



# THE ALABAMA VOTER

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## A BYRD'S EYE VIEW

*By Kathryn Byrd, LWVAL President*

Jean Johnson, our LWVAL Communications Director recently asked, "What would happen if we held an election and no one came." She was talking about the state appellate/supreme court races for which the LWVAL is sponsoring a Voters' Guide and voter information resource using the LWVUS Education Fund website, [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org). Press releases have gone out, letters to the editor throughout the state are being sent soon, and audio public service announcements will be distributed as well. We are also sending out our message via *Facebook* and *Twitter*. We need your "word of mouth" help as well. When you are among a group of people discussing the primary (or, later, the general election), please plug our [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) project.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

March 1: deadline for turning in the results of the Charter School study

March 13: Primary Election Day

April 22: Earth Day

April 24: run-off for primary candidates

March 31: board teleconference

May 5: State Council in Montgomery

June 8-12: LWVUS National Convention in Washington, D.C.

There are other ways to get out the vote, and to ensure that some of our more vulnerable citizens, those with disabilities, are able to cast their ballot with whatever assistance they require (including use of the AutoMARK® voter assist machine used in Alabama). There have problems in this area around the state. To that end, the LWVAL is joining the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) in piloting a polling place checklist. This checklist can be brought into the polling place when the voter who is reporting goes in to cast his/her ballot. Forms are being sent to local league presidents to distribute to those who are willing to help pilot the form. Local league presidents will have more information, but you also can contact me by my personal email ([kcburd@aol.com](mailto:kcburd@aol.com)) or my cell/text (205-394-5852), and I will get you a copy of the form and its guidelines.

Finally, the work of the League, alas, takes money. If you haven't done so, please send a check to your local league and also to the League of Women Voters of Alabama or the League of Women Voters of Alabama—Education Fund. (A donation to the LWVAL-EF is tax-deductible, but a check to LWVAL will enable us to do advocacy on our selected issues and helps cover the operating expenses of the LWVAL. such a mailing newsletters, postage, trips to Montgomery, etc. Jean Johnson has made it easy to contribute using PayPal. Go to [www.lwval.com](http://www.lwval.com) for further information, or send your contribution to our LWVAL Treasurer Shelly Murray. Checks can be sent to Shelly at 930 Boulder Lane, Auburn, AL 36830. Your contribution will enable us to serve the public—so there will not be an election where no one comes.

# UPDATE ON 'FOREVER WILD'

The LWVAL has made passage of the constitutional amendment reauthorizing "Forever Wild" a high priority on this fall's ballot. Passage of this amendment would reauthorize Forever Wild at its current funding level, allowing for the purchase of lands for general recreation use, natural reserves, additions to wildlife management areas, and for state parks, with over 220,000 acres throughout the state purchased or leased long-term from mountain tops, forests and streams to coastal wetlands. A statewide fundraising committee has been created to run the public relations campaign leading up to the November election. The LWVAL Natural Resources Committee will address the campaign in greater detail later this year, but be thinking how you and your league can help keep these special lands "Forever Wild."

## WATER POLICY AND PLANNING FOR ALABAMA WILL BE ADDRESSED THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION.

The Alabama Rivers Alliance (ARA) and their allies have been working for several years to support the Alabama Office of Water Resources in the development of a comprehensive water management plan for Alabama. The planning process they propose would include in-depth stakeholder input and would be done in coordination with other appropriate agencies, including the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, and the Geologic Survey of Alabama. The Permanent Joint Legislative Committee for Water Policy and Management has been working towards this goal.

The ARA-led group is currently drafting legislation that lays out this mandate to the agencies with proper guidance and principals that should be included in the plan (monitoring and management of water withdrawals; protection of minimum flows; management of inter-basin transfers; conservation and efficiency programs; regional decision-making structure).

