



The Voter March 2017

NOTE: The Voter is issued on the last Friday of the month to provide readers advance notice of upcoming activities.

League of Women Voters Johnson County, Iowa

From the President

Many bills are pending consideration in the Iowa legislature on the LWVIA's priority issues in 2017: Voting rights, water quality, justice reforms, and healthcare and mental health. To view proposed bills, just go to our website <https://lwwjc.org> and click on the link to the legislative bill tracker, then under client, select League of Women Voters of Iowa. The list you see identifies numbered bills under consideration this year, with a summary and complete text of each.

Voting rights are front and center at the moment because one bill being considered in the House right now is Secretary of State Paul Pate's "Election Integrity Proposal." League lobbyist Amy Campbell calls it a "mixed bag" for the League. The League is pleased to see the bill call for additional money to upgrade the state election technology, but not pleased that the bill includes a Voter ID requirement, purportedly, to ensure election integrity.

Actually, the Iowa League supports *current* voting laws of Iowa because they work and they *help* Iowans vote. Iowa's current voting laws worked so well in the 2016 election that the state had a stellar voter turnout and scored top ratings in elections integrity. The League opposes a Voter ID requirement because it places an unnecessary *hurdle* in the way of Iowans wishing to register and vote. Currently, to register to vote in Iowa elections, persons need to attest to being 18 years of age for the next election, residents of the community they are registering in, and citizens of the United States. To lie about any of this is a felony. Why would anyone want to lie about this, when lying could result in a criminal conviction and automatically purge them from the voter rolls as a "felon"? Why should they also have to remember to carry an easily lost or stolen card to the polls to prove they are who they say they are?

The LWVIA would like *all* Iowans to be able to vote in every election. It believes "voting is a right, not a privilege," supports "free, fair and accessible elections." It opposes any law that delays or restricts some voters from casting ballots. With this bill, anyone who loses his Voter ID card or forgets it on election day will experience delay, dismay, and perhaps alarm as they go through steps to vote provisionally, and

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they will cause those waiting to vote delay and dismay as well. Will they be inclined to stay away at the next election? If you have views on the proposed bill, I hope you will make your views known to lawmakers in Des Moines soon.



Wednesday, Feb. 22, was Capitol Day for the League of Women Voters of Iowa, and League members from across Iowa (including nine from Johnson County) were on hand at the Capitol. They wore yellow ribbons that suffragists wore at their conventions and to make their presence known in the

galleries of state legislatures considering ratification of the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote.

Our League will work beyond Feb. 22 for voters' rights for all Iowans.

Syndy M. Conger, President, LWVJC

What's Ahead

CCC Book Club to meet Feb. 28

The CCC Book Club will meet on Tuesday, Feb. 28, in the Coralville Public Library, Meeting Room B, at 7 p.m. **Lee Wood** will lead the "Promised Land: Thirteen Books that Changed America" discussion about the following chapter, "The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care." All members are welcome.

Sunday Speaker Series

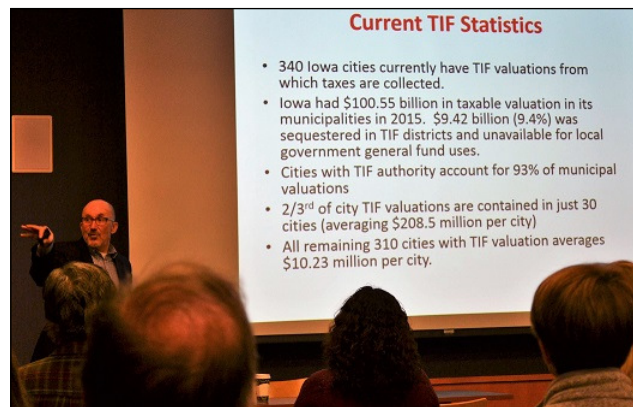
Meenakshi "Gigi" Durham, University of Iowa School of Journalism, will introduce the film "Suffragettes" on Sunday, March 26, at 1:30 p.m. at the Iowa City Public Library. University of Iowa Professor Durham holds joint appointments in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and Gender,

Women's, and Sexuality Studies. She is also a Faculty Fellow, Office of the Vice President for Research & Economic Development. Her research addresses representations of gender and sexuality in the media, focusing on the politics of the body, the intersections of race, class and gender, and youth cultures. Her articles have been published in leading communication journals, including *Critical Studies in Media Communication, Communication, Culture & Critique, and Feminist Media Studies*. She has authored several books that have earned her national and international media appearances.



