



**THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS of the CINCINNATI AREA**

# THE VOTER

103 Wm. H. Taft Rd. Cincinnati, OH 45219  
513-281-8683 Fax: 513-281-8714  
[info@lwvcincinnati.org](mailto:info@lwvcincinnati.org) [www.lwvcincinnati.org](http://www.lwvcincinnati.org)  
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*February 2011*

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE ...**

President's Article -	p. 2
National News -	pp. 3 - 5
Ohio News -	pp. 5 - 6
Local News -	p. 7
League News -	pp. 8 -10
Activities -	p. 11
February Meetings -	p. 12

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization which encourages the informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership is open to all men and women over 18. For information call 513-281-8683, or write to the LWVCA office at 103 Wm H Taft Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45219, or email at [info@lwvcincinnati.org](mailto:info@lwvcincinnati.org).

**LEAGUE TO STUDY "COUNTY GOVERNMENT 101"**

Feedback from the units following last years' LWVCA Local Program Planning revealed that our members feel a lack of clarity about the LWVCA positions pertaining to Hamilton County Government. LWVCA members stated that they want to learn more about why those positions exist and what they mean.



In response to this and in light of the recent deliberations and recommendations from the County Commissioners' Government Reform Task Force, the LWVCA County Government Committee has prepared information for the League's February unit discussions. Our objective is to educate our members and, in doing so, to empower them to become even more effective voices in the community.

Key components of February unit discussions will be:

- Hamilton County Government Structure
- LWVCA Positions Pertaining to County Government
- The Government Reform Task Force Recommendations to the Hamilton County Commissioners

Invite friends and colleagues for this informative discussion at your unit meeting.

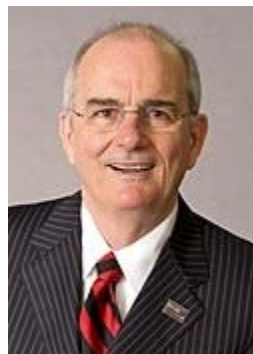
**LWV DIVERSITY POLICY**

The League of Women Voters recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making.

The LWVCA affirms its commitment to actively seek diversity in its membership, leadership and programs.

**SUSAN B. ANTHONY LUNCHEON**

**Saturday February 12, 2011**

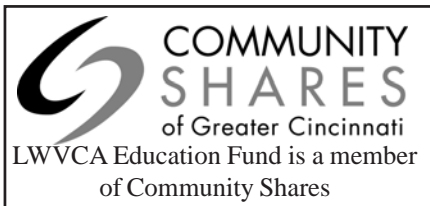


*Dr. Gregory H. Williams*

Make plans now to join all your fellow League members in celebrating 91 years of women's voting! There's still time to register for our annual Susan B Anthony Luncheon, Saturday February 12 at The Phoenix downtown: return the enclosed flyer by February 3 or reserve online at [lwvcincinnati.org](http://lwvcincinnati.org) by February 7.

New this year is a split-the-pot raffle – photocopyable tickets are enclosed. (page 8) You needn't be present to win, but do return all entries and payment in time for the February 12 drawing. Chances are \$5 each or five for \$20 and the raffle is open to all – members, friends, and community. The more tickets you buy, the greater your chances to win!

*(Continued page 9)*



LWVCA Education Fund is a member of Community Shares

*Editor's Note: There are no President Reports or Board Briefs this month.*

## LWVCA INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Welcome Linda Wihl

By *Melissa Currence, LWVCA President*

*Beth Kochheiser resigned as LWVCA Executive Director due to an emergency in her family. We were sad to see her go and wish Beth and her family the best.*

**Linda Wihl** has accepted the position of Interim Executive Director. Linda has served as a volunteer for the League and has done contract work for Voter Services. You may know her as the former office manager for Woman's City Club. She runs the Making Sense of Language Arts tutoring programs at Rothenberg and Winton Hills Academies. She has an AA and BA in psychology, a MA in Religious Studies, but most of all a husband and two adult sons who have taught her the value being an informed citizen.

As interim director, Linda will focus on the LWVCA's strategic planning process and developing an executive director on-boarding process. She is available by phone through the League Office at 281-VOTE and by email at [lindaw@lwcincinnati.org](mailto:lindaw@lwcincinnati.org).

As for the open position, I would like to encourage League members with leadership experience in the not-for-profit sector to apply and to share this opportunity with people you may know who are qualified. A job description and posting is available from our website at [www.lwvca.org/2010-12ExecutiveDirector.pdf](http://www.lwvca.org/2010-12ExecutiveDirector.pdf). Interested applicants can submit a cover letter and resume to [applicants@lwcincinnati.org](mailto:applicants@lwcincinnati.org). No phone calls please. Please note that this is a part-time position.



*Linda Wihl*

## LWVCA STRATEGIC PLANNING

By *Glenda Bernstein, LWVCA Board Secretary*

On August 21, 2010, a retreat was held at the Cincinnati Psychoanalytic Institute library. Attendees included board members, past presidents and representatives of the Education Fund. The purpose was to strategize LWVCA's structure and goals with focus on fundraising, membership and visibility.



*Discussion and contemplation at the strategic planning retreat. Pictured: Nancy Dawley, Fred Heyse, Mary Van Ausdall, Sherrie Heyse, Dee Shaffer (face hidden), Kim Thompson, Susan Lehman, Mary Kercherval Short, Alice Schneider. Photo by Glenda Bernstein.*

Creation of the executive director position required special attention to coordination of efforts to ensure effective communication and efficient operations. Fundraising is essential to the League's long-term viability and to the continuation of our important work educating the public. Retaining and growing membership is a challenge faced by many organizations today, and LWVCA is no different. Active, involved members are crucial to our success. We seek ways to engage current members and attract interest from potential members by connecting with other groups and organizations having interests and goals similar to ours, optimizing use of social media, and other activities. Our members are our ambassadors to the larger community.

To aid in strategic planning, the board wants input from members. October 2010 unit meetings were focused on obtaining feedback at the individual member level. The board wants to know how and where members want to see LWVCA in the future. What are members' views and visions? What direction should LWVCA be taking? This kind of information will aid the board in setting priorities that members will support. If you have comments or input - contact any member of the board or your unit leader. A short survey is also available online at our website: [www.lwvcincinnati.org](http://www.lwvcincinnati.org) or at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/W3CJSFB](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/W3CJSFB)

## LETTER SENATE MEMBERS

### Re: Senate Rules

*Letter from Elisabeth MacNamara, President LWVUS*

The League of Women Voters urges you to work with your Senate colleagues to reform the rules of the Senate. We believe this can and should be accomplished through consensus – a consensus that will preserve the underlying values of the current rules but that will end the abuses of recent decades.

The Senate's tradition of full debate on critical and complex national issues is important for our democracy. Quick and unconsidered action is often a mistake. At the same time, particular rules that have the effect of tying the Senate in procedural knots or that block the Senate from even debating a particular bill or subject are not consistent with this tradition and undermine the basic tenets of representative government.

While it may be possible for a simple majority to change the rules of the Senate at the beginning of a congressional session, the prospect of biennial rules changes on partisan votes would fundamentally change the role of the Senate. We share the deep concern about abuses that bring many to support this step. A better alternative would be for Senators from both political parties to agree on essential reforms and adopt them using current procedures. But it is simply unacceptable in a democracy to continue the Senate's recent practices, which allow a small minority of absent Senators to block any consideration of a bill or nomination and to obstruct and delay action after cloture is invoked.