The LWVAL Advocacy Committee will review and evaluate this legislation once it is finalized in late February to determine if we will support it as a priority. Learn more about the proposed process at [www.alabamarivers.org/alabama-water-agenda-1/why-alabama-needs-a-plan-for-its-water/comprehensive-water-plan-for-alabama](http://www.alabamarivers.org/alabama-water-agenda-1/why-alabama-needs-a-plan-for-its-water/comprehensive-water-plan-for-alabama)

LWVAL is working to extend our information on water resources in Alabama beyond the coastal zone. We plan to start with the Alabama Water Agenda updated in 2011 by Alabama Rivers Alliance and Southern Environmental Law Center. The document can be found at [www.alabamarivers.org/alabama-water-agenda-1](http://www.alabamarivers.org/alabama-water-agenda-1). Adoption of a comprehensive water management policy as discussed above is one recommendation in the Agenda.

## ENERGY POLICY AND PLANNING FOR ALABAMA

Work on water policy is quite a few years ahead of energy policy in Alabama, but groundwork is being done in the energy arena also. There is no comprehensive energy plan for Alabama. The closest to such a plan are the Integrated Resource Plans (IRP) submitted to the Alabama Public Service Commission (PSC) by Alabama Power and Alagasco.

All utilities develop an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which indicates the expected demand for energy and how they propose to meet it in the next 20 years. In almost all cases in the Southeast except for Alabama Power and Mississippi Power, redacted portions of these plans are available for public review. In some cases stakeholder participation occurs from the inception. TVA's plan is exemplary in this regard.

Formal and informal requests have been made to Alabama Power and to the Alabama PSC to review Alabama Power's IRP but it is not available.

On Nov. 1, LWVAL submitted a request to the Permanent Joint Legislative Committee for Energy Policy. It calls for full development of a state energy plan and requests that the Committee:

proceed toward adopting a more transparent process with public involvement for energy planning in Alabama, including the process for development of IRPs. We recommend researching possible new legislation by evaluating planning processes and energy efficiency and conservation activities of other states which include public involvement in review and comment for IRPs and energy efficiency activities

December 1-2, 2011 five from Birmingham attended the biannual Southeast Climate and Energy Network meeting, this time in New Orleans. The focus for this meeting, the fourth for your Natural Resources Chair, was energy efficiency as a resource for meeting projected demand for energy. It was an excellent source for ideas about best practices for energy in the Southeast, resulting in lower emissions.

On December 14, 2011, the Energy Efficiency Working Group of the Interfaith Environmental Initiative of Alabama (IEIA) was hosted by the environmental members of that group. (LWVAL supported the IEIA Energy and Water forum held at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens on October 13, 2011 with a sponsorship of \$100.) Our previous three meetings have been hosted by Alabama Power, Alabama Gas and Alabama Technology Network, which assists business and industry to become more energy efficient. Topics for the December 14th meeting included the issue of transparency in energy policy and Alabama's rank near the bottom in energy efficiency measures. PowerPoint presentations from that meeting are posted at [www.InterfaithEnvironmental.org](http://www.InterfaithEnvironmental.org)

Alabama Environmental Council, with several allies including LWVAL, is pursuing funding to provide for an Alabama Clean Energy Program to address energy planning to reduce emissions from energy generation and distribution.

# CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM UPDATE

All of us who are hoping for some Alabama constitutional reform are grateful for the Constitutional Revision Commission that the legislators approved last year. The Commission has been meeting and approved revisions to the Banking Article which is now HB358 and the Corporation Article which is now HB357.

They will both go to the House Constitution, Campaigns and Elections Committee the first week of March. Information about the Constitutional Revision Commission meetings is available here: [ali.state.al.us/constitutional-revision.html](http://ali.state.al.us/constitutional-revision.html)

And the transcript of the January 18th Public Hearing is available here: [ali.state.al.us/documents/transcriptjan1812.pdf](http://ali.state.al.us/documents/transcriptjan1812.pdf)

The Commission will debate Article IV, the Legislature, in May after this Session ends. At that time, they will consider the inclusion of home rule for counties. Ruth Ott, representing the League testified in favor of home rule to the Commission last year.

