



Terri Parks  
President  
lwbvn@lwbvn.org

Judy Huber  
Membership Chair  
lwbvn@lwbvn.org

Office:  
1272 Delaware Ave  
Buffalo, NY 14209  
884-3550  
Fax: 882-3797  
lwbvn@lwbvn.org

Office Manager:  
Eugene Abrahamson

Office Hours:  
Monday – Friday  
9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Always call before  
going to the office.

LWVBN Home Page  
[www.lwbvn.org](http://www.lwbvn.org)

LWVNY Home Page  
[www.lwbny.org](http://www.lwbny.org)

LWVUS Home Page  
[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

Kathleen McCormick  
Voter Editor  
lwbvn@lwbvn.org

The VOTER is published 10 times per year. December and early January items are due Friday, November 4, 2011.

## National Education Study Consensus Meetings on Funding & Equity

Wednesday, November 16

10 a.m. at the League Office  
1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo  
Discussion Leader: Phyllis Goldstein

7:00 p.m. at Harlem Community Center  
4255 Harlem Road, Amherst  
Discussion Leader: Joan Mondul

Our consensus process for the LWVUS study of the federal government's role in public education continues this month with a focus on Funding and Equity. Members have two opportunities to participate, one in the morning and one in the evening. If you cannot attend either session, please complete the Consensus Question form found on page 3 - 4 and mail it back to the League Office by November 18.

### League of Women Voters Mission:

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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## President's Message and Board Actions

We've concluded the busiest months in the League year and have once again provided voters in Erie and Niagara Counties with direct information from candidates to help them make informed decisions at the polls on November 8. With the assistance of many League members, we've moderated candidate forums, co-sponsored the Erie County Executive Debate at WNED, and published online and print editions of the 2011 Voters' Guide. The work to accomplish all of these important efforts was intensive and hampered by the flawed process for drawing district lines and selecting candidates for the Erie County Legislature.

The failure of the redistricting process in Erie County, and the lack of movement to create a non-partisan commission to direct redistricting at the state level are only two of the important issues that demand League attention in the near future. The Transportation/Waterfront Committee received the board's approval to support the no-build option for a bridge connecting Buffalo's inner and outer harbors at the October board meeting. The second set of consensus meeting for the League's education study will be on November 16. This League continues to advocate for issues that concern its members.

The Voter Service efforts outlined above and producing the annual *They Represent You* pamphlet and materials we distribute to new citizens and other voters involve not only the time and talents of League members, but also financial outlay. Once each year, we send both our members and community people a request for financial support for the League. Please consider the unique contributions of the League of Women Voters and be as generous as you are able when you respond to this year's appeal in the near future.

At its October meeting, the board voted to invite the public to all League meetings and events. During the discussion that preceded the vote, board members commented that the League should be transparent in its work and welcome people as observers at all meetings, even those where participation needs to be limited to League members, such as consensus meetings. We recognize that new members will come from people who are interested in the League's activities.

The board also decided to create an Executive Committee as permitted by Article VI of our bylaws to "make critical or time sensitive decisions between board meetings that include requests for action from individual members or program committees." The executive committee shall be composed of the officers and two alternates from the board. The alternates for 2011-2012 are Ramona Gallagher and Lynne Vallone.

*Terri Parks*

## Membership News

Joy Hart, a longtime member of the League, died September 30. She worked for many years with the Hamburg League in many capacities. After the League merger she worked on several committees, notably, Health Care Reform and Early Intervention of Children at Risk. For the last few years she suffered from Alzheimer's Disease, ironically, the same disease which took her husband. She will be remembered as an upbeat, bright, and curious woman and will be missed by many.

*Laura McDade*

## Great Decisions

Kristin Allen will facilitate our last Great Decisions topic for 2011, *Making Sense of Multilateralism*, on Thursday, November 3 from 10 a.m.– noon in the League Office at 1272 Delaware Avenue. "International cooperation subjects political leaders to an ongoing test balancing national needs with a commitment to building a durable international order. How has an increasingly interconnected and shrinking world affected the viability of existing agreements and institutions? What economic, social, political and security concerns are currently on the agendas of intergovernmental bodies, and what is the future U.S. role? We also need to assess the trial March-November meeting months. We have our own local decisions to make.