Over the years, Senators of both major political parties have taken different positions on cloture and filibuster procedures, often reflecting their partisan stands on the underlying issues. The League of Women Voters urges Senators now to recognize that they will sometimes be in the majority and sometimes in the minority. The Senate rules should ensure fair procedures for both. At its best, the Senate is unique in its ability to reconcile conflicting national interests and priorities through full and open debate that respects the contribution of each Senator. At its worst, the Senate wastes incredible amounts of time doing nothing, allows Senators to indulge their individual whims, and reinforces partisan rancor.

It is time to rise above partisanship and reform the Senate rules in ways that maintain the best traditions of the Senate while ensuring openness, accountability, decision-making capability and effective performance.

## OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS

### RULES: Letter to House Speaker John Boehner

*By Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, CREW Democracy 21, League of Women Voters, Public Citizen, U.S. PIRG, Dec 21, 2010.*

Dear Speaker-designee Boehner:

Our organizations are writing to strongly urge you to support, without any weakening changes, the gift, travel and other ethics rules adopted by the House in 2007 in response to the Jack Abramoff scandals.

We are pleased to see that, according to *Roll Call* (December 16, 2010), Representative Greg Walden (R-Ore.) said on December 16 that “he doesn’t ‘anticipate any change’ to the Office of Congressional Ethics in the 112th Congress, as members of the House GOP transition team concluded it will not issue recommendations about the future of the fledgling office.”

As you know, our organizations strongly support the OCE, a critically important ethics reform from the last Congress and believe it is essential that the OCE continue in the next Congress with its authority, powers and funding fully intact.

We also strongly urge you to oppose any efforts to weaken or backtrack on any of the existing ethics rules and standards of conduct that have been adopted to protect the integrity of the House and the interests of the American people. We further urge you to seek ways to strengthen the existing ethics rules and standards in order to ensure that members of the House are held to the high ethical standards that citizens expect from the federal officeholders who exercise great power over their daily lives.

The ethics rules adopted in 2007 included new restrictions on lobbyists and lobbying organizations paying for trips, gifts, meals and entertainment for Members, and ended the practice of Members paying cut-rate amounts to use corporate planes for their travel. These rules also established pre-approval requirements for trips financed by persons other than lobbyists and lobbying organizations and timely disclosure of these trips after they occur. This is an area where the rules and oversight apparently need to be strengthened, in the wake of a Caribbean trip that was the subject of a House Ethics Committee investigation based on the recommendation of the Office of Congressional Ethics.

Another important rule adopted in 2007 prohibited House members from participating in events held at the presidential nominating conventions to “honor Members” and financed by lobbyists or by private entities that retain or employ a lobbyist. This rule was adopted to stop the abuses that had occurred at national conventions where lavish parties paid for by lobbyists and lobbying organizations were, in essence, parties thrown by House members and financed by influence-seekers.

*(continued on page 4)*

## CULTIVATING POSITIVITY

By Marcia A. Merrins, LWVUS Board of Directors

Have you ever noticed that when you laugh there comes a chorus of laughter and when you are down most of the time you bring down those around you? Has negativity taken over in your League? Dr. Barbara Fredrickson pulls together 20 years of research on positive emotions. “Negative emotions are contagious, but so are positive emotions,” Fredrickson says. “Leaders who cultivate positivity have the chance to tip the scale from narrow, negative thinking to foster broad, innovative thinking and resiliency.” This may have great importance for the successes of your leadership teams and League.

Positivity isn’t just about nixing the negative, according to Fredrickson. Here’s the short version of how positivity works, adapted from Fredrickson’s book:

**Fact 1: Positivity feels good.** This may be obvious, but it is an essential point. The sparkle of good feelings makes you want more, creating motivation to change things that aren’t working in your League. But the good feeling is just the beginning.

**Fact 2: Positivity changes how your mind works.** Positivity doesn’t just change the contents of your mind, trading bad thoughts for good ones; it also changes the scope or boundaries of your mind. It widens the span of possibilities that you see. Although this broadened mindscape is temporary, you escape the tightness of negativity and gain elbow room for greater flexibility and seeing the big picture.

**Fact 3: Positivity transforms your future.** Positivity literally brings out the best in you and your League. It builds resources for the future. However subtle and fleeting, your moments of positivity accumulate and compound over time to build lasting resources for life. You become stronger, wiser, more resilient and more socially integrated.

**Fact 4: Positivity puts the brakes on negativity.** When hard times threaten to suck you into negativity’s downward spiral, positivity applies the brakes and allows you to bounce back. Even in dark times, positivity continues to broaden your mind and build your resources.

**Fact 5: Positivity obeys a tipping point.** Effects that are virtually nonexistent at one starting point grow disproportionately large at a different starting point. Most people experience a 2-to-1 ratio of positivity to negativity. But as you raise your ratio above 3-to-1, a transformation occurs. You feel more alive, creative and resilient.

**Fact 6: You can increase your positivity.** Through your own efforts, you can raise your positivity ratios and tip yourself from languishing to flourishing. You have more control over your ratio than you realize.

### Feeling Positive?

Noticing what’s good and positive about your League is more about choice than you probably think. Positive interpretations of your situation — even the most difficult ones — lead to positive emotions and positive outcomes.

*What a great way to start the year!*

### House Ethics *(con’t from p. 3)*

In December 2007, the House Ethics Committee issued guidance to House members that opened gaping loopholes in this rule. In a letter sent on December 18, 2007 to the Ethics Committee, reform groups stated:

The Committee’s guidance, issued on December 11, 2007, provides a clear roadmap for Members and lobbyists on how to circumvent and ignore the new rule at the party conventions next year. The door is opened wide by the Committee for lobbyists and lobbying organizations to continue their past practices at conventions of sponsoring and paying for lavish parties to “honor” Members - abusive practices that led to the adoption of the new rule.

With the presidential nominating conventions coming in 2012, we urge you to provide the leadership necessary to overturn this unjustifiable guidance and restore the “convention parties” rule to its original meaning.

In conclusion, we urge you to take all steps necessary to preserve and, where necessary, strengthen the House ethics rules and standards of conduct that exist to protect the interests of the American people in an honest and ethical House of Representatives.

## THE LEAGUE AND NONPARTISANSHIP

*By Susan Gilbert, Newsletter Editor and 40-year League member; LWV of Berrien and Cass Counties, Michigan*

It is not uncommon for outsiders, and even some members, to question how the League can be nonpartisan yet advocate on positions that, in the slice of time that is now, appear to be partisan. In the highly partisan climate that has developed in recent years, the League is one of the very few political organizations that is not in either the liberal/Democratic camp or the conservative/Republican camp. And we have members of all political persuasions and encourage them to get involved in politics. So members may be partisan but the organization is not.

All this is hard for many to wrap their minds around. The League is nonpartisan in that we do not endorse or support any political party or candidate for office. We don't rate legislators, we don't track their votes and we don't threaten them if they don't vote our way. Voter service is one of our main missions and we publish nonpartisan voter guides and hold candidate forums to help voters educate themselves beyond TV ads. Education is an important League function, and we try in our meetings and in this newsletter to inform our attendees/readers and stimulate them to think about issues in our world.

However, the League is also an advocacy group, and we have positions on issues that have been developed over the years since our founding in 1920 and are the result of study and consensus of the local Leagues nationwide. These positions are updated from time to time, but are basically consistent. The positions and platforms of the political parties, on the other hand, do change and at times they resemble our League position, or not. But the League doesn't change or drop its positions because they are currently those of one party or the other.

