

Winter 2009

**LWVNH Legislative Day  
Thursday, March 5, 2009  
4 Park Street, Concord**

**Officers and Directors**

Jane Armstrong, President 603-526-2066 <a href="mailto:president@lwvnh.org">president@lwvnh.org</a>	8:30 9:15 12:00	Coffee and Briefing Leave for Committee Hearings Return to Park St. for lunch, reports and speaker, Liz Hager
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More than 1,000 bills have been submitted for this session of the legislature. Certainly the fiscal status of the state is the highest priority, and very difficult decisions lie ahead for our representatives. On league day, you can visit a committee and see your legislator in action or go to a committee in which league members have a special interest. A tour of the capitol can also be arranged for that day.

Elizabeth Hager, "Liz," our enthusiastic, well-respected speaker. was a representative in the New Hampshire House from 1972-2008. While in the legislature she was a long-time chair of the finance committee. She also ran for the Republican nomination for governor, served as a Concord City Counselor and was the city's first woman mayor from 1988-1990.

She sponsored the Equal Rights Amendment which became a part of the NH Constitution in 1975. She is now the Executive Director of the United Way of Merrimack County. When asked if she would be available to speak to the League she answered quickly, "I sure would." She will talk about her perspective on critical issues facing the state.

Registration: \$5 which includes a light lunch. To make a reservation, call the league office at 225-5344 or email [president@lwvnh](mailto:president@lwvnh). In the event of uncooperative weather, the decision to cancel will be made by Liz Tentarelli. Call her at 763-9296 for information.

See back page for parking information.

## 2009 - A TIME TO CELEBRATE!

At the annual convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in the winter of 1919 president Carrie Chapman Catt called for the dissolution of that organization and the formation of a "league of women voters" to "finish the fight" and aid in the reconstruction of the nation.

The actual formation of the national league did not take place until 1920 but that did not stop states from forming leagues, and New Hampshire joined in, forming a league in 1919. The first minutes are of an executive board meeting on March 16, 1920 written on a printed letterhead indicating 7 officers, 15 directors and 10 committee chairs. The first president, Martha Kimball, from Portsmouth, served from 1919-1921.

In July 1920, Miss Kimball "opened discussion on how to get the ultimate woman to the polls." This year, 2009, is the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the LWV of New Hampshire. Happy Birthday, League! And we're still trying to get the ultimate woman to the polls!

The state league is planning to develop a traveling display of New Hampshire League's history and sponsor at least one event in Concord during this year. We are looking for members who can share league history with us, writing reminiscence of their league experiences or of a league success or challenge. We welcome pictures, publications, records of meetings, or other memorabilia. Each local league is invited to host a celebration in their town as well. If there are historical materials about the league that can be donated or shared, or if you would like to help in the planning of the celebration, call the league office at 225-5344 or email a message to [president@lwvnh](mailto:president@lwvnh).

We have begun interviewing long-time members and hope to assemble their memories in a booklet to share.

**Historical Tidbit** - Excerpt from an interview with long time member of the Manchester League, Alice Krasner.

"I recall the only time our unit was able to get 100% replies on Candidates' Sheets questionnaires. Mina Cukor was in charge and she was very persuasive. The only reply missing was the Governor's. They called the Governor's home late at night and when his wife answered explained how the League was missing only his response. His wife assured them that he would get his questionnaire done the next day and get it right back to them. And he did!"

## **Legislative Action Opportunities Beginning January!**

As in the past several years, the LWVNH website will post the results of a search of each week's Legislative Calendar for bills and scheduled hearings on our priority issues. Find the website and look at "Hot Legislation."

If you want a message personally, please contact Sally Davis, [rsdavis@emlot.com](mailto:rsdavis@emlot.com) or (603-726-3775) and you will receive each week's message. All LL presidents who wish to receive the information directly or wish me to send it to someone in their League to pass along to others need to tell me.