*Bernice Baeumler,*

## Public Education Study Consensus Questions

Please make every effort to participate in one of our November consensus meetings. November results will be combined with those from the October meeting for our final report to LWVUS. If you are not able to join us in person, please complete the consensus form below and mail it to LWVBN no later than November 18 (1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY, 14209).

*Lee Tetkowski, Education Chair*

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. The current role of the federal government in public education is
  - a. Much too small
  - b. Too small
  - c. About right
  - d. Too large
  - e. Much too large
2. What should be the role of the federal government in public education? (Rank in order of importance)
  - a. To ensure that all students K-12 receive a quality education.
  - b. To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.
  - c. To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.
  - d. To monitor state efforts for funding
  - e. To measure teacher effectiveness through test data.
3. A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. No consensus
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

4. Currently the governors and state education officers have developed Common Core Standards that are national but not federal. Which standards should be mandated by the states in order to obtain federal funding?
  - a. Special grant programs such as Race to the Top
  - b. All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act where the needs qualify for funding.
  - c. All programs receiving federal funding from any source
  - d. All of the above
  - e. None of the above
5. Should there be a national assessment aligned with the Common Core Standards? Yes    No  
 If Yes, Should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated?  
     Voluntary      Mandated      Mandated, if fully funded  
 If No, what other accountability measures might you suggest?
  - a. Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments.
  - b. Suggest that the local education districts use their own assessments or adopt one that is a nationally norm-referenced assessment such as the Stanford Achievement Test or Iowa Test of Basic Skills.
  - c. Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically
6. National standards should lead to:
  - a. A nationally mandated curriculum to be aligned to the national standards and assessments.
  - b. A national curriculum that is only suggested but not mandated.
  - c. A suggested structure for states and local education agencies to develop their own curriculum.
  - d. No national curriculum.
7. What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation? (Rank in order of importance)
  - a. Provide an assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards.
  - b. Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching Common Core Standards.
  - c. Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers.
  - d. Provide information to students, parents, teachers and school districts about student achievement.
  - e. Provide diagnostic information on each child.

*(continued on next page)*

8. Data from the national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. If we have a national assessment, what information is most important to be reported to parents, teachers, students and the community?
  - a. Data should be “norm referenced” (where students are ranked) for district comparison only.
  - b. Data should be “criterion referenced” and clearly informative so that teachers, parents, and students know how individual students have mastered criteria established at a national level.
  - c. Data should be used to determine “cut” scores knowing if students have mastered requirements for special grade levels.
9. Information from nationally required assessment data should be used to (choose one):
  - a. Sanction schools not measuring up to the specific levels
  - b. Reward schools that achieve high scores
  - c. Rank teachers based on student test score data
  - d. Reward teachers who have exemplary scores
  - e. Inform districts how their population compares to others similar to theirs.

### FUNDING AND EQUITY

10. In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds. However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as Race to the Top. Which would be appropriate?
  - a. Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements
  - b. A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants
  - c. Competitive grants only
  - d. No federal funding
11. If the federal government’s role is the concern of the “common good”, then:
  - a. Mandates only should be sanctioned.
  - b. Mandates and funding should both be provided.
  - c. Funding should be provided through grants only.
  - d. A combination of funded mandates and grants should apply.
  - e. No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.
12. Equity in public education means equitable access to: (Rank in order of importance)
  - a. high quality teaching/learning.
  - b. adequate and current learning materials.
  - c. clean and well maintained physical facilities.
  - d. food and health care.
  - e. safe and secure neighborhoods.
  - f. secure housing.
13. Currently Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding is considered “categorical” rather than for general use. This means that it can only be used with special populations for special purposes. ESEA should remain targeted toward poverty and special needs.
  - a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. No consensus d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree
14. The federal government has a role in supporting early childhood education, birth to 5, for all children?
  - a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. No consensus d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree
15. Federal support for early childhood education programs ( e.g.Head Start, Title I, Special Education, Early Start) should include funding for parent education and support regarding child development, child health and nutrition, and access to other supportive services, such as mental health as needed.
  - a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. No consensus d. Disagree e. Strongly Disagree

This funding should be extended to : All children    Only those with special needs    Special needs first

Please share any comments concerning the topics covered in the Consensus Questions in the space below.



**LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS**

## **ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN PUBLIC EDUCATION: WHERE ARE WE NOW AND THE IMPACT UPON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

The United States has changed dramatically since the early debates on public schools. The responsibility for education for the common good shifted from mainly local control to state control. Now, in 2011, attention is coming from the federal government and national organizations to control standards.

Congress is currently in a debate and stalemate over the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965 ESEA, reauthorized as “No Child Left Behind” in 2001). Major issues include the purpose and role of the federal government in public education.

**Pro:** An increased role of the federal government in education ensures equal education opportunities for all children across the country, so that we will be better prepared to compete globally. The federal government has always had a part in distributing funding to state and local school districts for specific needs, so there will be more consistency across the districts and states.

**Con:** Education has traditionally been a local and state issue. An increased role of the federal government will add to the number of unfunded federal mandates (laws passed with no monetary support). Decisions at the local level best serve the needs of students in the local area.

### **FUNDING FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

This Brief covers the reasons for the federal role in public education relating to early childhood, the importance of parent education, and the pros and cons related to federal intervention in early childhood education.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) creates standards and

guidance for early childhood providers across the country. Their position statements promote and endorse an integrated, well-financed system of early care and education for the learning and development of all children, including children in poverty.

**Pro:** From an economic standpoint, achieving equity builds lasting value. Heckman’s (2010) research shows that inequality in the development of human capabilities produces negative social and economic outcomes at every level and can be prevented by the proper investment in people. Early childhood education, particularly for disadvantaged children and their families, levels the playing field to provide equal opportunities for success. Every dollar invested in early childhood education returns ten cents on the dollar annually for the life of a child, a 10 percent per year return on investments. Furthermore, solid economic returns are possible, providing investments come early and are comprehensive, cohesive, and sustained over time, because it shapes the future and builds equity. Heckman warns that investing later chains us to fixing the missed opportunities of the past that are very costly. Heckman’s research clearly documents the impact of quality early childhood education upon later success in school, and beyond, in health and in economic advantages for society in general.

**Con:** Reasons against the federal involvement in early childhood basically come from providers of childcare centers as well as legislators. Some argue that universal preschool will be too expensive to support and that it will take away funding for K-12 grades. Educators who own and manage private preschools raise concerns that parents will choose “free” preschools instead of private ones.

*(continued on next page)*

**TIMELINE OF MAJOR FEDERAL PROGRAMS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD UP TO 2010**

Title	Year	Purpose
Head Start	1965	Funded by U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services to provide children from low-income families free access to early education. It also includes children who are at risk and with disabilities.
Even Start Title I, Part B.	1988	Integrated early childhood education to low-income parents for children birth through age 7, integrating adult education and early childhood learning with family literacy programs.
Early Head Start	1995	Funded programs for low-income families supporting 2 generations, usually mothers and infants and toddlers.
Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)	Many revisions since <b>1965</b>	Local education agencies apply to state agencies for approval of the program that is subsequently funded by the federal government.
No Child Left Behind (NCLB)	2001	Promotes the use of Title I, Part A, to fund preschool programs, recognizing the importance of preparing children for entering school with language, cognitive and early reading skills.
Early Reading First	2002	Extends the goals of NCLB under Reading First to preschoolers.
Special Education preschool grants and state grants programs 3-5	2002	Part of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding for preschool students ages 3 to 5.
Special Education Grants for Infants and Families	2007	Part C of IDEA (birth to 2 for children with disabilities)
Child Care Development Fund (CCDF)	Many revisions since 1990	The Child Care and Development Fund assists low income families, families receiving temporary public assistance, and those transitioning from public assistance in obtaining child care so they can work or attend training/education.