LWVJC Bylaw revisions

LWVJC Board members are considering revisions to our bylaws. Suggestions include electronic participation at board meetings, covering board vacancies, board responsibilities and word tweaks. The LWVUS recently changed age requirement of members to 16 years, "persons" replaced "citizens." Proposed changes will be forwarded to League members for consideration prior to the annual meeting on May 18 when action will be taken.



Iowa economist Dave Swenson presented at the Jan. 29 Sunday Speaker Series at the Iowa City Public Library. A pdf of his presentation is online at LWVIA.

Voter Services: 2017 Legislative Forums

Saturday, Feb. 25, Coralville City Hall – 9:30—11:30 a.m. Join League members and our local Iowa legislators at the next Legislative Forum focusing on environment. Co-sponsors for the event are the Sierra Club, Iowa River Friends, 100 Grannies and Clean Air for Everyone Coalition.

March 25, North Liberty City Hall – Focus on Labor, Civil Rights, Housing and other topics.

April 29 (TENTATIVE) Iowa City Harvat Hall, TENTATIVE date depending on Legislative session wrap-up.

Paula Vaughan

UI Communication Students to conduct communication audit

Cindy Riley and **Linda Schreiber** are working with a team University of Iowa journalism students to conduct a communication audit of the LWVJC communication efforts. Students will review League materials including brochures, news releases, social media as well as our website. Students will also create a member survey and informational videos.

New Members

Rebecca Way Bergus **Miriam Timmer-Hackert**
Helen Dailey **Laura Twig**
Paula Forest

Fundraising Drive 2017

The League of Women Votes of Johnson County (LWVJC) has worked since our inception to foster civic engagement and ensure access to voting. Our efforts are to make government participatory and include:

- Registering more than 400 new voters
- Presenting candidate forums to inform voters in local, state and national elections
- Hosting Legislative Forums to propagate

government transparency

- Holding discussion groups and public presentations concerning issues of current interest
- Providing access to information about local, state and national candidates, ballot issues, and voting information through the League of Women Voters online service VOTE411.org
- Partnering with other community organizations to provide programs that support our positions
- Continuing to study topics of importance such as TIF financing, voting rights and water quality
- Advocating for our positions through our state and national lobbyists, member lobby days in Des Moines, social media and letters to local news outlets


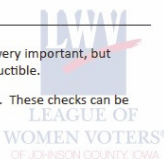
Do you also appreciate the value of an honest political process? If so, we would appreciate your financial (and participatory) support. All of our work is carried out using the volunteer efforts of our members, but we do need to raise funds to pay for communication costs, educational materials and meetings.

Fundraising Committee

*Cathy Eisenhofer, Katy Hansen, Polly Horton,
Nancy Lynch and Judy Pfohl*

If you can help, please send your donation with the form (below):

Polly Horton

	We Need Your Help in 2017
	"I want to support the League of Women Voters of Johnson County, Iowa. Politics should not be a spectator sport"
Name: _____	
Address: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> General Fund: Checks may be made out to LWVJC. Gifts to the League are very important, but because they support activities that include advocacy, they are not tax deductible.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Education Fund: Gifts designated for our Education Fund are tax deductible. These checks can be made out to LWVJC/EF.	
Please return this form with your check to LWVJC, P.O. Box 5452, Coralville, Iowa 52241	
	



LWVJC members attend an Iowa Women's Foundation reception at Carver-Hawkeye Arena before a UI Iowa Women's Basketball game on Feb. 16.

TIF (Tax Increment Financing) Study Update:

Reprinted from the LWVIA Spring 2017

Halfway to Spring, the LWVIA TIF Study Committee continues to review Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in Iowa as the study enters the homestretch. Committee members have studied dozens of papers, searched the Internet and conducted interviews with local and state professionals who are experts about the subject to learn how TIF is used in the state.