Do you know that in New Hampshire unlike in most states the Legislature hears and votes on EVERY bill that is proposed? This means there is a lot for committees to follow and become informed about. Opportunities for input are frequent! We hope to help you get involved. We know your input can be valuable for all of us. -Sally Davis

### **NH Climate Change Policy Task Force**

At the five Public Listening Sessions held in September, the Climate Change Policy Task Force received public and written comments on over 100 potential Actions developed by six technical and policy working groups. Considering that input, the Task Force is striving to develop a set of recommendations that will focus on those potential Actions that have the greatest potential to achieve multiple goals, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and creating economic opportunity for the state.

The Task Force will submit its final report just after our Voter deadline. Jan Pendlebury was a member of a subcommittee and Sally Davis and Cathy Corkery either observed a meeting or submitted comments. Perhaps other League members did also! The report should be on the NH Government website when it is available. We should have plenty of opportunities to request support for policy implementation at our town, county, state and federal levels.

*>From the Coalition for Open Democracy:*

### **Citizen Funded Elections for New Hampshire**

Citizen Funded Elections breaks the link between big money and politics by using public dollars to amplify small contributions from constituents. Candidates who opt in and qualify no longer rely on special interest money. Once elected, they answer only to voters. Competition for public office opens up to new people with new ideas, not just those with access to money. Voters get more choice. Campaign costs stop skyrocketing. Public servants spend less time raising money and more time serving the public. In Maine, Arizona and Connecticut, successful programs like this enjoy wide support from voters and politicians alike, all across the political spectrum.

The bi-partisan NH Public Funding of Elections commission recommends such a system for NH. To qualify for the program, candidates for governor, executive councilor and state senate raise a set number of small contributions from NH voters. Once candidates qualify and agree to contribution limits, they are eligible to receive a set ratio of public

matching funds for the small contributions they raise, up to a set limit that provides enough to run a competitive

*(Continued on next page.)*

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race. Candidates who so choose can continue to raise additional contributions of capped size, unmatched. For the general election, candidates receive a grant of a set sufficient amount, and can continue to raise additional contributions. The only difference for minor party candidates is that for the general election, they receive matching funds instead of a grant.

This could cost as much as \$6.4 million annually to fully implement. The Citizen Funded Elections Act offers a trial program for six senate districts over three election cycles, at an estimated annual cost of \$382,500. A public investment in our elections.

These recommendations from the commission will be in a Senate bill – soon to be released. Citizen Funded Elections, by strengthening confidence in public policy, by restoring faith in democracy, is a solid foundation for the big, bold bipartisan solutions New Hampshire needs.

We will be asking League members for their help in passing this legislation by calling their legislators. Look for a call to action.

### **House Finance Budget Hearings**

The House finance committee has scheduled five hearings on the budget across the state so that citizens can appear before the committee to comment on the budget. The Finance Committee will record the hearings so that they may be streamed on the General Court Web site.

The schedule of hearings is as follows:

March 5, 4-7 p.m. Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, Auditorium E and F,  
Lebanon

March 6, 5-8 p. m. Alumni Recital Hall, Redfern Arts Center, Keene State  
College, Keene

March 8, 4-7 p.m. Rochester Community Center, Rochester

March 12, 4-7 p.m. PSNH Auditorium, Manchester

March 15, 4-7 p.m. White Mt. Regional High School Auditorium, Lancaster

### *National Popular Vote Compact Study*

Last fall's Voter gave you an introduction to this study with an interesting quiz. Now it is time to study the National Popular Vote Compact in earnest. Below are summaries of background and pro and con arguments from the LWVUS website. Local Leagues will have consensus meetings this spring and we hope ALL of you can attend one of them.

In order to be well informed, visit the national LWV website by going to [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)→For Members→Projects and Programs→National Popular Vote Compact. Check especially the “suggested resource list.” As of this date, the Kearsarge/Sunapee League has scheduled a discussion and consensus meeting on the issue for Tuesday, February 24, noon to 2 PM. The meeting is open to all LWV members including Members-

at-Large and nationally registered members. Other local league meetings will be posted on the LWVNH website as they are scheduled. The following material will provide you with a good beginning for the study.