In order to keep this important issue before the legislators and the public now until May, former Speaker Pro Tem Demetrius Newton offered a constitutional amendment to provide home rule for counties this session. It was patterned after home rule constitutional amendments offered in 2003 and last year. It is HB302 and you can view it here...

<http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/ACTIONViewFrame.aspTYPE=Instrument&INST=<http://alisondb.legislature.state.al.us/acas/ACTIONViewFrame.aspTYPE=Instrument&INST=>HB302&DOCPATH=searchableinstruments/2012RS/Printfiles/&PHYDOCPATH=//alisondb/acas/searchableinstruments/2012RS/PrintFiles/&DOCNAMES=HB302-int.pdf,,>  
(cut and paste this long address into your server. Sorry it is so long.)

This will not diminish the work of the Commission, but will keep the subject before the legislators, as well as the public, and will provide guidance to the Commission when they begin the discussion of article IV in May.

If this legislation passes and goes to the voters this year, that would be the very best outcome.

HB302 will go to the Counties and Municipal Governments Committee of the House the first week in March.

Members of that Committee are:

**STEVE MCMILLAN**, Chair, from Bay Minette: Home 251-948-5575, Montgomery 334-242-7723 [bcld07@gmail.com](mailto:bcld07@gmail.com)

**RANDY WOOD**, Vice Chair from Anniston. Home 256-820-6700 Montgomery 334-242-7700 [rwoods36@cableone.net](mailto:rwoods36@cableone.net)

**DEMETRIUS NEWTON** from Birmingham: Home 205-324-6053, Montgomery 334-242-7546 [demetrius.newton24@yahoo.com](mailto:demetrius.newton24@yahoo.com)

**GEORGE BANDY** of Opelika: Home 334-749-0051, Montgomery 334-242-7721,

**ALAN BOOTHE** of Troy: Home 334-670-3203, Montgomery 334-242-7710

**NAPOLEON BRACY** of Pritchard Phone 251-622-8118 Montgomery 334-242-7756 [napoleon@napoleonbracy.com](mailto:napoleon@napoleonbracy.com)

**RICHARD "DICKIE" DRAKE** of Leeds: home 205 281-4428, Montgomery 334-242-7600 [ddrake1080@aol.com](mailto:ddrake1080@aol.com)

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**JEREMY ODEN** of Vinemont: Home 256-734-3188, Montgomery 334-242-7722 [info@mocold.com](mailto:info@mocold.com)

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**DAN WILLIAMS** of Athens: home 256-232-8993, Montgomery 334-242-7741 [hizonor92@yahoo.com](mailto:hizonor92@yahoo.com)

Our job now, is to convince those members to give HB302 a favorable vote so it can move on to the Rules Committee and then to the floor of the House. Thanks to all of you for your support of this important issue.

Nancy Ekberg [nanekberg@aol.com](mailto:nanekberg@aol.com) (Let me know if you call any of these numbers and they are wrong....phone numbers seem to change each year.)



# League Launches New Study — Privatization of Government Assets and Services

In Mobile, and across the nation, League of Women Voters chapters are delving into the complex issue of the privatization of public assets and services. For more than 30 years, federal, state and local governments have contracted, transferred, outsourced, and sold government services and assets, with the goal of increasing efficiency and reducing costs. The Mobile League's study will take measure of privatization's impact on our citizenry: what is working and what is not. The group will search for lessons to be learned within the greater framework of this public policy debate.

The League plans to identify policies and parameters that should be considered when any governmental entity plans to undertake some type of privatization process. While local examples are not a main focus of the study, the League hopes to learn more about what services our local governments have privatized and the results of those endeavors. "The League recognizes that privatization presents enormous opportunities, both for increased efficiency and savings of tax dollars – and for corruption," said Jane Everest, president of the League of Women Voters of Mobile. "We hope to identify the factors that make privatization successful, as well as the areas where public officials must safeguard taxpayer dollars and resources."

