

March 2014

League of Women Voters Clermont County



VOTER

## GOV. KASICH URGED TO VETO SENATE VOTING BILLS



Voter advocates from around Ohio have called on Governor Kasich to veto Senate Bill 205 (SB 205) and Senate Bill 238 (SB 238). Both bills were passed by the legislature in February and would impose new restrictions on absentee and early voting. Numerous voter advocates testified on these bills, identified our concerns, and offered suggestions for amendments. However, despite our efforts, many problems remain with these bills.

"These two bills move Ohio in the wrong direction," said Deidra Reese, of the Ohio Voting Rights Coalition. "While other states are looking to expand early voting options, Ohio is moving in the opposite direction."

"SB 205 makes absentee voting less accessible," explained Carrie Davis, Executive Director of the LWVOhio. "It prohibits government officials from sending unsolicited absentee applications to voters: a prohibition so broad that it would ban counties from automatically giving them to poll workers. It allows absentee ballots and applications to be rejected for minor paperwork mistakes. In short, it makes absentee voting harder."

"SB 238 eliminates the first week of absentee and early voting, often called 'golden week', in which a voter can register and cast an early ballot in one stop" said Cathy Johnston, Advocacy Director for the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing (COHHIO). "While one week may not seem like much, we are deeply concerned that this bill may represent the first of many more cuts to early voting."

"Ohio's adoption of no-fault absentee and early in-person voting has prevented a repeat of the long lines and other problems Ohio voters experienced in 2004," added Ellis Jacobs, of the Miami Valley Voter Protection Coalition. "It also saved counties money. Up to a third of Ohio voters cast a ballot before Election Day, which means counties save money by consolidating precincts, needing fewer polling places, poll workers, and voting machines. If it's harder for Ohio voters to vote early, all those cost savings might be undone."

"Why cut something that works? Absentee and early voting are hugely popular with Ohio voters," concluded Catherine Turcer, of Common Cause Ohio. "Governor Kasich should respect Ohio voters' desire for expanded early voting opportunities by vetoing SB 205 and SB 238."

*This newsletter made possible in part by Nancy Middleton and The Printing Place, Inc.*

## PROPOSED IRS CHANGES IMPACT LEAGUE

Last November, the IRS proposed significant changes to the regulations governing political activity by 501C4 organizations, like the LWV. The proposed regulations would impact the ability of 501C4 social welfare organizations to use money from undisclosed sources to influence elections. However the proposed regulations would also significantly impact the ability of the League to conduct nonpartisan voter service activity. That is because in defining 'candidate-related activity' that would be prohibited for 501C4 groups, the IRS included voter guides, voter registration, and candidate events without making any distinction for the truly nonpartisan work.

These are proposed regulations and the IRS has accepted comments on them. The LWVUS submitted comments. We also sent a message to every state and local president with links to our comments and the action alert. Through these regulations, the IRS has the opportunity to force the secret money that has been flooding our elections into the open, but it is critical that in doing so, nonpartisan election activity is protected.

Nearly every League is organized as a 501C4 social welfare organization. At the national level, in many states and a few localities, the League is also organized as a 501C3 charitable organization. Most of us are accustomed to distinguishing between our advocacy work which we do in the C4 and our voter service work which we do in the C3 or education fund. At the local level, this is true even though the majority of our local Leagues do not have their own separate education fund. Nevertheless, when we do candidate debates, voter guides and voter registration, we are scrupulous in following rules established by the IRS for 501C3 organizations. These rules have served us and our communities well for many years. We are asking the IRS to use that definition to distinguish nonpartisan voter service work from candidate-related activity for C4s.

The 501C4 structure has been abused by those who wish to influence our elections precisely because the current IRS rules do not require C4 organizations to disclose their donors. The code also recognizes tax-exempt 527 organizations designed to engage in candidate activity and required to disclose donors. Our comments urge the IRS to clearly define and restrict candidate related activity for C4s because any group of individuals wishing to engage in this kind of activity can do so through a 527.

Our goals are simple: restrict or eliminate the secret money flowing into our elections and guarantee voters the nonpartisan information they have come to depend on. Because of our voter service work, because we do not support or oppose candidates, the League is in a unique position to influence this process.

**Statehouse Day in Columbus**  
**Wednesday, April 9, 2014**  
**Register Now!**



This important and informative event will occur at the Columbus Sheraton, 75 E. State Street in Columbus. We are looking for a carload or two of people to cover all the informative sessions and bring back new views to our membership. The day will be full of engaging presentations on important issues critical to Ohioans such as election administration and voting rights, judicial reform, women's reproductive health rights, clean water and water usage. The cost is \$40 per member and \$45 for non-members. **HOWEVER, our local Clermont County LWV is offering \$20 scholarships from our education fund to the first four members to register.** Register online or contact Jane Sonenshein at [csunshine@fuse.net](mailto:csunshine@fuse.net). The registration deadline is March 24



Judy Miller, Director of Clermont County Board of Elections was presented with the Election Official of the Year Award by Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted on January 17.

Kathy and Tim Rodenberg were honored at the 2014 Salute to Leaders with the Wm. H. Over Leadership Award on March 11.

Linda Pilon has been named to the Board of Directors of Clermont County Chamber of Commerce.

**Mental Health Concerns in Clermont  
Union Twp. Civic Center  
March 25, 2014  
Queen City Room**



The Clermont County Mental Health and Recovery Board exists to plan and make provision for comprehensive mental health and recovery services that are accessible to all residents of Clermont County. It delivers comprehensive, customized care to families and individuals suffering from substance abuse, mental illness and co-occurring illnesses. Join us as we learn about the challenges of assisting those in need of mental health care in our communities.

**2013-2014  
League Leadership  
Officers:**

**President:**

Karen Scherra

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**VP for Programs:**

Yvette Duguay

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**Secretary:**

Jane Sonenshein

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**Treasurer:**

Carol Young

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**Suffragist Dinner Chair:**

Martha Kleinfelter

**League of Women Voters Clermont County**

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www.lwvclermont.com



Place  
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**2014 General Meetings**

General Meetings and Programs  
All Meetings begin at 6:30 pm

**Mar. 25, 2014**  
**Queen City Room**  
**Mental Health Concerns**  
**in Clermont**  
**Union Twp. Civic Center,**  
**4350 Aicholtz Rd.**

**GENERAL MEETINGS**

**Apr. 22, 2014**

**Queen City Room**  
**Land Use in Clermont**  
**Earth Day**  
**Union Twp. Civic Center ,**  
**4350 Aicholtz Rd.**

**May 20, 2014**

**Harmony Hill Winery**  
**Picnic Supper & Annual Business Meeting**  
**2534 Swings Corner Pt.**  
**Isabel Rd.,**  
**Bethel, OH 45106**

**For more information:**  
**(513)752-8011**

Please mark one:

- \$65 Individual
- \$85 Dual (2 adults same household)
- \$99 Family
- \$25 Student

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

Additional Names: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City, State Zip  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (home) Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (office)

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

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose form

with check payable to LWVCC:

League of Women Voters Clermont County  
P. O. Box 733  
Milford, OH 45150



**It's Time to Renew: 2014**