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### Background for the National Popular Vote Compact

The League has a long-standing position in support of the direct election of the president by popular vote. Now, League members have the opportunity to consider whether to support the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact) as a viable process to achieve that result. The NPV Compact would avoid the need for a constitutional amendment abolishing the Electoral College (EC), and would assure that the individual receiving the most votes would become president.

The NPV Compact proposal uses the mechanism of the EC. States that legislatively enact the NPV Compact would agree that their state electors would vote for the individual that received the most votes nationwide. Thus, the popular vote count from all 50 states and the District of Columbia would be added together. State elections officials in all states participating would award their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the largest number of popular votes.

This alternative method of assigning a state's EC votes would take effect only when enacted by states collectively possessing a majority of the electoral votes. This 270-vote threshold also corresponds essentially to states representing a majority of the people of the United States.

The plan includes procedural provisions to help assure smooth functioning of the agreement – conditions that deal with states deciding to withdraw from the Compact at the last moment, enforcement issues and recounts.

Currently four states have passed legislation to enact the NPV Compact.

There are pros and cons to this plan, which are discussed in full in papers found on the LWVUS Web site. Summaries of these papers are also available. League members can learn more about the plan from these sources and consider its ramifications at consensus meetings across the country. Be sure to participate! Who better than the League to be ready to speak to this good-government issue?

### Support for the National Popular Vote Compact

Because the League already supports direct election of the president, arguments against the Electoral College (EC) are not included in the material supporting the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact).

Constitutional Issues The NPV Compact is a way to assure that every person's vote counts equally and that the person receiving the most votes is the winner of the presidency. The same result would be achieved by constitutional amendment but the U.S. Constitution is difficult to amend. The NPV Compact is a viable way to attain the same goal as amending the Constitution to eliminate the EC.

A constitutional amendment is not needed to effectuate the NPV Compact because states already have the right to implement changes in how electors are appointed.

The NPV Compact is a compact between states – a method of concerted state action that has long been sanctioned by the Constitution and the courts.

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Evaluating Fairness A candidate can be elected president by receiving the most electoral votes even though he or she did not receive the most popular votes. This is not a result voters expect or desire. As election campaigns are now waged, major emphasis and resources are concentrated in key EC battleground states because that is where elections are won or lost. The NPV Compact would eliminate the emphasis on battleground states and would be more apt to assure campaign strategies that appeal to a broad spectrum of the electorate which would foster greater voter participation.

The argument that the plan would negatively impact states' rights is countered by poll results showing that most voters want their individual vote to count, rather than allotting them to electors representing the state as a whole.

Any claim that the NPV Compact is an unprecedented disregard for the U.S. Constitution ignores the reality that voting rights have been changed through state action many times. Women's suffrage, for example, was instituted by twenty states before passage of the constitutional amendment that made the right universal

Mechanical Considerations Those opposed to the NPV Compact cite mechanical issues that might lead the NPV to fail, but the Compact includes provisions that address issues of enforcement, winning levels and recounts.

Other Issues The Voting Rights Act and the NPV Compact are in harmony, assuring equality of votes throughout the United States.

League Issues Opponents say that the NPV Compact conflicts with the League's support of uniform voting standards. Supporters of the Compact advocate its passage in all states, which would result in uniform voting standards. It is true that the NPV Compact could be in effect for an interlude when not all states had signed on to it. The same could be demonstrated for other laws, such as the Equal Rights Amendment. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that uniform voting standards are not now in effect. The NPV Compact could help assure that every vote would be counted equally. Further, implementation of a method which assures direct election of the president by popular vote is in keeping with the League's long-held position.

#### Opposition to the National Popular Vote Compact

There is little respect for the Electoral College (EC). The League opposes it and most voters want a direct popular vote. But is the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV Compact) an appropriate way to achieve that result?