At Mobile's January 18 luncheon, Joe Adams, of Samford's Public Affairs Research Council (PARCA) discussed the costs, benefits and public risk of privatization, focusing on important practical questions and operational issues that arise when public services are privatized, outsourced, or contracted. He illustrated some of the benefits and talked about some of the risks, in plain, simple terms addressing some of the following questions:

- What has been missing in discussions of privatization?
- How do we ensure performance, accountability, and transparency?
- How do citizens best participate in these decisions?

## **PRIVATIZATION: THE PUBLIC POLICY DEBATE** *Executive Summary*

THE PURPOSE OF THIS ARTICLE IS TO PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE PUBLIC POLICY KNOWN AS "PRIVATIZATION." PRIVATIZATION IS A MOVEMENT TO DEREGULATE PRIVATE INDUSTRY AND TRANSFER MANY GOVERNMENT SERVICES, ASSETS AND FUNCTIONS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

### **CLAIMS AND CONCERNS**

Those promoting privatization claim that:

- the private sector can provide increased efficiency, better quality and more innovation in services than the government;
- a smaller government will reduce costs to the taxpayer; and
- less regulation will provide a better environment for business, thus creating more jobs.

Those concerned about privatization suggest the following.

- Profits: The mandate to make a profit will endanger public safety and reduce services available to the general public.
- Costs: There will be increased costs to consumers.
- Transparency and Accountability: Private companies will lack transparency, adequate oversight and accountability.
- Corruption: There will be increased corruption between government and for-profit, private companies.
- National Defense: Privatizing sectors such as ports, utilities and defense can result in foreign control and will put the country at risk in the event of war.
- Inequality: The scale of privatized programs will result in

chronic high unemployment, low wages and abusive labor practices, leading to growing inequality between the wealthy and poor.

### **LARGER THAN THE UNITED STATES**

The privatization movement is an international movement. Outside the United States, prominent divestitures of government assets have included Russia's natural gas (Gazprom), Bolivia's municipal water system in Cochabamba and the United Kingdom's British Rail. Inside the United States, privatization has taken the form of deregulation, e.g., the deregulation of the financial services industry; redistribution of the taxes "burden," e.g., efforts to reduce individual Privatization: The taxes on capital gains and inheritances, and reductions of corporate taxes; and privatization, the shifting of government programs to the private sector, e.g., the prisons and highways.

### **HISTORY**

In the 1970s, disillusioned with the Progressive Era vision, leadership in the increasingly global private sector became more active, asserting that burgeoning tax rates and government regulations of industry were inhibiting free trade. Efforts were launched to dismantle many progressive programs such as restrictions on financial lending, elimination of worker's compensa-



tion, elimination of control over food and environmental safety, and a revamping of the tax system by eliminating progressive taxes and replacing it with a flat tax.

## COMPETING THEORIES

Milton Friedman: The intellectual inspiration behind the public policies to privatize in the United States has come from the Public Choice and Property Rights schools of thought. Prominent leaders advocating these theories include Milton Friedman, the Chicago School of Economics, and Fredrick Von Hayek whose book, *Road to Serfdom*, warned of the growing welfare state. The basic assumptions include:

- Democratic political systems have inherent tendencies toward government growth and excessive budgets.
- Expenditure growth is due to self-interested coalitions of voters, politicians, and bureaucrats.
- Public enterprises necessarily perform less efficiently than private enterprises.
- The more individuals stand to gain from tending to their property; the better it will be tended.

John Maynard Keynes: The dominant economic theory after WWII was that of John Maynard Keynes. Keynes believed that to break a depression, the government needed to stimulate demand. It was necessary to get money into the hands of consumers to jumpstart growth. Businesses would not borrow and build if no demand was in sight, no matter how low the interest rates might go. Keynesian theories were later refuted by economist Milton Friedman and this dispute is at the core of the ongoing debate regarding how to break the current recession/depression.

## PRIVATIZATION IN PRACTICE

The key strategies as to how to downsize government and transfer programs to the private sector are described as:

- Privatization by attrition - Cessation of public programs and disengagement of government from specific kinds of responsibilities. Example might be the U.S. postal system.
- Transfer of assets - Direct sale or lease of public land, infrastructure, and enterprises. Examples might be federal and state parks, state-owned liquor stores and the proposed privatization of public libraries.
- Contracting out (public/private partnerships) or vouchers - Instead of directly producing some service, the government may finance private services, for example through contracting out or vouchers. Examples might be charter schools, prisons.
- Deregulation - Deregulation of entry into activities previously treated as public monopolies. Examples might be utilities, water, waste management, air traffic control and ports.

## ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The public agenda of privatization requires a close examination of the proper relationship between government, business and civil society. What should the role of government be in protecting the environment, helping the poor, defending the nation, providing justice, ensuring democracy, protecting public health, ensuring public safety, providing education, promoting a thriving economy, and ensuring safe work environments and a living wage? Our country must seek a pragmatic balance between social and economic returns. *Nora Leech, LWV Privatization Committee*

## MORE RESOURCES

You can find more articles on privatization at this link: [www.lwv.org/member-resources/privatization](http://www.lwv.org/member-resources/privatization)

# EDITORIAL: LET YOURS SHINE

Remember the song you learned, perhaps in Sunday School: "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine." The lesson was supposed to be that we may not be superheroes, but we can all do something worthwhile. The League of Women Voters tackles big issues, and we aren't superwomen. But if we each tackle the little bit of the job we can handle, big things get accomplished.

Constitutional reform? Charter schools? Adequate health care for everybody, whether it involves insurance coverage or health professionals in rural counties?

Preservation of the environment? Clean energy? A fair tax system? Good education at every level? Access to voting for every citizen? A fair (and merciful) immigration policy? All of these are League issues, and each is way too big for any one or small group of us to solve alone. But together, we can do it. Not tomorrow or next

week, but eventually. Look how long it took for women to get the vote in the first place.

Our county was nearly 150 years old before women got a chance to participate fully in the political process. When it finally happened, the LWV committed itself to producing informed and active citizens, able and willing to participate. Let us never lose sight of our important mission, by studying, informing, and actively working for the kind of country the patriots in the song dreamed of when they saw beyond their own years to a place of freedom and justice for all.

This is a pep talk, and a plea for each of us to find our little bit and do it, and to recruit others, especially younger women –and men – to carry on. (Your editor just turned 83; she may have to retire some day!) — CW



# BOB McCURLEY ON CHANGES TO THE ALABAMA CONSTITUTION

Alabama Constitutional Reform. The League of Women Voters of Alabama has had an official position on “alconref” since 1967, with a preference for a constitutional convention. We have partnered with groups such as Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform (ACCR), cosponsored and participated in a Mock Constitutional Convention, and also helped to underwrite the powerful DVD production of *An Open Secret*, based on actual transcripts of the infamous 1901 Alabama Constitutional Convention—which produced the equally infamous current Alabama Constitution. Sometimes a compromise is a beginning. The 2011 Alabama Legislature voted to establish Alabama Constitutional Revision Commission, which is charged with updating the current constitution *article by article*. Robert “Bob” McCurley, recently retired Director of the Alabama Law Institute, has written legislation for the legislature and led legislative orientations for almost 40 years. He has been hired by the Alabama legislature to spearhead the writing of the Commission’s proposals.

LWVAL President Kathy Byrd and LWVAL Board Member and retired Associate Law School Dean at UA Hattie Kaufman met recently with Bob McCurley to discuss his perspective on the goals and actions of the Alabama Constitutional Revision Commission. The following is a summary of the high points of their discussion with McCurley, with paraphrases of his responses in italics.

## 1. PLEASE EXPLAIN THE LEGISLATURE’S DIRECTIVE TO THE ALABAMA CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION COMMISSION.