And we do speak out! An example is health care. The League has a position on comprehensive health care for all Americans. President Truman liked that idea too and President Eisenhower delivered a special message to Congress on January 31, 1955 recommending a comprehensive health program for Americans. Lyndon Johnson got Medicare passed and that took the pressure off for awhile. President Nixon encouraged HMOs as a way to rein in costs and provide health care for more people. Then President Reagan came along and decided the free market was the best way to manage health care and the Republicans have basically supported this idea since. Clearly both parties have been on both sides of the issue. The key is not to confuse politics with position advocacy.

## LWVO INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Source: LWVO*

We are pleased to announce Joanna Z. Helon of Columbus is the new interim Executive Director of LWVO/EF, effective January 4, 2011. Ms. Helon has more than ten years experience in non-profit management, with a focus on government relations, communications, fundraising and special events. Previously serving as interim executive director of the Women's Fund of Central Ohio, she led the Fund's work to grow women's philanthropy and invest in programs that promise social changes for women and girls. Joanna also brings years of experience working with volunteers and volunteer organizations and will help us assess our strategic direction and goals for the short and long term. Welcome Joanna!!

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## REDISTRICTING JARGON: HOW PARTIES IN POWER CONTROL THE MAP

*Source: League of Women Voters of Ohio Educational Fund*

**Packing:** involves packing voters of one party or large constituencies of that party into districts that are safe for that party, keeping them out of neighboring districts. For example, African-Americans are considered to be Democratic voters, and the 11<sup>th</sup> District, in Cleveland, has always been packed with Democrats and African Americans, to make sure these groups are a minority in surrounding areas.

**Cracking:** Conversely, cracking dilutes the party vote by splitting up areas. For example, Hamilton County is split down the middle into two Congressional districts, mixing the urban, Democratic area, with more Republican rural and suburban areas, resulting in one closely contested district and one that is strongly Republican.

## UPDATING LWVO'S STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE AND TAXATION POSITIONS

By Ardith Keck, LWVO 1<sup>st</sup> VP – Chair, Issues Education Committee

Thank you to the sixteen Leagues that returned consensus report forms! The board determined there was consensus among the reporting Leagues on a number of options offered by the Study Committee. Language added for the update is underlined, while language deleted is ~~stricken through~~.

### ***I. Approved LWVO Positions on State Finance and Taxation with Updates Marked***

#### **Criteria** (Adopted July 1989)

LWVO supports the following tax principles as criteria to be used in evaluating individual taxes and the tax mix in Ohio.

Taxes should:

1. be fair and equitable;
2. provide adequate funds for government programs while allowing flexibility for financing future program changes;
3. be understandable to the taxpayer and encourage compliance; and
4. be easy to administer.

*Note: There was no consensus to add a fifth criterion, “promote economic competitiveness,” nor to give greater weight to the first two criteria addressing fair and equitable taxes, and adequacy of resources. The position remains as it was.*

#### **Taxes on Business** ~~Corporate Franchise Tax~~ (Adopted July 1989; revised December 2010)

LWVO supports taxes on business ~~the corporate franchise tax~~ as a source of state revenue especially because businesses should help pay for services received.

*Note: There was consensus to replace “corporate franchise tax,” which no longer exists, with “taxes on business.”*

#### **Income Tax** (Adopted July 1989)

LWVO supports a personal income tax as a source of state revenue because it meets the fair and equitable principles. The state income tax rates should be graduated.

*Note: There were no proposed updates to this position.*

#### **Property Tax** (Adopted March 1983):

1. LWVO supports real property tax relief, financed by the state in the form of the Homestead Exemption, based on age, income and disability income.
2. LWVO supports the elimination of the real property tax rollbacks, both across-the-board and for owner-occupied homes.

*Note: There was no consensus to add the following condition to #2: “providing the rollbacks do not unduly burden low-income individuals and families.”*

#### **Sales Tax** (Adopted March 1983; revised June 1989):

1. LWVO supports a change in the base rather than a change in the rate of the sales tax. We favor broadening the base by reducing the number of exemptions.
2. LWVO supports application of the sales tax to nonessential services, tickets for professional athletic and entertainment events, and prepared food purchased for on- or off- premise consumption.
3. LWVO supports exemptions for food, other than prepared food, sold for off-premise consumption, prescription drugs, prosthetic and surgical devices, and items for direct use (components in manufacturing and agricultural use).

*Note: There were no updates proposed to this position.*

#### **Tax Mix** (Adopted July 1989; revised December 2010)

~~LWVO supports the state taxes currently in effect.~~ If an increase in state taxes is needed, LWVO prefers the income tax as a source of revenue because it tends to be progressive rather than regressive. Applying means testing to state property tax-relief programs would increase the revenue generated by the tax and make the system more equitable by not unduly burdening low-income individuals and families. Taxes on alcohol and ~~tobacco cigarettes~~ are another revenue source if needed. An increase in sales tax, although less desirable, is another possible revenue source

If a decrease in state taxes is called for, LWVO supports reducing the sales tax because it is regressive and less equitable. Tax relief for those at the lower end of the income scale should be considered if there is an increase in state taxes.

*Notes: There was consensus for additions and deletions seen above; there was no consensus to add the following: “An increase in sales tax, although less desirable, is another possible revenue source.”*

## ENHANCED RECYCLING PROGRAM PRODUCES RESULTS

By Larry Falkin, Cincinnati Office of Environmental Quality

The City of Cincinnati is in the final implementation phase of its “Enhanced Recycling Program,” plan to improve recycling for residents. More than half of city residents have received larger recycling containers as part of this plan, and the city is already seeing big results. Cincinnati recorded its highest recycling rate ever in November 2010, collecting 1,330 tons of recyclables, a 30 percent increase over November 2009.

“We are very pleased with the initial results,” said Sue Magness, recycling coordinator. “Not only are we saving natural resources and energy through our waste diversion efforts, but we are saving the City money by reducing our landfill disposal fees.”

Magness added that the increase in recycling also means additional payments from the Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District. “The City could potentially earn \$200,000 or more in additional paybacks from the Solid Waste District, if residents keep producing these results,” Magness said.

According to Larry Falkin, Director of Cincinnati’s Office of Environmental Quality, the City won’t be the only one rewarded for its increased recycling rate. Falkin says that residents can earn RecycleBank rewards for their efforts if they register for the program. RecycleBank is a rewards program that motivates people to take greener actions, like household recycling. RecycleBank participants earn points that are redeemable online for rewards from local and national retailers, restaurants, pharmacies, grocers and more. Similar to frequent flier programs, the more a community recycles, the more RecycleBank Points participating households earn. Points are recorded when Rumpke collects the recyclables every-other-week.

To register for the RecycleBank program, Cincinnati residents should visit [www.RecycleBank.com](http://www.RecycleBank.com) and enter their activation code, which is mailed to them prior to cart delivery. Residents can also register by calling 1-888-727-2978 and entering their activation code or their address.

For more information about the City’s recycling program, please visit [www.cincinnati-recycles.org](http://www.cincinnati-recycles.org) or call 591-6000. In addition to the larger recycling carts and the RecycleBank rewards, the Enhanced Recycling Program also includes the move to every other week collection. Residents are reminded to follow the Green Week or Gold Week schedule provided with their new carts.



**Kim Thompson** writes: *We love our new recycling container. It's twice the size of the old bin and it has a lid! Every time the recycling is collected we get points to use for gift cards and other fun stuff.*

## PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

By Michelle Dillingham, reprinted from *StreetVibes* with permission.

