



THE VOTER

Monthly News & Updates

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Undemocratic. Unfair. Unpopular. Unnecessary. HJR1 is a real threat to Democracy

House Joint Resolution 1 and its companion piece Senate Joint Resolution 2 are proposed to require a vote of at least 60% of the electors to approve any constitutional amendment instead of a simple majority. They also modify the procedures for petitions proposing a constitutional amendment. Instead of gathering signatures from 44 of the 88 counties to put a citizen-initiated constitutional amendment on the ballot, they require signatures from 88 counties.

The changes to the process of amending the Ohio Constitution have wide-ranging consequences. If this constitutional amendment passes in August, it will make the Choice referendum in November and any citizen-initiated reform in the future almost impossible to pass. Supporters of this change argue that it is too easy to amend the constitution and that “big money” from outside the state plays too big a role.

From Jen Miller’s (LWVO Executive Director) testimony in opposition to HJR1: “...yet ballot initiatives have improved the daily lives of Ohioans living in each of our 88 counties and in every Ohio House district. Ohio voters have approved



Marching Music

Last week, I got to check off one of my bucket list goals: I finally saw Bruce Springsteen live! Great seats, terrific venue, AMAZING concert. I noticed that he hadn’t played “Born in the USA,” one of his biggest hits, so I Googled to find out more. As many fans know, the lyrics of “**Born in the USA**” have been misinterpreted for years. Back in 1984 the song was perceived by many as a pro-America anthem, but it was written as a commentary on the issues Vietnam veterans experienced when they returned home. Few had really listened to the words, and when they found out that his politics didn’t mesh with theirs, many former fans got angry and quit listening, threatening his career at the time.

pensions for war veterans, funded school construction, and placed protections for the Ohio Constitution from monopolies. Ohioans voted to raise the minimum wage, provide low-income housing assistance, fund conservation and recreation areas, and invest in local communities, infrastructure improvements, and economic development. Indeed some of the best policies in Ohio have been passed for and by the people through Constitutional ballot initiatives. The League is honored to stand with more than 225 allied organizations who represent Ohio citizens from all walks of life in opposition to this threat to direct democracy. HJR1 is a direct attack on democracy and freedom as we know it in Ohio. It is undemocratic and unfair, because it would shred our constitution and abandon our proud tradition of direct democracy.” Jen also argues that in the preceding 110 years there have been only 69 citizen-initiated amendments put on the ballot with a 26% passage rate.

HJR 1 is a real threat to democracy in Ohio. The passage of this legislation will do to great harm to Ohio for years to come.

The full text of HJR 1 and its timeline can be found [HERE](#)

~Mario
League President

It feels like we are fighting for and against all the same issues that were fought in the 1960s, but in the '60s, protesters had the music of Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez, Sam Cooke, and Bob Dylan, artists who took strong stances on racism, war and social inequality, to inspire them. Might contemporary artists fear they may hinder their careers by writing songs about racial inequality, the ugly truths in American history, that our democracy is in peril as voting restrictions are tightened, and that our human rights to privacy and control over our own bodies are being taken away?

We need a new group of artists to record a soundtrack for a new generation to inspire THEM to take up the cause to expose inequity and preserve democracy.

What should be the 'marching music' for our times?

~Chris Corba
League Executive Director



League Stand on Right to Abortion Amendment Clarified

On the State level we are confronting all types of challenges to our democratic ideals and our ability to control our own destiny. As soon as activity began to place a constitutional amendment on the

ballot to protect reproductive freedom, the Ohio legislature began a campaign to restrict citizen-led initiatives to amend the constitution. **The Right To Reproductive Freedom With Protections For Health And Safety** signature campaign is currently in progress. This ballot initiative needs 442,958 valid signatures to be collected and submitted by July 5, which means organizers are collecting 800,000 signatures from around the state to create a safe margin. Several groups organized campaigns to get this work done, including: **Pro-ChoiceOhio**, **Red Wine & Blue**, **Protect Choice Ohio**.

This seems like a no-brainer for the League banner to be flying and yet, it is not. More than a few local League members have expressed confusion and frustration. We received a fuller explanation from LWVO at the April All Member meeting. Pulling the threads apart from all the activity in Columbus, the fundamental

challenge at this moment is HJR1 and SJR2, which are poised to pass the legislature. Suffice to say, if this legislation passes in August, under the old rules of 50% of the popular vote, the Reproductive Freedom ballot initiative will be subject to the new requirement of 60% of the popular vote to pass. It was determined that League efforts would be best utilized right now in stopping the ballot change.

That explanation does not sit well with some. After all, we are the League of WOMEN Voters and reproductive choice is absolutely a woman's issue. Over the last few years LWVO has communicated consistently that they encourage local Leagues to take positions on local issues, but they determine what issues the League will support on the State level, which is where they do their work. As a local League, chartered by the State, we are bound by the protocols established by them. League members are encouraged to sign petitions and volunteer with organizations like those listed above. I am fully convinced that after the anticipated August special election the League will be out in force to support passage of the Right To Reproductive Freedom With Protections For Health And Safety ballot initiative.

As always, your ideas and comments are welcome. Send me an **Email**. Thank you.

~Mario



Join us at League of Women Voters Greater Dayton Area 2023 Annual Meeting, held Tuesday, May 23 at Goodwill EasterSeals Miami Valley Community Room, 660 S. Main St, Dayton. The meeting starts at 6 PM.

Dinner catered by Piada, including beverage and dessert, will be served. Cost is \$15 payable on our website **HERE** or by sending a check made to LWVGDA to the office.