The volume of information on the subject is vast. The committee is adhering to the timeline adopted early in the process (reported to League members via this publication by Lauris Olson in Spring 2016). Three committee members provided the LWVIA Board an update at its January meeting in Hiawatha: Barbara Beaumont, TIF Study chair and LWVJC member; Kathy Kahoun, President, Des Moines Metro League; and Lauris Olson, Story County and Ames League.

Committee members have drafted a report that provides TIF background, timeline, history, expanding use, in some cases shifting tax burdens, school aid funding, new uses, reporting requirements, sunset dates, as well as, concerns. Currently, interview comments are being woven into the report narrative to provide readers context. The report will be posted to the LWVIA website for members to

review and local Leagues to use for membership meetings about TIF.

In Iowa, TIF may be used for either a) urban renewal or b) economic development purposes. The Iowa Legislature adopted Tax Increment Financing (Iowa Code 403) in 1957 to improve areas designated as slum and blight. In 1969, a mechanism to finance TIF was added. In 1985, the law was expanded allowing use for economic development purposes. The law was amended again in 1995 creating a 20-year sunset for economic development purposes; and reporting requirements were added in 2003, 2006 and 2012.

The committee discovered prior to 1985, the use of public funds to support private development was not allowed. TIF use has grown as communities faced increased competition for capital development. In the 21st century the number of TIF urban renewal areas increased 43 percent, from 1,125 to 1,614 areas; and the taxable TIF value more than doubled, accounting for nearly \$300 million in property tax revenues in fiscal year 2014.

As reported earlier, the local League members don't have to look far to find a nearby TIF. Two counties, Johnson and Polk, have the highest percentage of TIF valuation in the state. Other research reveals:

- Iowa Legislative Service Agency's August 2014 report lists only four counties that do not have any TIF districts within their boundaries.
- In the remaining 95 counties, the percentages of land valuations currently included in a TIF district range from 1 to 43 percent.
- Of the 338 public school districts in Iowa, 262 had TIF valuations within the school boundaries.
- 3,871 wind turbines are located in Iowa the date of the legislative report, with the revenue from the increase in most of the

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turbines' valuations being deflected into county TIF districts.

Committee members plan to host information sessions designed to apprise members and the public about TIF use. The Johnson County League's Sunday Speaker Series on Jan. 29 featured Iowa's economist Dave Swenson, Iowa State University professor. His presentation, "Iowa's Economy & Economic Consequences/Tradeoffs of TIF," was held at the Iowa City Public Library. The session was broadcast live on the library's cable channel and videotaped. The presentation will be available online and a link will be forwarded.

The committee is preparing Concurrence Positions that will be forwarded to Iowa Leagues in the near future, as well as a draft report that will be available online at www.LWVIA.org. Iowa Leagues should have ample time to consider the issue before the Iowa LWV Convention in Grinnell in June.

Preparing for 2020: Foundations of the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters will celebrate its 100th Birthday in 2020. This is the second in a series of articles about the American suffrage movement, the amazing suffragists who made the vote for women happen, and the organization which followed, the League of Women Voters.

* * * * *

In the beginning our forefathers, when writing the U.S. Constitution, determined that the citizens allowed to vote in this country were white male property owners. Article 7, Section 2 defines citizens as "free persons, including those bound to service for a Term of Years (indentured servants)," excluding Indians and three-fifths of all other Persons (slaves). So women, in addition to the Indians and slaves, were not allowed to

vote.

Most have heard of Abigail Adams' 1776 letter to her husband John . . . "in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of Husbands . . . Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion . . ."

John answered Abigail . . . "As to your extraordinary Code of Laws, I cannot but laugh. We have been told that our Struggle has loosened the bands of Government every where . . . That Children and Apprentices were disobedient—that schools and Colledges were grown turbulent . . . But your Letter was the first Intimation that another Tribe more numerous and powerfull than all the rest were grown discontented . . . Depend upon it, We know better than to repeal our Masculine systems . . . We have only the name of Masters . . ."