The “Campaign for Affordable Housing” is a non-profit organization whose mission is “to create a more receptive political climate for favorable government decisions on land-use matters and allocation of public resources”. They argue we need more and better public information about affordable housing. By knowing what public opinion is out there, they hope to develop better public education materials for advocates. Recently they did a meta-analysis of public opinion research on attitudes about affordable housing that was collected from the late 1990s to 2003. Although the research was drawn from a wide array of sample groups the findings yielded similar patterns of response. They found essentially two story lines. The first story line is one of positive attitudes toward affordable housing; that the basic American values of fairness and opportunity appear to be the underlying value in their responses. The second story line is how attitudes change when the issue is framed as a local issue, or right next door; when it hits home “darker issues of fear overtake fairness and opportunity for many Americans.” People report they are supportive of generalized “policies” to expand affordable housing such as alleviating tax burdens, however when it gets “local” or specific such as changing one’s own neighborhood zoning, deciding the site for a project, or increasing the number of affordable units in one’s apartment building, it is not supported.

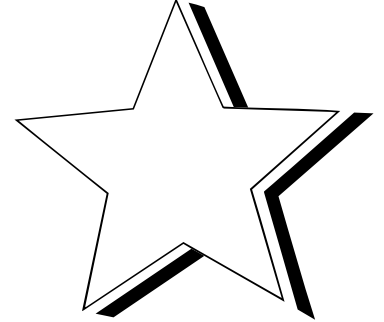
These research findings are intuitive. Here in Cincinnati we see how mainstream media often uses fear when referencing project-based properties or homeless shelters, and this dissuades public opinion against supporting affordable housing. I can recall many discussions at City Hall about police and fire calls for service and other quality of life issues being raised in the context of project-based housing. Later, when the data revealed it was not the affordable housing tenants drawing the call but a neighboring property or business, the corrected information was not given equal publicity.

The researchers conclude that broad-based campaigns should speak to the general need for more affordable housing, calling on values such as fairness and equal opportunity. However, when advocating for local housing efforts use a more targeted messaging that address worries about increased crime and poor maintenance. The researchers emphasize, “*Advocates must be ready to prove these fears unfounded.*”

Planning communications around what people are really concerned about is not underhanded or an attempt at being subliminal-it’s keeping it real. We must convince Cincinnati’s neighborhoods that 1) affordable housing will benefit not only the tenant, but the neighborhood as a whole, 2) those who will benefit directly are children, the elderly, and working families, and 3) we need to showcase many examples of “high quality, attractive, affordable and safe housing to counter the negative preconceptions about appearance and crime and their impacts on property values.” The Campaign for Affordable Housing asserts that if communications are crafted at a local level they can “unlock the specific missing messages that will create national change one community at a time”.

Support the LWVCA Education Fund by buying a "Split the Pot" Raffle ticket. You do not need to be present to win. The drawing will take place at the SBA luncheon after the speaker. Tickets can be purchased before the luncheon or at the luncheon. Please send tickets and check to the LWV Office or bring to the luncheon for the Raffle. This is an opportunity for friends and neighbors to support the Who and What of Elections, the SmartVoter webpage and other Voter Services. Just be sure we can read the name and phone number of the lucky winner. Tickets must be in the office by the Friday mail to be included in the drawing.

# Split the Pot Raffle

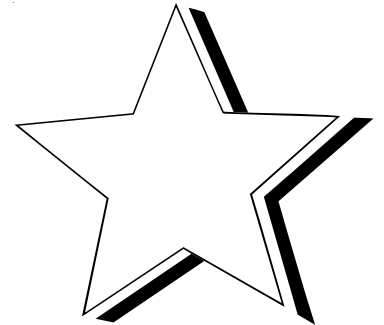


\$5 per ticket or 5 tickets for \$20

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Winning Raffle ticket will be drawn at the Susan B. Anthony Luncheon on Saturday Feb. 12 You do not need to be present to win! Send tickets and check to LWV Office to 103 Wm Howard Taft Rd, Cincinnati OH 45219. Make checks to LWVCA Education Fund.

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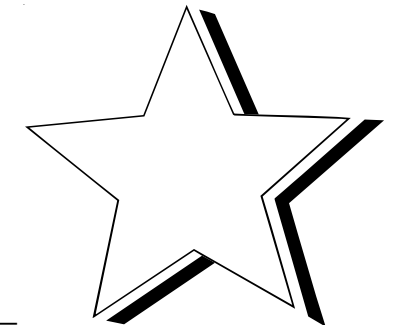


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## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By *Mary Van Ausdall, Membership Director*

Have you heard people around town say, “It’s so hard to talk with others about issues when we have different viewpoints”? Well, invite them to become members of the League of Women Voters! Monthly discussion groups, monitoring of debates and fact finding committees are the League’s lifeblood. It’s as important as ever to have a vibrant League. Our membership count is behind the count from this time last year. If you know deeply that bipartisan dialogue about important issues is important, please consider asking others to join the LWVCA!

Also, if you haven’t done so, please fill out our strategic planning survey and encourage your fellow leaguers to do so, too. We want your opinion regarding which age group should be our focus for expanding our chapter: below 35; 35-55; over 55. The online version is available from our website and directly:

[www.surveymonkey.com/s/W3CJSFB](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/W3CJSFB)

## THE LWV TOUR OF THE CINCI ART MUSEUM: Wedding Gowns and the Gainsborough

By *Sherrie Heyse*

The LWVCA is very lucky to have member **Carolyn Honkomp**. Carolyn, a trained docent with the Cincinnati Art Museum, has graciously led members on tours over the years and this year was a wonderful tour of two exhibits: “Gainsborough and the Modern Woman” and “Wedding Gowns”.

One hundred and fifty years before women’s suffrage, Thomas Gainsborough captured the spirit of revolutionary women in his paintings. These strong spirited women went to Gainsborough to be painted the way they wished the world to see them. For example, Ann Ford had herself painted with her legs crossed (considered unladylike in her time), in clothing that was “on the edge” and she was also passionate about playing music. Gainsborough painted women dancing, in provocative colors and poses, and often showing erotic symbols in the painting. This was definitely revolutionary and defied the tradition of the time. Carolyn led us through with her descriptive style and added a special dimension to the tour. We all felt connected to the spirit of the women painted by Gainsborough.

The Wedding Gowns were gorgeous to look at and see how fashion has changed over the years. It was interesting to see how many gowns were treasured and how much individual artistic creativity went into each wedding gown. Carolyn gave us some unique insight into the creation of gowns for a very important event in a woman’s life.



*Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788), England Ann Ford (later Mrs. Philip Thicknesse) 1760 oil on canvas Bequest of Mary M. Emery, 1927.396*

## SUSAN B. ANTHONY LUNCHEON *(continued from p. 1)*

Luncheon speaker is Dr. Gregory H. Williams, noted author and President of the University of Cincinnati, giving us the latest news from uptown: *UC 2019, a Global University*. As always, our festive mid-winter luncheon begins with a social hour/silent auction filled with tempting treasures at 11:00, followed by the luncheon/keynote address at noon.

For only \$35 (down from \$40 in 2009), or \$300 for a table of ten, you can enjoy great company and a delicious full chicken or vegan hot luncheon, complete with salad, rolls, dessert, and coffee or tea. Table sponsorships, including recognition from the podium, in the March Voter, and on our website, are available for \$1,000 and include a reserved table of ten. You can park all day Saturday at the adjacent Garfield Garage, 13 W Ninth St, for only \$2. A separate elevator entrance to The Phoenix is on Ninth St, where you can go directly to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Grand Ballroom.

