action to determine the LWVUS national program included:

1) Studies

Delegates adopted two studies:

a) *Federal Role in Public Education*: This study will focus on the role of the federal government in education policymaking, with possible consideration of funding, common standards and/or governance relationships among all levels of the government. This study was recommended by 71 Leagues.

b) *Privatization*: This study will focus on the policy agenda to transfer government functions, services and assets to the private sector.

2) Amending / Updating LWVUS Positions by Concurrence

Delegates voted to amend/update three positions by concurrence:

a) *LWVUS Arms Control* position (see pages 34-35 in the Convention Program and Workbook on the LWVUS website).

b) *Marriage Equality*: The addition of the following to the Equality of Opportunity position: "The League of Women Voters of the United States supports equal rights for all under state and federal law. LWVUS supports legislation to equalize the legal rights, obligations, and benefits available to same-gender couples with those available to heterosexual couples. LWVUS supports legislation to permit same-gender couples to marry under civil law. The League believes that the civil status of marriage is already clearly distinguished from the religious institution of marriage and that religious rights will be preserved" (LWV-Maryland and LWV-Maine position on marriage equality).

c) *National Popular Vote Compact for Presidential Elections*: The addition of following as the third sentence to the LWVUS position on selection of the president:

"We support the use of the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal of the direct popular vote for election of the president until the abolition of the Electoral College is accomplished" (LWV-Arizona)

3. Adoption of LWVUS 2010-2012 Program

The delegates approved retaining all other current LWVUS Positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy.

4. Resolutions

Delegates approved the following resolutions:

a) *Unrestricted travel to Cuba*: That LWVUS support lifting the travel restrictions for Americans going to Cuba (LWV-Florida).

b) *Safe drilling and mining for energy resources*: Be it therefore resolved that we, representatives at the 2010 National Convention of the League of Women Voters, call upon the Board to use the resources of the League to support and lobby for significant strengthening of appropriate regulation, oversight, inspection, and penalties associated with the development of fossil fuel resources. This strengthening should include elimination from national legislation of the exemptions for drilling and mining, as well as additional legislation requiring the federal agencies to regulate drilling and mining in a manner consistent with the preservation of a healthy environment. We also call on the Board to communicate with the President and the Congress putting them on notice that Leagues across the country are deeply concerned about this issue (LWV-Tompkins County, NY).

c) *Limitation of senate filibuster*: Be it resolved that the League of Women Voters call upon the Senate to change its rules to limit the use of the filibuster (LWV-Kalamazoo Area, MI).

d) *Adding transparency to the SARA Resolution*: ACRONYM EXPLAIN: Be it resolved, therefore that the LWVUS add the principle of TRANSPARENCY to the SARA Resolution, as adopted at the 2004 LWVUS Convention and amended at the 2006 LWVUS Convention (LWV-Monterey Peninsula, CA).

e) *Advocating for improved Medicare for all*: Therefore, be it resolved that we, the representatives of local and state Leagues assembled at the 2010 LWVUS Convention, call upon the LWVUS Board to advocate strongly for bills that legislate for improved Medicare for all (LWV-Bloomington-Monroe, IN).

f) *Emergency resolution of Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill*: Therefore, we request that the LWVUS highlight the need for those responsible for the oil spill to be held accountable. Further, the LWVUS demands that our government hold those responsible

for the environmental disaster accountable for the clean-up. The LWVUS further urges the legislative and executive branches of the federal government to immediately take all necessary steps to maximize to the extent practicable the ability and efforts of all relevant federal agencies and departments to take action, and to work with the U.S. coastal states and communities most directly and immediately affected, to respond creatively, efficiently and effectively to the environmental, health and economic crisis created by the oil flowing from the out of control BP oil well in the Gulf of Mexico and by the efforts to contain and disperse it (LWV-Dane County, WI; LWV-Alabama).

5. LWVUS PMP and Budget

a) PMP: The LWVUS board had proposed PMP increases of 40 cents for FY 2010-2011, to \$29.60, and 40 cents for 2011-2012, to \$30.00. After spirited debate regarding the amount of PMP increases—particularly given the additional cost of the second approved study which was not budgeted for in the original proposed budget—Convention delegates approved the following:

- LWVUS PMP rate of \$29.70 for FY 2010-2011.
- LWVUS PMP rate of \$30.00 for FY 2011-2012.

b) FY 2010-2011 Budget: The delegates adopted the proposed budget as presented on in the Convention Program and Workbook.

6. Election of LWVUS Officers, Directors and Nominating Committee

By unanimous consent, the delegates approved the 2010-2012 LWVUS officers, board and nominating committee as presented by the 2010 LWVUS Nominating Committee.