League Members Dig Earth Day

The League celebrated Earth Day by pulling weeds at Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark. Natural Resources Director Kathy Turner made the arrangements and Beth Adelman was point person for the volunteers. It turned out to be a beautiful morning and the Wegezyn supervisor was very appreciative of their efforts. Seen here are from left to right – Beth Schaeffer, Lucy Anne McCosky, Jane Katsuyama and Val Lee. Not shown, Beth Adelman and Mario.



League Night with the Dragons

Did you know that “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” was written by Jack Norworth to woo Trixie Friganza, a famous vaudeville actress and suffragist? Plus, suffragists rallied at baseball games to further the cause. The League and baseball just belong together!

Join us at Day Air Ball Park on Friday, June 23, for fun and to support LWVGDA. Tickets are \$14; \$7 will come back to us! More information will be coming soon, so keep an eye out for League emails to purchase tickets. Everyone is invited! In the meantime, learn more about incomparable Trixie Friganza [HERE](#).



LWVO Education Committee Focusing On School Funding

On April 10, the conversation focused on local leagues and individual members taking action to communicate to LWV members, local communities, and state lawmakers about opposition to school vouchers and the underfunding of public education in Ohio. Individuals are encouraged to take action representing their personal experiences and share stories explaining why they have taken their particular stance on this issue. A link to resources will be made available at a future date.

~Mona Bailey
teacher in Brookville and
LWVGDA representative to
the LWVO Education
Committee.

LWVGDA Strategic Planning Update

Last month nine League members spent a weekend in Yellow Springs to discuss the League’s direction for the next few years. The JAEL Group facilitated these sessions. They are trainers for SCORE association, a local business management consulting group that League leadership vetted over the past year. We received a \$3,000 grant from the Ray Loughman Fund of The Dayton Foundation and a challenge grant from a League member which allowed us to engage their services without drawing from the League budget.

At the end of the first day, we determined our strategic aspiration to be:

The League of Women Voters of the Greater Dayton Area energizes and empowers people to be active in the electoral process as the premier provider of voter information and resources.

On the second day we determined how we were going to make our aspiration a reality using the SOAR process – Strengths, Opportunity, Aspirations, and Results. At its conclusion, Keelie Gustin was selected as the Champion and together with an Action

Participants included: Board members Mario, Beth Schaeffer, David Bodary, Keelie Gustin and Sandy McHugh; League members Mary Sue Gmeiner, Mona Bailey, Stephanie Smith; student Maria Camacho; and Chris Corba. During the process we outlined our reasons for contributing to the organization, identified why the organization needs to continue to exist, and labeled actions we could execute to become the organization we need to be. The facilitators led us to realize the need to concentrate on one “Strategic Aspiration” and focus the League’s efforts on achieving it.

Team she will develop goals to bring the Aspiration to fruition. There are specific steps to make sure the League monitors the progress and keeps this work at the top of the agenda. An additional benefit from using this process is that it can be replicated at any time as the League reaches each stated outcome long term. A fuller presentation on this process and the actions items will be made at the Annual Meeting on May 23.



DEI Corner

Antisemitism in the United States

Each year since 1979 the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has tracked incidents of antisemitic harassment, vandalism and assault in the United States and publishes the information in an annual report. In 2022, the ADL found a 36% increase in the number of national incidents recorded from 2021. The 2022 number was the highest on record since the ADL began tracking these incidents. This trend also held for Ohio, which, according to the FBI, had a record number of hate crimes in 2021. This escalation in antisemitic actions comes just as the ADL has reported on Americans’ highest level of antisemitic attitudes in decades. According to ADL’s **2023 report**, “Antisemitic Attitudes in America,” 20% of American believe six or more antisemitic tropes, which is significantly more than the 11% that ADL found in 2019. This dramatic increase also occurs just as the FBI released its 2021 hate crime data showing that Jews remain the most targeted religious minority in America. In its “Denunciation of Antisemitism,” the League of Women Voters of the United States has stated, “Now, more than ever, we must stand and work together to combat hate, including this recent spike of antisemitic acts, wherever we find it.... We will never stop protecting and advancing civil and human rights for all, nor let up on our mission to build an America as good as its ideals.”

~Dianne Herman

Changes in Community Relations League Leadership

It was with regret that the Board accepted Peggy Berry’s resignation from her position as Vice President of Community Relations at the last Board meeting. She has accepted an appointment to the LWVO State Board and her increased professional responsibilities were taking up much of her time. Fortunately, Mary Robertson accepted the Nominating Committee’s nomination to step in and also to be considered for the remaining term ending in 2024. She is on the Items for Vote that was inserted in the April *The Voter*. Mary has been the Public Relations Director since 2019, working with Peggy, and the transition will be seamless. She will use the Strategy+Planning Process document to guide our Community Relations work moving forward.

~Mario

UPCOMING CALENDAR

May 23: LWVGDA Annual Meeting – Goodwill Easter Seals Community Room, 6:00 PM

June 6: LWV Ohio All Member Meeting - Zoom, 12:00 PM

June 6: Changes in Voting Laws: A Community Conversation, Dayton Metro Library
Downtown, 6:30 PM

June 9-11: LWV Ohio 2023 Convention – Columbus

June 12: Board Meeting - Zoom, 6:00 PM

June 13: Lobby Corps meeting - Zoom, 12:00 PM

June 13: Funding and Development - Zoom, 4:00 PM

June 19: Juneteenth, office closed

June 23: [SAVE THE DATE!](#) League Night at the Dragons

June 27: LWV Ohio Voter Service Call - Zoom, 7:00 PM



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The League of Women Voters Greater Dayton Area is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice.

League of Women Voters of the Greater Dayton Area | Talbott Tower, 127 N Ludlow St.,
Dayton, OH 45402-1703

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