The Susan B. Anthony Luncheon is a joyous event you can share with friends and family, and would be especially appropriate to introduce young people to the history of women’s suffrage. Proceeds of the event benefit the League’s nonpartisan 501(c)(3) Education Fund; contributions are tax deductible to the extent they exceed fair market value received. For more information, call **Marjorie Davies** or the League office, (513) 281-8683. See you February 12!

## BOOK REVIEW

### The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness

Book by Michelle Alexander

Review by Nancy Dawley

“The fact that more than half of the young black men in any large American city are currently under the control of the criminal justice system (or saddled with criminal records) is not—as many argue—just a symptom of poverty or poor choices, but rather evidence of a new racial caste system at work.”

The author came to this view of our criminal justice system reluctantly and over 10 years of study. At one time she thought it a radical idea. Now she sees it as obvious.

In the mid-1970’s there were fewer than 350,000 people incarcerated in the United States. The growing consensus of experts at that time was that the prison system would soon fade out. “Those who had meaningful economic and social opportunities were unlikely to commit crimes regardless of the penalty, while those who went to prison were far more likely to commit crimes again in the future.”

Now about 2 million people are in prison, mainly due to the war on drugs. Crime rates in the United States have not been markedly higher than those of other Western countries, about equal to official rates in Finland and Germany. But the U.S. incarceration rate has quadrupled while Finland fell by 60% and Germany remained stable.

Why? “Each government chose to impose different levels of punishment.”

What does this have to do with Jim Crow? Crime rates are about equal among the races. Because of injustices in our entire judicial system, more people of color are incarcerated. Prison sentences and their length is not the only inequality. Once released,

*“Jarvious Cotton cannot vote. Like his father, grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great grandfather, he has been denied the right to participate in our electoral democracy.”*

former prisoners face discriminations that have been legalized – discrimination in employment, housing, food stamps and public assistance, education, and exclusion from the right to vote and jury service. “As a criminal you have scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a black man living in Alabama at the height of Jim Crow. We have not ended racial caste in America, we have merely redesigned it.”

Read this book, and see what you think.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Ellie Belanger** passed away on December 14, 2010. She was an active member of the League for many years serving on the Board in the early 80s and as North Central unit chair at various times. Ellie headed the Wyoming School Study that led to LWVCA’s local position in support of the Wyoming Public Schools. She frequently chaired the Wyoming Candidates Night meetings sponsored by LWVCA and headed up the publication of a local Wyoming Voters’ Guide. Ellie was also president of the Wyoming Parent/Student Association. **Jan Evans** writes: “*Betty Roosa, Peg Cooke and Ellie Belanger did remarkable things for this community without citizens being aware of their personal efforts or of their identities. They simply flew under the banner of The League of Women Voters.*”

**Bobbie Mystrom** passed away on January 20. She was a longtime resident of Kennedy Heights where she was active in the community for many years. Bobbie was an active member of the Cincinnati League for over 50 years and served as Co-President from 1995-97.

### Join the League of Women Voters

**...where hands on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.**

All citizens, male and female, 18 years and older, are welcome. Take the opportunity now to support our work promoting democracy and civic engagement. Dues include Cincinnati, Ohio, and National membership, including newsletters from each.

Individual - \$60.00

Household - \$80.00

Student - \$25.00

Dues pose a hardship. I can pay \_\_\_\_\_

Optional deductible contribution to LWVCA: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to LWVCA, 103 Wm. H. Taft,  
Cincinnati, OH 45219

**CALENDAR: FEBRUARY UNIT MEETINGS**

Discussion Topic: **County Government 101**

*Unit meetings are our grassroots discussions, located at different places and times so that there's always one convenient for YOU! This is your chance to get involved. All meetings are open. Come, and bring a friend!*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday 2/8/11**

College Hill: 11:30 am Location TBA

North Central: 12:00 noon, Friendship United Methodist Church, Springfield Pike & Fleming Rd

Warren County: 7:30 pm Mason United Methodist Church, 773 Mason-Montgomery Rd

**2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday 2/9/11**

Anderson: 7:00 pm Anderson Government Center, 7850 Five Mile Rd

Central Evening: 7:15 pm League Office, 103 Wm H Taft

**2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday 2/10/11**

Eastern Day: 12:00 noon with brown bag lunch, Marjorie P. Lee Home, 3580 Shaw Ave

**2<sup>nd</sup> Monday 2/14/11**

Hilltop: No meeting this month

Northeast Evening: 7:00 pm Madeira Public Library, Euclid and Miami Ave

**3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, 2/16/11**

Metro Day: 12:00 noon League Office, 103 Wm H Taft

\*Note: College Hill meets in individual member homes. Please see your membership directory or call the office or your unit chair for these addresses.

**LWVCA 2010-11 Board of Directors:**

President: *Melissa Currence*

President Elect: *OPEN*

Treasurer: *Kim Thompson*

Secretary: *Glenda Bernstein*

Vice President, Program: *Nancy Dawley*

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Director, Unit Coordinator: *Susan Lehman*

Director, Planned Giving: *Dee Shaffer*

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**February 15** – Woman's City Club Forum: "*The Vanishing Middle Class in Cincinnati: Myth or Reality?*" Location is First Unitarian church, Avondale, 7 pm.

**STRIVING FOR JUSTICE:  
Searching for Common Ground**

The League of Women Voters is co-sponsoring with The Woman's City Club of Greater Cincinnati (WCC) the speaker, Naomi Tutu. Naomi Tutu, daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, will share her views on one of the most pressing issues facing our community:

"Striving for Justice: Searching for Common Ground" on Thursday, March 10, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. Millennium Hotel, 141 West 6th Street

The challenges of growing up black and female in apartheid South Africa have led Naomi Tutu to become a dedicated world champion for human rights. In her speeches she blends the passion for human dignity with humor and personal stories. Rather than focus on what separates us, Tutu encourages us to focus on our shared humanity in order to build a just world.

If you would like to purchase tickets, please contact **Alice Schneider** at 381-8683. Tickets: \$25.00. Make checks payable to League of Women Voters Cincinnati Area (LWVCA).



*The Voter* is the official monthly newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area.

Editor: **Rina Saperstein**.  
Office Staff: **Susan Gorman**.  
Proofer: **Melissa Currence**  
Layout and design:  
**Kit Berger**.



**League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area**

103 Wm. H. Taft Rd. Cincinnati, OH 45219

513-281-8683 Fax: 513-281-8714

info@lwvcincinnati www.lwvcincinnati.org

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**LEAGUE ACTIVITIES**

*All meetings are open to the public and are held at the League Office, address above, unless otherwise noted.  
Bring a friend!*

Friday	Feb 4		Deadline to Register for Susan B Anthony Luncheon
Monday	Feb 7	6:30 pm	Board Meeting
Thursday	Feb 10	7:00 pm	Natural Resources Committee
Friday	Feb 11		<b>Voter</b> copy for March due to Editor
Saturday	Feb 12	11:00 am	Susan B. Anthony Luncheon, Phoenix, 812 Race St, \$35 (\$300 table of 10)
Saturday	Feb 19		LWVCA Board Planning (Cincinnati Psychoanalytic Institute)
Monday	Feb 21	7:00 pm	County Government Committee
Tuesday	Feb 22	7:00 pm	Health Care Committee
Wednesday	Feb 23	5:30 pm	Program Development Committee (PDC)
Wednesday	Feb 23	7:00 pm	Discussion Leaders Briefing for March Topics
Thursday	Feb 24	10:00 am	Voter Collating, Central Evening in Charge
Saturday	Feb 26	1:00 pm	Discussion Leaders Briefing for March Topics
Saturday	Feb 26		LWVO Regional Meetings. Location TBA

*See our website [www.lwvcincinnati.org](http://www.lwvcincinnati.org) for more information on upcoming events.*

## HAMILTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT 101: GETTING TO KNOW WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT COULD BE

The members of the League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area (LWVCA) have requested information about Hamilton County Government and the LWVCA position on county government reform. In response to and in light of the recent deliberations and recommendations from a Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) appointed Government Reform Task Force (GRTF), the LWVCA County Government Committee has prepared this information for the League's February unit discussions.