*The commission’s schedule calls for consideration of revisions to various articles—three at a time—during the 2012, 2013 and 2014 legislative sessions. Taxation has specifically been excluded from the revisions. The Commission has already looked at un-constitutional language (whose proposed changes have passed the legislature and will be on the November 2012 ballot). The Legislature must approve any changes proposed by the Commission, which are then put to a statewide vote. The Alabama Law Institute has been assigned to serve as the Commission’s staff.*

## 2. THE LWVAL STRONGLY FAVORS EXPANSION OF HOME RULE IN ALABAMA. DETERMINING THE BEST STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL IS KEENLY IMPORTANT. SINCE THE 1901 CONSTITUTION HAS NO LOCAL GOVERNMENT ARTICLE ALONG THE LINES OF THE PROPOSED IN ARTICLE IX OF THE 1973 PROPOSED CONSTITUTION, BY WHAT MEANS CAN TRUE HOME RULE BE INTRODUCED INTO THE PROPOSED REVISION?

*There will be something regarding Home Rule introduced in Article IV, the Legislative article. The issue involves whether counties should be allowed to “opt in” (specifically agree to accept a specified form of Home Rule) or “opt out” (having the right to vote against some aspect(s) of Home Rule). Some public groups are pushing for an “opt in” approach. Citizen groups, some of which are really fronts for opponents of Home Rule such as ALFA, have come forward to protest Home Rule, decrying it as “un-American,” “socialism,” and unnecessarily meddling in what should not be the government’s business (e.g., requiring weeds to be cut or old, rusting cars removed from a privately owned lot). The county commissioners association does not want unlimit-*

*ed home rule; they do not want complete responsibility.*

*Currently taxation has been prohibited from the discussion of Home Rule and other aspects of the Constitutional Revision Commission’s recommendations. But to get raising revenue “eased in,” the strategy could be to eliminate certain exclusions, rather than overtly raising taxes. For example, the loss of revenue from the elimination of taxation on groceries could be offset by eliminating certain exclusions.*

## 3. COULD EXISTING SECTIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION BE EXPANDED, SUCH AS EXPANDING SECTION 88, WHICH STATES, “COUNTIES SHALL PROVIDE TO THE POOR” TO READ “COUNTIES SHALL PROVIDE FOR THE POOR AS WELL AS THE LAWS NECESSARY FOR THEIR CITIZENS” BE A POSSIBLE STRATEGY?

*One problem is having enough revenue to pay for such an expansion. The courts will not be a likely recourse for ordering a change in the tax system, based on the recent precedent set by *Lynch v. Alabama*, regarding inadequate funding of education under the current tax system. The court determined that it is the prerogative of the citizens of Alabama, through their elected officials, to structure a tax system in a manner that best serves their interests.*

## 4. WHAT DO YOU PREDICT WILL HAPPEN AT THE MAY 2012 HEARING FOR THE ALABAMA CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM COMMISSION?

*Home rule will take two to three legislative sessions to achieve. The May meeting will likely deal with the length and types of annual sessions of the legislature.*



*One proposal would be to have two annual sessions. The earlier session would deal with matters unrelated to the budget, then the shorter second session would focus on the budget. In addition, changes in the terms of the legislators may be discussed. On possibility might be to stagger the election of members of the House of Representatives, so half would be elected to a four year term every two years. The possibility of a six-year term for state senators might be discussed. Term limits may appear as an issue. Another topic may be compensation of Commission members and legislators, possibly tying pay to an index based on the "average Alabamian's paycheck," rather than having legislators vote for their own raise.*

## 5. DO YOU THINK THE SCANDAL IN JEFFERSON COUNTY WILL HELP OR HURT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HOME RULE?

*Certainly many voters will not trust any legislative body. Legislators may be viewed as wanting a cut of everything. A good strategy would be to hold off discussing taxation in relation to legislators right now.*

## 6. REGARDING THE BANKING SECTION, THE LWVAL IS VERY CONCERNED THAT THE ARTICLE BE NEUTRAL, PROTECTING BOTH BUSINESS AND CONSUMER ALIKE. COMMENTS?

*Because of federal legislation, much of the Alabama banking industry is currently under regulation. Although the current banking article is out of date, the proposed article was written to provide evidence and reassurance to Alabamians regarding the banking industry.*

## 7. WHAT SUGGESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR THE LWVAL AND ITS ALLIES TO PROMOTE EXPANSION OF HOME RULE?