So while Abigail Adams understood that eventually the "ladies" would foment a rebellion, it would be more than 50 years before some of the ladies began the work of "fomenting." Among those leaders were Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone. In the later years, when the early leaders had grown old or were gone, would come Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul among others. Their stories make all women proud.

Women's history in America has not been much recognized, but in the 1970s some recognition began including the passage of a federal Equal Rights Amendment and the effort to acquire the necessary state ratifications (which failed). Through the efforts of women, by the 1980s a number of states had declared March as

National Women’s History Month. In 1987, following the lobbying of Congress, March was declared National Women’s History Month “in perpetuity.” A Presidential Proclamation is issued each year to honor the achievements of American women.

(League members who have begun planning for celebrating “A Century of Impact: The League Story” are Syndy Conger, Jean Lloyd Jones, Polly Horton, Gaylen Wobeter, Linda Kroon, Linda Maloy and Pat Jensen.)

Pat Jensen

Member Spotlight

Keeping up with Paula

Paula Vaughan, R.D., doesn’t have a slow speed, in fact she may need a governor. Perhaps she’d become a disciple Dan Buettner, National Geographic Fellow and “Blue Zone” founder and author. Twice retired, this licensed, registered dietitian/nutritionist practices what she likely preached as a nutritionist – get involved in community to make connections, eat right (healthy) and exercise to stay active.

Paula studied at the University of Missouri where she received a B.S. in Medical Dietetics. She received a MBA from Regis University in Denver, Colo. As a registered dietitian (R.D.) Paula maintains continuing education credits for licensing requirements though she has “no thought of returning to work at this time.”

Throughout her work career, she managed hospital food and nutrition departments. The challenge of working with multiple processes and staff and medical personalities was enjoyable for this active problem solver.

The Vaughans, who were living in northern New Mexico, compiled a list of possible retirement communities. After completing research to find a good place, the couple conducted several western location site visits.

“None felt right,” says the Missouri native.

Their extensive checklist for a retirement community must offer lots of activities, including fine art and performing art venues at affordable prices, an active senior center, community and neighborhood walkability, public transportation and a thriving downtown. In addition, the couple was seeking a community that offered local food served in restaurants as well as fresh, locally-sourced produce available in grocery stores.



“When we visited the last town on our list, Iowa City, we immediately felt at home,” Paula adds.

In 2009, the Vaughans retired and relocated to Iowa City until Paula accepted a job in Waverly, Iowa, for two years. Once again, the Vaughans researched retirement communities; and in 2014, they decided again to put down roots in Iowa City where it was easy and quick to assimilate in the community.

Paula enjoys League membership that has created a greater political awareness and new opportunities for involvement and friends. She coordinates Legislative and Candidate Forums for LWVJC, serves on its Housing Study. Paula is serving her first term on the LWJC Board of Directors, and she is a member of Iowa City’s Housing and Community Development Commission.

Three seasons of the year, you will find her walking or biking to League board meetings at the Iowa City Public Library.

The Vaughans are active gardeners. Employing a creative fencing system to deter deer living in Hickory Hill Park, their small

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garden produced an enormous crop of tomatoes last summer. Not only did they preserve their prize to use in homemade soups and pasta dishes throughout the winter months, but they also shared their bounty donating more than 100 tomatoes to the Iowa City Crisis Center.

Married for 34 years, Richard, a retired English professor, and Paula have a daughter Anna who lives in California. Paula's brother and family live in the Kansas City area. They love to travel and often visit places that have outdoor activities, like hiking and bird watching, on the agenda. The Vaughans returned from a trip to Peru and Galapagos Islands last fall.

New Members' Corner

What's involved in creating a position

statement? *Whether you are a new member wondering how the League works or long-term member wishing to review that understanding, this column is for you!*

Each winter, usually in January, local Leagues ask themselves whether there are issues in their city or county governments that merit a *study*. If so, and if enough interest and expertise exists in a League to establish a study committee, the local League board can do so. Critical in that process is finding a person willing to chair the committee to shepherd it through the challenging process ahead.