### County Government Structure

Responsibility for governance in counties is shared by the Ohio General Assembly, which has legislative power; the county courts which have judicial power; an elected Board of County Commissioners; and eight independently elected county officials. County government in Ohio is an arm of the state. Its purpose is to administer state law on the local level and carry out designated functions.

The Ohio Constitution and state law determine the composition of County Government: a Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) made up of three commissioners elected at large for 4 year staggered terms, eight independently elected county officers who head departments and the Court of Common Pleas and Hamilton County Municipal Court.

The BOCC is responsible for approving an annual balanced budget. Other responsibilities include:

- approving department budgets
- determining tax levies and bond issues for the county
- managing real and personal property owned by the county
- appointing members of various boards and commissions

- implementing state regulations pertaining to physical needs of the county such as roads, sewers, and zoning.

The Hamilton County BOCC uses an appointed County Administrator, an office permitted by the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). The administrative head of the County acts under the direction and supervision of the Board. The current Hamilton County Administrator has divided the departments under the control of the BOCC into six sections:

- Communications Center
- County Facilities
- Environmental Services
- Human Services
- Job and Family Services
- Planning and Development

Eight independently elected officials head the following departments.

**Auditor** - Serves as chief fiscal officer for the county; conducts regular real property appraisals; issues warrants to county treasurer for county expenses.

**Clerk of Courts** - Enters all orders, decrees and judgments; collects and distributes court costs; keeps records of court dockets and journals; issues and transfers automobile title certificates.

**Coroner** - Determines the cause of any death not clearly due to natural causes; conducts autopsies, issues death certificates, supervises county morgue and laboratory. Must be a state licensed physician for at least 2 years.

**Engineer** - Responsible for the county road and bridge system and is engineer for operating townships. Must be a registered professional engineer and surveyor.

**Prosecuting Attorney** - Prosecutes all complaints, suits and controversies in both Common Pleas and Municipal courts in which the state is a party; serves as legal advisor to all county officials and boards; county's chief legal officer; must be an Ohio licensed attorney; may continue a private practice while in office.

**Recorder** - Records deeds, mortgages, plats, powers of attorney, proceedings of annexation and municipal incorporation and liens.

**Sheriff** - Administers county detention and correctional facilities; provides full police protection to those townships which do not have their own police departments. Chief law enforcement officer.

**Treasurer** - Collects county, local government and certain state taxes; invests county funds; disburses funds from treasury on warrant from the county auditor.

Each elected official has executive authority with duties prescribed by state law. Each heads a separate department of county government and operates independently from the Board of County Commissioners.

Parks, libraries, sewers, safety services, health and human services and other services are provided through appointed members of boards and commissions and other officials.

County government serves unincorporated areas by providing such local government facilities and services as highways, police protection, building inspection, planning and zoning. Elected county officials have no authority in incorporated areas, i.e., cities and villages; however, a city or village may contract with the county to receive a service.

County Government is not a general purpose government. Under the current structure, no one entity is accountable for the performance of Hamilton County government as a whole. There is no overall single governing body.

Recently, the County Commission has informally taken it upon itself to serve as the

policy-making body of the county government. That is a role not explicitly sanctioned by state law.

The independently elected department directors of the county operate independently of the BOCC which does not have the power to set policy for the government as a whole. Responsibility for County administration is divided between the BOCC and the eight independently elected officers, as well as the elected judiciary and independent boards and commissions.

As the administrative arm of the state, the county cannot pass its own ordinances but does have the power to levy certain taxes.

Voters in the county may choose to change county government structure either by adopting a charter or an alternative form of government as set forth in Chapter 302 of the ORC.

The Alternative Form of county government as authorized in ORC Chapter 302 grants home rule or limited legislative powers to the county. The county Board is the designated policy-making body for the county government with authority to act on any matter unless specifically prohibited by state law or the Ohio Constitution. This sometimes is referred to as "implied powers" and is an important part of the Alternative Form. This Alternative Form does not allow for abolishment of any elected county officials.

— In 1979 Summit County changed its structure with the adoption of a charter.

— As of January 2011, Cuyahoga County has a new Charter as approved by voters in November 2009.

— In Ashtabula County, a petition for a new Charter was circulated in 2010 but did not obtain enough signatures to qualify for the ballot in November.

### **LWVCA Positions Pertaining to County Government**

The LWVCA has called for modernization of County government since the 1920's. As early as 1934, a proposal to reorganize County government was on the ballot. The League has

worked on this issue by means of citizen education, publications, public forums and surveys, and by working with other groups on proposals for changes in county government structure.

Changing government structure is a political process that has involved representatives of political parties, business and civic leaders and community groups.

Within the past forty years, the LWVCA has been a part of three major attempts to restructure Hamilton County government.

In 1971, the Citizens Committee to Improve Local Government (the Lingle Committee) was formed because certain civic groups were convinced the present government structure was not organized to handle the needs of an urban county. One League member was on the Executive Committee and other members served among the 200 citizens appointed to subcommittees to study the county responsibilities and make recommendations for improvements.

During 1980-1982, the League played an active role as one of five groups in the Coalition to Draft a County Charter. This organization was formed after a change in Ohio law allowed a Charter to be placed on the ballot by petition. A Home Rule charter was drafted and many League members helped in the Home Rule NOW petition campaign.

The same five-member coalition convened again in early 1990's in a Citizen Committee to Restructure Hamilton County Government. Again the League helped to conduct public meetings and forums and was on the drafting committee for a county charter. Neither of these two efforts was successful.

The extensive action by the League in county government reform was the result of League studies of Hamilton county government and the subsequent consensus of members on the position statements.

## SUPPORT OF MODERNIZATION OF HAMILTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT

**Position: The LWVCA supports the modernization of county government through some form of reorganization, such as adoption of a county charter or one of the alternative forms of county government permitted by Ohio Law.**

Criteria to be used in defining/judging "modernization":

### Group A

1. The county executive should be appointed by the county governing body.
2. The county executive should have budgetary responsibilities and powers of policy execution and be directly answerable to the county governing body.
3. Hamilton County governing body should have implied powers and some self-taxing ability.

### Group B

1. The county governing body should be elected in combination method including districts and at-large and should have 5-11 members.
2. Means of citizen participation should be explicitly provided.

### Group C

1. Members of the county governing body should serve 4-year, staggered terms.
2. Means of citizen recourse should be explicitly provided.
3. All county department heads should be appointed.

**Background:** The LWVCA initially supported county reorganization in 1933 and supported a charter for Hamilton County in 1935. Elsewhere in Ohio, many attempts have been made by counties to adopt various forms of change, but only Summit County (Akron) has succeeded in adopting a charter (1979).

Our present LWV position for modernization was adopted in 1967. In 1980, after a two-year study, LWVCA adopted a set of criteria by which to judge any future attempt at county reorganization.