*The League is respected for its ability to present the pros and cons of an issue. The League should find a way to make awareness of the issues such as Home Rule in every county, broadcasting a confident, positive attitude that Home Rule is going to happen. Although taxation is specifically excluded from the discussion of Home Rule at present, once Home Rule is voted into place, the taxation component should fall into place.*

*Specific activities should include Op-Ed pieces and letters to the editor in every county and local paper, as well as the usual statewide newspapers. The League should make use of alliances with groups like ACCR and AAUW. Also, the local leagues should ask one of the Alabama Constitutional Revision Commission members speak to groups in their localities.*

NOTE: As a follow up, Bob McCurley has offered to meet with us to discuss the legislative article in more detail in a few months, when the issues and proposals are more clearly defined. We look forward to this next conversation.

Bob has been heavily involved in writing the first four articles of the constitution—looking at the hundreds and hundreds of amendments, the 1973 document which proposed (unsuccessfully) changes to solve many of the inequities and mean spiritedness of the 1901 constitution. The Article I passed the legislature in 2011, and Articles II and III are ready for the current 2012 regular legislative session. Bob and other commission members are currently working on Article IV, related to the Alabama Legislature.

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT ON WEB

The Advocacy Committee (Anne Permaloff of Montgomery, chair; Hattie Kaufman of Tuscaloosa; and Ruth Wright of East Alabama) is at work reading and evaluating bills for the League. Updated Legislative Reports appear on the LWVAL web page each week the Legislature is in session.

Jean Johnson generally posts the materials at the start of each week. The reports summarize legislation the League is following based on the priorities set by the State Board and let you know what the League Action is on the bills based on League positions. Updates report on bill progress in the legislature, including changes in the legislation. Check it out.

## HEALTH CARE STUDY SCHEDULE RESET

In order to space studies in a manner that will ease Local League schedules, the State Board altered the schedule for the Health Care Study.

Local Leagues can expect the *Facts and Issues* in early spring 2013. As reported earlier there will be two separate documents. One will cover some of the major health care issues and the manner in which they impact each other and policy making; the other will focus on nursing, particularly advanced practice nurses, with some coverage of physician assistants.

Anne Permaloff of (Montgomery) and Jan Widdell (East Alabama) are the major researchers. They are building upon initial research collected by Marilyn Garrett (East Alabama) and her committee.

The consensus process will occur in the fall of 2013. Consensus discussions will use not only the two new documents but *Facts and Issues: Health Care in Alabama* which is on the LWVAL web page.



# CALL TO LWVAL COUNCIL 2012

Saturday, May 5, 2012, 10 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Montgomery • 2810 Atlanta Highway

To: Local League Boards

From: Kathy Byrd, President, LWVAL

Date: February 20, 2012

We look forward to seeing you at the May 5th LWVAL State Council in Montgomery. We will present the LWVAL position on charter schools in Alabama, based on our consensus on the Charter Schools Study, and thanks to our diligent Study Committee and your participation in the process. After the morning business session, you will enjoy a luncheon speech and the two workshops and an update on the legislature.

## KEY PLANNING INFORMATION

- Each local League's voting delegation consists of the Local League President and two other delegates. But all members are encouraged to attend, and guests are welcome. In fact, there will be two tracks of workshops in the afternoon. So the more attendees you bring, the more members who will be able to return with information for your league.

- **The registration deadline is Monday, May 1.** Please duplicate the registration form for each member and guest from your League area who will attend the Council.
- **Directions to the Unitarian Fellowship, the Agenda, Registration forms, and other information will be sent in April.**
- **Attention to Local League Presidents:** By April 15, please send an email report of your League's activities for the past year and plans for the coming year, if known, to Kathy Byrd. Please list at least one idea/activity/whatever that you think would be particularly helpful to other leagues, and maybe one that did not work out—and tell what you would do differently. Kathy's email address is kcburd@aol.com. **These ideas will be presented in the Council workbook provided to all preregistered Council attendees.**

For questions, contact Kathy at 205-758-2137 or kcburd@aol.com.

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THE LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS  
OF ALABAMA