Evaluating Fairness Voters supporting the candidate who receives the majority of votes in their state want their state's electors to support their choice. Adoption of the NPV Compact may require a state elections official to direct its state's electors to cast their ballots in support of a candidate who was not favored by the voters of that state.

Passage of the NPV Compact will result in the emphasis of presidential campaigns shifting from the battleground states to areas of large concentrations of population. So, while some voters are disenfranchised by the EC, others might be disenfranchised by the NPV Compact. Because the Compact requires entry into a contract with other states which binds state elections officials to direct electors to vote in a certain way, regardless of the outcome of the election in their state, states' rights are diminished.

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In addition, one can question the advisability of a method that bypasses the normal constitutional amendment process in this manner.

Constitutional Issues Many constitutional scholars argue that this plan will lead to extensive litigation involving challenges to the NVP Compact on issues such as the scope of constitutional powers, the Compact itself, the need for congressional approval, the concerns of non-compacting states, and constitutional protections of state interests and their role in elections.

Mechanical Issues/Flaws The methods for enforcement of this plan are unclear. Opponents question the power and timing to withdraw from the Compact and the power to enforce compliance.

Others express concern about an onslaught of lawsuits between compacting and non-compacting states, as well as procedures in close elections.

The plan, allowing the election of a president by a plurality of votes, does not improve on the current system; neither the present system nor the NPV Compact requires that the president be elected by a majority.

Other Issues The Voting Rights Act requires pre-clearance for legislative changes. This, too, has the capacity to engender lawsuits to ensure compliance.

League Issues This proposal does nothing to achieve the goal of uniform standards of voting. The NPV Compact is effective when passed by states representing 270 electoral votes, effectively negating the impact on presidential elections of the voters in states which represent the other half of electoral votes. A system which assures no voter disenfranchisement is a better way to assure that every person's vote counts.

The League has long supported the abolition of the EC. Although the NPV Compact purports to foster the same result, it creates additional concerns. Amending the U.S. Constitution is a difficult process, and we should seriously consider supporting the normal amendment procedures to abolish the EC versus this specific "work-around."

To prepare for the consensus meeting, please read the complete version of this paper (available at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) by the LWVUS National Popular Voter Compact Study Committee.

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### **HOLD THE DATES**

Plan to join League members from all over the state at our bi-annual Convention to be held **Saturday, May 2**. Help the LWVNH make plans and gain strength for the coming year.

Quad State will again hold our popular Leadership Training Workshops near the NH seacoast on **Saturday/Sunday, May 30-31**. Don't miss this energizing weekend!

**Member at Large Dues** Most of our state Members at Large have renewed their League membership, and many have also made an additional contribution. The board's sincere thanks for the donations. Second reminder notices were mailed in early January to those members who have not yet renewed. We must have our memberships up to date by the end of January so they can be entered on the LWVUS database as active members. If you have not yet sent your renewal, please do so as soon as possible. Membership is \$40 for MALs and \$55 if a second person from the household is included. Checks may be sent to LWVNH, 4 Park Street, Suite 200, Concord, NH 03301.  
Liz Tentarelli, Treasurer

**Parking for LWV Day at the Legislature**. Do not even think you will find street parking and even if you do, the meters are only good for 2 hours, and Concord meter folks are right by your car when the time is up. If you can, carpool and have your driver drop off passengers at the Park Street entrance (corner of Park and N Main.) Park Street is a one-way street going WEST. There is a parking garage located between School Street (a one-way street going WEST from N. Main) and Warren St. (a one-way street going EAST) from State Street.) If you can get to that garage, the meters are available for 8 hours. As you exit the garage, cross the street and there is an alleyway between School and Capitol Streets – walk closely next to the building; it's narrow and cars have limited visibility as they pull into the alley. You come out right at Capitol Plaza, cross the plaza and you are on Park Street. It's a quick 2-block walk.

***New Hampshire Voter***

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