In 1981, the LWVCA was part of a coalition which drafted a county charter and circulated petitions to place it on the ballot. Important support in the community was not forthcoming, so the effort ended.

After these attempts failed, the League turned to other means to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of county governance by looking at service delivery incorporating support of contracts between governments into broader possibilities such as special districts and privatization.

### **HAMILTON COUNTY SUPPORT OF CERTAIN CRITERIA FOR METHODS OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

**Position: The LWVCA supports criteria for service delivery in areas of:**

- 1. Relationships with other governments and service providers**
- 2. Accountability and responsiveness**
- 3. Taxes, fees and assessments**
- 4. Quality of service.**

I. The LWVCA believes the following features are of primary importance in judging new proposals for service delivery whether directly by government unit, public/private contract, or a special district:

A. In regard to relationships with other governments or service providers, service provider should take part in cooperative planning for the region. In the case of special districts, the proposal should include firm guidelines for dissolution or merging with another district or governmental unit.

B. In regard to accountability and responsiveness, there should be (1) clear responsibility for planning and delivery of the service, (2) a clear line of recourse for unsatisfactory service, (3) pre-announced open board or council meetings, 4) accountability to citizens through an elected official and 5) annual financial and program reports readily available to the public.

C. Elected officials should approve fees and assessments.

D. The service delivery plan should be the best service delivery option in terms of cost-effectiveness (assuming cost-effectiveness means the best service for a reasonable price, not just low bid); provide for qualified staff to plan, to write RFPs (requests for proposals) and contracts and to monitor and evaluate service

Other features considered important but without consensus on the level of importance are:

1. The service provision not be duplicated by another source.
2. The proposal not have an adverse effect on prospects for change in county structure.
3. Annual financial and program reports be reviewed at state and local level with results of that review published.
4. There be a public referendum on new taxes.

It is the intention that these criteria for service delivery be applied in Cincinnati and other municipalities and townships as well as at the county level.

II. LWVCA members support special districts, contractual arrangements (both public/private and intergovernmental) and general purpose government as appropriate means of service delivery.

**Explanation:** Note that LWVCA Board must approve any action applying LWV criteria for effective action. When applying the criteria to a particular service delivery program, a judgment will have to be made about how many features of importance must be present for support. Criteria will also be used for comments during the proposal development process at hearings, etc.

In the late 1990s, the LWVCA promoted the establishment and maintenance of a citizen Tax Levy Review Committee as a way of getting more openness on the use of tax levies and more efficient and effective use of the dollars for the services they fund for children, seniors, developmentally disabled and indigent health care. This statement was adopted in December 2005:

## CRITERIA FOR HAMILTON COUNTYWIDE VOTED PROPERTY TAX LEVIES

**Position: A model tax levy process would include:**

1. A committee of citizens with the authority to review tax levy proposals and tax levy recipient organizations; to review the requesting agencies' financial, management and performance audits; and make recommendations to the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners. This committee must be adequately funded and staffed.
2. Reduction of the total number of voted levies without sacrificing needed services.
3. Timing that prevents placing all levies on a ballot at the same time.
4. Funding county services based on a determined level of need that balances funds, services and resources.
5. Funding broadly defined services that can respond to changing conditions and needs.
6. The provision of meaningful opportunities for citizen involvement, input, monitoring and review.
7. Assuring agency accountability to the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners for the appropriate use of tax levy dollars.
8. Ballot language that is understandable to citizens and accurately describes services funded by the proposed levy.

**Background:** At the May 2004 Annual Meeting, members authorized a study on the "Evaluation of the Procedure for Voting on Property Tax Levies in Hamilton County." The LWVCA County Government Committee's study included a review of the current procedure in Hamilton County. They explored systems used in other urban counties in Ohio and developed criteria to use in judging a property tax levy review system. With Board

agreement to the process and proposed statements, meetings were held and concurrence to the new position was obtained in November 2005.

It is easy to see that ideas put forward in the GRTF Report and other plans for tax levies can be issues for strong action by the LWVCA.

### The Government Reform Task Force Recommendations to the Hamilton County Commissioners

Over the years, Hamilton County has experienced changes in both the area and population served by county government as well as in the services it provides and the service delivery techniques available in the modern era. Governmental budget pressures have become increasingly challenging. These changes have been so significant that the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) thought a review of improvement opportunities would warrant the creation of a Task Force to study the structure of the government.

On May 19, 2010, the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners unanimously created the Government Reform Task Force (GRTF) to study the structure of the County today and the alternatives permitted under Ohio law. The GRTF was charged by the Commission to recommend reform that would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the government and to produce a recommendation for a government that is streamlined and narrowly tailored to work effectively and efficiently with, for, and on behalf of the 49 political subdivisions. The County Commission directed that the GRTF exclude from its considerations all county judicial operations as well as any possibility of merging Hamilton County with another local government within the County. Over the following six months, the Task Force studied the workings of Hamilton County government and reviewed the other legal structure options available to the County.

The GRTF was unanimous in its conclusions as expressed in its final report dated September 3, 2010. There was agreement with the premise

of the BOCC's resolution that the current form of government (which dates from 1851 in Ohio) is antiquated and that there are opportunities for improvement. The GRTF recommended reform that would improve the operation of the government

The Task Force stated that, under the current structure, the BOCC has limited authority to determine policy or administrative direction for the County. Indeed, with responsibility for County administration divided between the Board and eight row officers, as well as elected judiciary and independent boards and commissions, nobody is accountable for the performance of Hamilton County government as a whole.

The GRTF made two recommendations:

That the BOCC place a new plan of government on the ballot for voter adoption based upon the alternative authorized by Chapter 302 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC).

That the BOCC should act to implement a Charter within five years of implementation of the statutory Alternative Form of government recommended in its report.

Thus the Task Force recommended a staged process to reform Hamilton County government, implementing the statutory Alternative Form immediately, then creating a Charter form within five years thereafter, drawing on the experience of the first transition.

The Alternative Form of government was viewed by the GRTF as a moderate transition plan for Hamilton County, enabling improvements without radical change in the core way the County is structured to do its business. Under this Alternative Form, the Task Force recommended that the new statutory plan have:

A County Commission with three members elected at-large, as at present

A professional appointed County Executive to operate the government

Three departments under and accountable to the County Executive and BOCC with duties enumerated in ORC Chapter 302: Finance, Law, and Personnel, and such other departments as would make the operation of the government more efficient.

Indeed, although the Commission would be empowered to centralize key staff functions and thereby reduce costs, the existing independently-elected officers would remain in place. Subsequently, the County could tailor further refinements in the government structure to suit local needs with a Charter.

#### References:

Hamilton County, Ohio, Government Reform Task Force, Report to the Hamilton County Commission, September 2010.

Hamilton County website  
[www.hamilton-co.org](http://www.hamilton-co.org)  
Government Reform Task Force page.

*Know Hamilton County*, League of Women Voters Education Fund, 2007.