**REFERENCES**

Heckman, J.J. (2010, December). Invest in early childhood development: Reduce deficits, strengthen the economy. Retrieved from <http://www.heckmanequation.org>

Education Liberty Watch (March 20, 2011). Retrieved from <http://edlibertywatch.org/2011/03/studies-oneffectiveness-of-early-childhood-programs/>

Read more contrasting viewpoints: <http://www.brighthub.com/education/earlychildhoodhttp://edlibertywatch.org/2011/03/studies-on-effectiveness-of-early-childhoodprograms/d/articles/47611.aspx#ixzz1FZSLiX8>

Produced by the LWVUS The Education Study:  
The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education

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Additional resources for the Education Study can be found at [www.lwvbn.org](http://www.lwvbn.org) by clicking on [Education Study Materials](#).

*The League of Women Voters:*

*Where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.*

*Work with the LWV to help shape the issues that keep our community fair, vibrant and strong.*

## League Fund-Raisers



### Ten Thousand Villages Benefit Sales Day

Shop at Ten Thousand Villages, 5596 Main Street, Williamsville on November 3, 2011 from 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. to benefit LWVBN. Fifteen percent of net sales that day will be donated to the League and there will be a presentation about the League at 7:00 p.m. Bring your

friends and neighbors with you for a special day in Williamsville. You will enjoy a beautiful collection of holiday ornaments, nativities and holiday decorations in addition to artisan-crafted home decor, personal accessories, and gift items from across the globe. The fairly traded goods at Ten Thousand Villages provide opportunities for artisans from many countries to earn a living wage through a long-term relationship.

### Holiday Gift Wrapping at Eastern Hills Mall

Our largest annual fundraising effort begins on November 30th. Come solo and make a new friend. Or grab an old friend and come together. Either way, please sign up for a shift or two on the enclosed form. We need you!

## Amherst Unit News

### Two Exciting Lunch and Issues Programs

We are honored to have two distinguished speakers at upcoming Lunch & Issues programs. On Friday, November 18, **Dr. Gail Radford**, a League member and University at Buffalo history professor, will present *"PUBLIC AUTHORITIES: Where They Come From and What They Mean for Us Today."* Gail is a noted expert on 20th century U.S. public policy.

On Friday, December 16, **U.S. Congresswoman Kathy Hochul** will discuss her work and experiences as a "freshman" representing the 26th District. A dynamic speaker, she welcomes this opportunity to meet her constituents.

Both programs begin with lunch 11:30 a.m. in the Scotch and Sirloin Restaurant, 6999 Maple Road, Amherst. All LWVBN programs are open to the public so please invite your friends and family. Contact Sally Metzger or Judy Metzger ([lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org)) for reservations by the Wednesday before the program. The all inclusive meal is \$15.00. Please make checks payable to LWVBN and mail them to the League office at 1272 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, 14209.

### Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers to attend Amherst Town Board meetings on the first and third Mondays of the month at 3:00 p.m. in the Town Hall, 5583 Main Street, Williamsville. Please contact Mary Scheeder ([lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org)) for more information.

Thanks to League members who helped with the Candidates Forum at the Amherst Senior Center and to Cathy Sommer and the Center for hosting the program.

*Judy Metzger, Amherst Unit Coordinator*

## Voter Services

### Naturalization

Thank you to League members who participated in naturalization ceremonies: Marian Bass on September 14, Beverly Nemo and Lillis McLean on October 6, Libby and Marilee Keller on October 18. Apologies to Marian Bass for not recognizing her service in the October VOTER.

### Candidates' Forums

Many thanks to organizers and League members who assisted as moderators or timekeepers at candidates forums in October: Ramona Gallagher, Judy Huber, Ann Marie Malachowski, and Laura McDade.

*Joyce Bol, Voter Services Chair*



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**November 2011**

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 <b>Issues</b> 4:30 p.m.	2	3 <b>Great Decisions</b> 10:00 a.m. <b>League Benefit</b> 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.	4	5
6	7 <b>Board Meeting</b> 4:30 p.m.	8 <b>General Election</b>	9 <b>Transport &amp; Waterfront</b> 10:00 a.m.	10 <b>Natural Resources</b> 9:30 a.m.	11	12
13	14	15	16 <b>Consensus Meetings</b> 10:00 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	17 <b>Education</b> 1:30 p.m.	18 <b>Lunch&amp;Issues</b> 11:30 a.m.	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30 <b>Holiday Gift Wrapping Begins</b>			

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