Such studies are formally launched after the entire membership approves them, usually at an annual meeting. In the meantime, however, the *study committee* can convene and begin to plan the study: its aims, its scope, its methods of investigation, and the resources to be consulted. Armed with its plans, the committee drafts a *formal proposal* to take to the membership for their approval. If the membership approves, the committee is then prepared to spring into action. If this sounds a

little bit like a student's thesis process, that's because it is very similar. Committee members who sign on are going to learn a lot before the process is finished.

Such a process began in our local League two years ago at a January program planning event, when members began to wonder if there should be a League study of Tax Increment Financing, perhaps even a state-level study. TIF, its short name, is a financial incentive tool used by local governments to stimulate economic development or urban renewal in their communities. TIF began to attract public attention, then press coverage, and then controversy in Johnson County as tax dollars usually flowing to local schools were diverted to urban projects. The Johnson County League took their proposal to the next state membership meeting, where a statewide study was approved. Under the leadership of local former LWVJC League President Barbara Beaumont, who has a background in economics, the study committee began what became a long and demanding investigation.

The committee has reported to the membership via *LWVIA Voter*. They "studied dozens of papers, searched the Internet and conducted interviews with local and state professionals who are experts about the subject to learn how TIF is used in the state." They came to realize that "the information of the subject was vast" and that TIF can benefit local communities but at the same time has significant "economic consequences and tradeoffs."

Local study committee members will host an information session about TIF use in Coralville on April 19 at a Making Connections meeting (see calendar) where members will discuss a possible position on the issue TIF. The committee's goal is to have a LWVIA position on TIF crafted for delegates to the State Convention June 9-10, 2017, to consider for

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adoption.

At this point, the committee has chosen one of two *League methods* to present their material to the membership for their approval. They could have opted for a *consensus* process—a process by which a large number of League members gather to come to a collective opinion about what should be included in the position statement. Instead, in large part because the League has not taken a position on TIF, they opted for a *concurrence*

process—a process by which the committee produces a *position* statement for State Convention delegates to “concur with” or adopt. First the committee members, then convention delegates, ask questions and raise doubts if they have them. Once approved, the *position carries the weight it gained by being tested over time by many members*. This process takes dedicated committee members!

Sydney Conger

Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Location	Program
Saturday, Feb. 25	9:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Coralville City Hall	Legislative Forum: Environment
Tuesday, Feb. 28 Carrie Chapman Catt Book Club*	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Club Zlatnik 319.351.8084P	Dr. Spock, <i>Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care</i>
Saturday, March 11	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Wickiup Center near Cedar Rapids	LWVIA Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, March 15	5:30 – 7:30 p.m.	Club Moeller, 445 Breconshire Lane, Coralville	Clean Water Matters!
Monday, March 20	12 – 1:30 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library	LWVJC Board of Directors Meeting
Saturday, March 25	9:30 – 11:30 a.m.	South Slope Community Hall	Legislative Forum: Labor, Housing
Sunday, March 26	1:30 – 4 p.m.	Sunday Speaker Series Iowa City Public Library	Meenakshi “Gigi” Durham introduces “ <i>Suffragette</i> ”
Monday, March 27	3:30-5:30 p.m.	WRAC, Clinton Street	Century of Impact Committee
Tuesday, March 28 CCC Book Club*	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Coralville Public Library	Jack Kerouac, <i>On the Road</i>
Wednesday, April 19	5:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Club Moeller, 445 Breconshire Lane, Coralville	Making Connections: TIF Final Update
Tuesday, April 25 CCC Book Club*	7 – 8:30 p.m.	Coralville Public Library	Betty Friedan, <i>The Feminine Mystique</i>
Saturday, April 29	9:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Iowa City City Hall	Final Legislative Forum
Monday, May 1	10 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Winans Chocolates and Coffees, 470 First Ave, Coralville	May Day: Meet New Members Coffee
Saturday, May 13	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Wickiup Center near Cedar Rapids	LWVIA Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, May 15	12 – 1:30 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library	LWVJC Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday, May 18	6 – 8 p.m.	TBA	LWVJC Annual Meeting
Friday and Saturday, June 9-10		Grinnell College Campus	LWVIA Biennial Convention
Monday, June 19	10 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library	LWVJC Strategic Planning Session