The Ohio Constitution, Chapter X  
[www.legislature.state.oh.us/constitution](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/constitution)

The Ohio Revised Code, Title 3, Counties ([ohio.gov/3](http://ohio.gov/3))

#### *A Word about Formation of League Positions —*

*The League's interest in a particular local issue is usually begun and sustained when a study committee is formed. This group's study and deliberation may take one or two years and results in the preparation of a background paper which is then presented to our members at meetings for discussion. At these meetings, an attempt is made to reach a consensus on the response to questions evolving from the study. Statements which receive a consensus are written to become a solid expression of League opinion which becomes our "position" and our platform for action.*



**Please Join the League of Women Voters  
Celebrating 91 Years of Women's Suffrage!**

# **Susan B Anthony Luncheon**

**Saturday, February 12, 2011  
The Phoenix, 812 Race St, Downtown**



**“UC 2019: A Global University”**

**Dr Gregory H Williams**

**President, University of Cincinnati  
Author, *Life on the Color Line***

**11 am - Noon: Social Hour & Silent Auction  
Noon - 2 pm: Luncheon & Keynote Speech**

**Tickets \$35 per person or \$300 for a table of ten or \$1000 for a sponsorship table of ten  
Luncheon includes chicken or vegan entree, salad, rolls, dessert, and coffee/tea**

**Event benefits the League's tax-deductible 501(c)(3) Education Fund. Fair Market Value received is \$23.50 per person**

**Reserve by February 3 with coupon below or online by February 7 at [lwvcincinnati.org](http://lwvcincinnati.org)  
All-day Saturday parking is \$2 at the adjacent Garfield Garage, 13 W Ninth St**

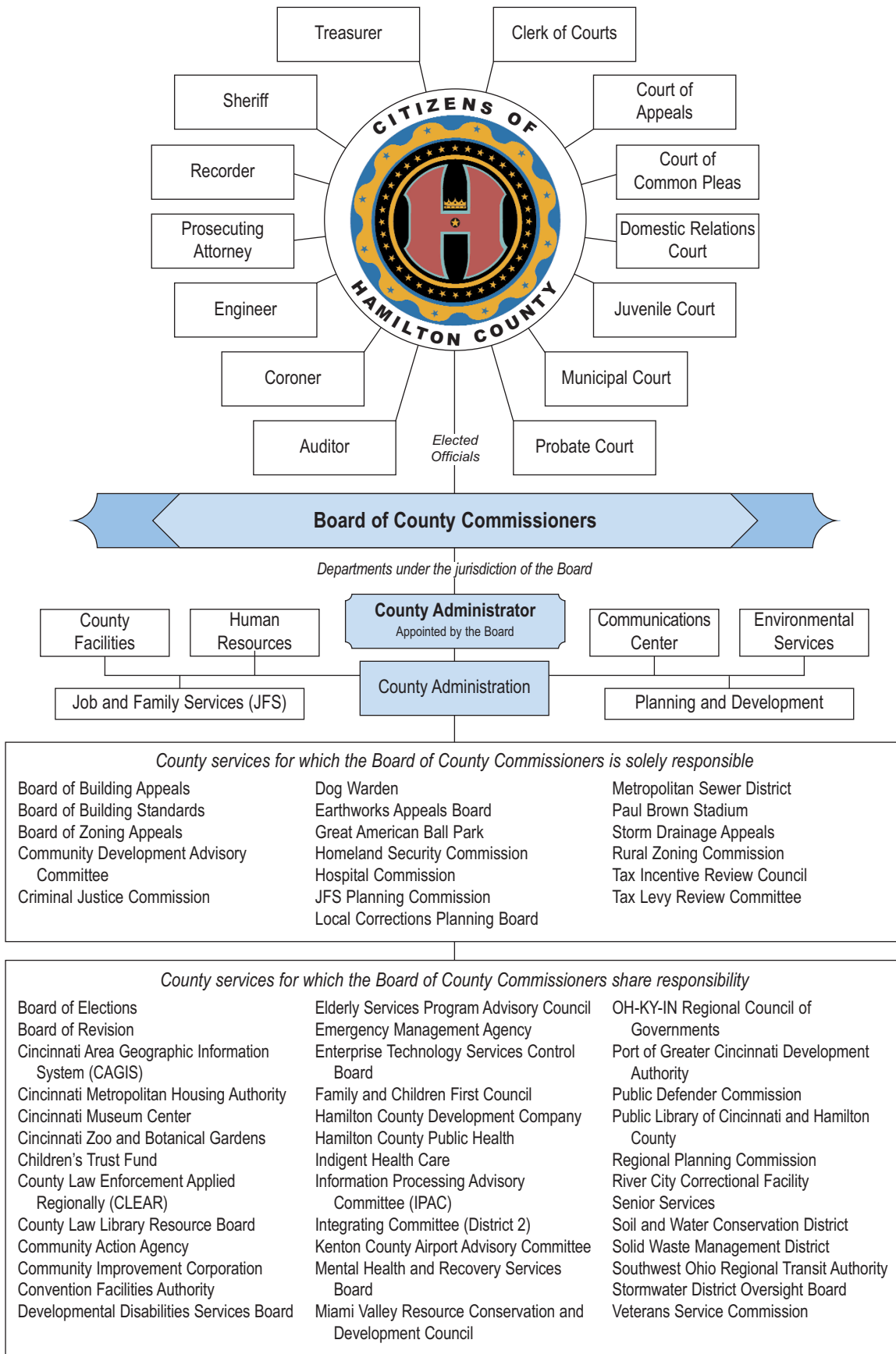
<b>Guest Name</b>	<b>Chicken or Vegan?</b>	<b>Guest Name</b>	<b>Chicken or Vegan?</b>
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Your email or phone \_\_\_\_\_

_____ No of single tickets @ \$35	\$ _____
_____ Table of ten @ \$300	\$ _____
_____ Sponsorship table @ \$1000	\$ _____

I can't attend but enclose a tax-deductible contribution to support LWVCA nonpartisan services \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail with check payable to "LWVCA EF" by February 3 to: LWVCA, 103 Wm H Taft Rd, Cincinnati OH 45219  
For more information, call the League office at (513) 281-8683  
Thank you for supporting the League of Women Voters!**



**Organization Chart** Hamilton County's judges and other elected officials (grouped around the citizens at the top of the chart) function as independent administrators of their departments. The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), and the County Administrator as its representative, have direct jurisdiction over the seven areas beneath the Board. The BOCC also has sole responsibility for the 18 other entities grouped in the next box and shares responsibility for the remaining 37 services in the box at the bottom of the chart.

## County Budget

### General Fund Budget Summary

For calendar year 2011, the Board of County Commissioners has appropriated a general fund budget of \$210.7 million, a \$1.1 million, or 0.5%, decrease from the 2010 budget. The 2011 budget marks the lowest revenue and expenditure levels in the county since 1998. General fund employee positions are estimated to decrease by less than one position (0.62) from the 2010 budget.

### 2011 Commission Priorities

During this time of economic challenges, the Board of Commissioners has concentrated the budget on basic community needs in the face of declining revenue and has determined by consensus priorities within the areas of economic development, public safety, and government consolidation.

Through special property tax levies, of about 20% of Hamilton County taxpayer's budget funds came from property taxes earmarked for specific purposes such as abused and neglected children, treatment alternative to incarceration, indigent health care, law enforcement assistance, senior services, Cincinnati Museum and Cincinnati Zoo.

The County's General Fund consists of all receipts not earmarked or restricted as to purpose.

### General Fund Budgeted income and expenditures for 2011

2011 Budgeted Income  
\$210.7 million

2011 Budgeted Expenditures  
\$210.7 million

<b>County Sales Tax</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	<b>Judicial</b>	<b>34.1%</b>
<b>Service Fees</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>Public Safety</b>	<b>33.9%</b>
<b>Intergovernmental</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>General Government</b>	<b>21.5%</b>
<b>Fines and Forfeitures</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>Debt Services</b>	<b>5.3%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>Social Services</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>Property Tax</b>	<b>22.9%</b>	<b>Public Works</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
<b>Investment Interest</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>Development</b>	<b>0.7%</b>