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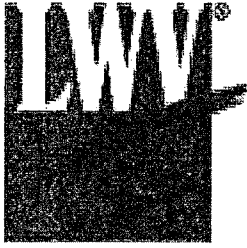
### LWV Bulletin, May, 2006

League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area

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# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF HUNTINGTON



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LWVUS website: [www.LWV.ORG](http://www.LWV.ORG)

May 2006 Bulletin

## JUDICIAL FORUM

May 18 is the date of the Judicial Forum hosted by the League of Women Voters. The topic will be "Sentencing Considerations: State vs. Federal Perspective". The event is free and will be held on Thursday, May 18 starting at noon at the downtown library. Delicatessen food will be provided starting at 11:30 am. Please invite friends to the forum. Our grant requires us to ensure that at least 50 persons attend the forum.

Our speakers will be Federal Judge Robert C. Chambers and Circuit Judge, O.C. Spaulding, Putnam County. Some of the topics they will discuss are key differences between federal and state sentencing, guidelines for federal cases and guidelines for state cases, opportunity for judicial interpretation and discretion, and practical aspects of sentencing and relevant information for the Court. There will be opportunities for questioning. The forum has been approved for 1 hour of Continuing Legal Education credit. If you wish to attend the forum, please contact Helen Gibbins, 736-3287 or [gibbins@verizon.net](mailto:gibbins@verizon.net).

The forum is sponsored by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF), with funding from the Constitutional and Legal Policy Program of the Open Society Institute (OSI) as part of their project, "*Safeguarding U.S. Democracy: Promoting an Independent Judiciary by Defending the U.S. Constitution.*" Their project is an educational effort to increase citizen understanding of the importance of our nation's system of separation of powers and checks and balances provided for by the U.S. Constitution.

## ACTION

*Lobbying Accountability and Transparency Act, HT 4975.* Guided by the LWVUS we urged Congressman Rahall to vote against HR 4975 if it was not strengthened. We believe an independent, nonpartisan, professional oversight office is needed to investigate allegations of ethics violations. The bill passed by 217-213. The executive director of the LWVUS at a press conference made the following points.

The League of Women Voters supported open and free debate for lobbying reform legislation on the House floor, but that was rejected. The House leadership chose not to allow members to vote on needed amendments. The bill does not fix the ethics process or the travel abuses. It does not provide the disclosure needed so that Americans can see what is going on in Washington. The bill fails to set tough new limits on fundraising for members of Congress by lobbyists and lobbying firms, and fails to impose strict reforms of the gift, travel and employment relationships among members of Congress, lobbyists and lobbying firms. Finally, the bill fails to provide the strong and effective enforcement and disclosure mechanisms that are needed.

The Senate bill, but not the House bill, aims to rein in the practice of the "revolving door" by limiting lawmakers and senior aides from lobbying former colleagues for two years, instead of the current one year. The bill now goes to reconciliation with a stronger version passed by the Senate.

*Clean Air Act standards.* The LWVUS signed a letter to EPA, along with other orgs, concerning the Clean Air Act. New standards

for fine and coarse particulate matter are too weak to protect health, crops, and materials.

### COURTS ARE DIFFERENT

(An article by Luke Bierman) Following are some excerpts from his article: "Courts are different. The role of the judicial branch in the American republic is intended to complement, not duplicate, the roles of the legislative and executive branches. Separate institutions, with unique functions and responsibilities that are executed in distinct ways, lie at the core of American governance, which is rooted in the constitutional design. For well over 200 years, America has progressed with these fundamental distinctions intact. Recent trends give cause for concern about the continuing efficacy of these guiding principles, about whether courts will continue to remain different.

Impartiality, long horizons and deliberation are its hallmark, if it is to remain true to the intent and design of the constitutional contemplation. For the greater part, judges are able to do just that, resolving literally millions of cases each year, most without serious controversy over the propriety of the outcome. The brilliant Supreme Court Justice Benjamin Cardozo once observed that nine out of ten cases can come out only one way."

Mr. Bierman goes on to talk about modern trends that threaten the independent judiciary. Copies of his article will be available at the forum; or contact Helen Gibbins to receive a copy by email.

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LWV is a nonpartisan organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership in the League is open to women and men of voting age. Annual dues, not tax deductible, are \$40 individual, \$55 for two in one household and \$24 for students.

To join, send your check to: Ann Spear,  
Treasurer, 706 Ridgewood Road, Huntington, WV  
25701

LWV Huntington Area  
Jane Husted, Editor

## CALENDAR



May 18 – Forum with Judges Chambers and Spaulding. Downtown library, Deli- lunch served.

WELCOME BACK, Giovanna Deveny. She and Jim are moving back to Huntington after a long tenure in Florida. And a FOND FAIRWELL to Mikala Shremshock, Mikala graduated from MU this spring.

### RIDES TO LEAGUE MEETINGS.

If you would like a ride to a League meeting, please contact Mary Anderson, 523-2032.

### SUMMER FUN

Julie Damewood gathered information about recreational opportunities for children and youth and forwarded the information on to the Herald-Dispatch. The H-D will give a tabloid featuring recreational opportunities to each of the children in our schools. Also the information will be on its website, [www.herald-dispatch.com](http://www.herald-dispatch.com). If you have access to a computer, you may contact Helen Gibbins, [gibbins@verizon.net](mailto:gibbins@verizon.net), and she will forward to you some of the information Julie has collected.

This bulletin will be the last one until fall. If you would like to be on the League's email list to receive information on League's activities and action possibilities, contact Helen Gibbins at [gibbins@verizon.net](mailto:gibbins@verizon.net). If you have not paid your 2006 dues yet, please do so by contacting Ann Spear.