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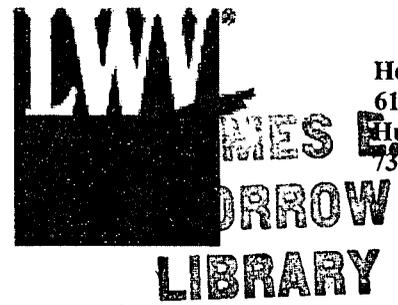
LWV Bulletin, November, 2005

League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF HUNTINGTON



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November 2005 Bulletin

**SPECIAL
COLLECTIONS**

WELFARE REFORM: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

The speaker at our November 21 meeting will be Dr. Girmay Berhie, a professor in the Social Work Department, Marshall University. Dr. Berhie will discuss the effects of the 1996 federal welfare reform law.

The Act was passed to move employable people off welfare rolls into jobs. Federal governmental money can pay for childcare, transportation to jobs, and education with the aim of moving the recipients into jobs. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) in the form of cash assistance can also be given, but there is a 60 month limit for individuals receiving help from these programs. The state also pays a share of the costs.

According to a July 24, 2005 Washington Post article, welfare rolls have dropped 50 percent nationally since the federal law was implemented. However, in rural WV "a year after their checks stopped, 73.1 % of former recipients were unemployed, 65.6 % reported not being able to afford their basic utilities, and only a small proportion believed that their prospects for the future were good (11.3%) or excellent (3.1%). The main problems: jobs were few and far between, getting from here to there was a major ordeal, and added personal burdens – from health concerns to child care quandaries – could derail even the most determined attempts welfare recipients might make at self-sufficiency." Some parts of the state, such as the southwestern part, are more prone to having difficulties with employing those on welfare than other parts.

Here are several of the conclusions and consequential questions from WVU researchers and others. Work is not a guarantee that families will be self-sufficient. Should states provide a safety net? Where is the appropriate governmental intervention? The private sector is not set up to respond to the need for providing jobs to those on welfare. How can the private sector pick up the slack? WV does not have enough resources to help those clients who are no longer in the welfare program, but may have lost their jobs or were never employable. Many of those previously on welfare are working at minimum wage. How do we help them increase their incomes?

While reauthorizing the Act, Congress is considering changes. Cutting the budget will also affect the neediest of our society. Come to the League meeting to discuss and learn about the effects of welfare reform as well as the possibilities for improving the system.

BOND ISSUE.

The League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area supports the passage of the bond issue to improve Cabell County schools. The League believes one of the facets of quality education is the environment where children are taught. Up-to-date teaching methods and curricula depend on schools that reflect these educational practices. Modern schools also are easier to maintain. The proposed new bond issue was constructed to continue, rather than raise, the property taxes that Cabell Countians have been paying for new school buildings. Therefore, our county will continue efforts to modernize our school buildings in a careful manner. It will include

a new Cammack-Miller elementary school, Barboursville Middle school & Milton Middle school. The special election will be held Sat. January 28, 2006. The League urges all Cabell Countians to find out what the bond issue will cover so they will be prepared to vote on Election Day.

CALENDAR



ACTION BY LWVUS

(This was also the Huntington League, although sometimes the Huntington League did not have time to take similar action.)

Supported the amendment to the Dept. of Defense appropriations bill, opposing torture of anyone in U.S. custody.

Opposed addition to the budget bill that would allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Opposed efforts to kill the presidential public financing system.

Opposed weakening environmental and public health regulations and laws associated with projects in hurricane areas.

Supported reforms of the Patriot Act.

Opposed a rider to the Transportation Appropriations bill that increases the amount of money incumbents can raise from individuals.

Opposed the new House Energy Bill

Opposed cuts in basic needs for low-income people.

RIDES TO LEAGUE MEETINGS

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

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

Nov. 21, 7 pm. Enslow Park Presbyterian Church Welfare Reform: Successes and Failures

Nov. 28, 11:30 am. Beverly Hills Presbyterian Church League of Women Voters Board meeting The meeting is open.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome new members, Mark Bugher, Patricia Proctor, and Cindy McCarty.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGNS.

During the 2004 election season, "92 % of all election coverage by national networks went to the presidential race. Less than 2 % of campaign coverage went to U.S. House or U. S. Senate races. State and local races received the smallest amount of coverage with 12 times more coverage going to sports and weather than all local races combined."

(From *The Political Standard*, October 2005)

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