



**FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK
BY SCARLETT GADDY & LEONETTE SLAY**

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Alabama voters soon will be going to the polls to cast ballots in a number of state, Congressional, and local races. Despite many hours of work by LWVAL leaders and our partners at the University of Alabama, we were not able to facilitate a forum opportunity for the 2014 gubernatorial candidates to share their goals and vision with Alabama citizens. This was a disappointment for League members who helped organize successful, well-received debates four years ago and looked forward to providing a similar service this year. We owe Vice President Kathy Byrd a special thank you for her tireless liaison work with our partners and also in providing detailed "lessons learned" from 2010 for us to build on.

Our state Advocacy Committee, chaired by Anne Permaloff, has carefully analyzed proposed Constitutional amendments appearing on all November 4 Alabama ballots. Their analysis, with pros and cons, can be found on the LWVAL web site. Please share/FB/Tweet this link to all your contacts. Another new opportunity on the LWVAL home page contains information on Giving Tuesday, December 2. This provides us a chance to orient away from the consumerism of Black Friday and Cyber Monday and toward nonprofits that are involved in causes we care about. Please consider using our handy link to donate to LWV, which continues to be highly respected for nonpartisanship, thoughtful advocacy, and voter education.

**NO GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE IN 2014: DOES IT MATTER?
BY KATHRYN BYRD**

The *Anniston Star* recently published an article entitled "BEYOND DEBATE: This year's governor's race will be the first in 20 years without a debate. Does it matter?" The League of Women Voters of Alabama replies emphatically, "YES, IT DOES MATTER!" It wasn't supposed to happen that way. The LWVAL, in conjunction with Robert McCurley of the University of Alabama's Honors Program and members of the Student Government Association (SGA), offered to host a debate between the gubernatorial candidates on statewide television through the Center for Public Television and Radio. Hoping to accommodate the Governor's schedule, the governor's staff was informed

in the spring about the plan to sponsor a debate. A final proposal was submitted in September, the time at which Governor Bentley's campaign staff indicated the Governor would reveal if he would do a televised debate. Unfortunately, we were notified that the Governor's campaign staff declined the offer. We were surprised at the refusal because the Governor had previously participated in League debates as a candidate for the legislature and four years ago in the two gubernatorial debates presented live on public television and (continued on Page 3)

**SPECIAL DATES
TO REMEMBER:**

- **October 30: - Absentee ballot application deadline**
- **November 4—General Election**
- **December 15—Bill of Rights Day**
- **February 14—LWV Birthday, 95 years!**

WOMEN IN POLITICS BY HATTIE KAUFMAN

On Monday, Sept 15, 2014 League of Women Voters of Greater Tuscaloosa joined with Stillman College Women's Council, Tuscaloosa Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and Pickens County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. in presenting a community forum, "Women 2014: Politics, Power and Perceptions." The distinguished panel consisted of Councilwoman Cynthia Lee Almond, Tuscaloosa City Council; Councilwoman Sonya McKinstry, Tuscaloosa City Council; Ella Bell, Alabama State Board of Education; Hon. Merika Coleman-Evans, Ala-

bama State House of Representatives; and Hon. Elizabeth Hamner, Sixth Judicial Circuit Court. The panelists shared with the audience of over 150 people their stories of how they became involved in politics, the barriers they faced, their greatest successes, and their advice to young people interested in getting into politics. The enthusiasm and dedication of these women was evident and greatly appreciated. The forum was held at Stillman College, and a contingent of Stillman students, as well as a contingent of Scarlett Gaddy's students from Hillcrest High School joined the audience.



Moderator Hattie Kaufman



Women in Politics Panelists

GIVINGTUESDAY BY JEAN JOHNSON

Don't forget LWVAL on GivingTuesday, December 2. It is on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

Be sure to include the LWVAL Education Fund in your list of charities. Please be generous!

Or why wait? Give today at

<http://www.lwval.org/about/donate/>

BLACK FRIDAY. CYBER MONDAY.

#GIVINGTUESDAY

DECEMBER 2, 2014

www.givingtuesday.org

LEAGUES PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY BY SCARLETT GADDY

In advance of the upcoming mid-term elections, Leagues across the state conducted voter registration drives ensuring that citizens can exercise their right to vote. National Voter Registration Day is held in September each year to highlight the importance of voter registration. This year's event was on September 23rd and several Leagues in Alabama participated in the event, registering over 700 new voters in Alabama. Congratu-

lations are definitely in order to Mobile whose registrations exceeded 500. Great work Mobile! Much of Mobile's success can be attributed to their work in Mobile County's schools, through the Vote 18 program, which presents a history of suffrage and the opportunity to register at the time the program is presented. National sponsors of the NVRD event announced that over 71,572 new voters were registered by 7,680 volunteers. The League of Women Voters organization

wholeheartedly supports these efforts and our Leagues here in Alabama will continue to contribute their expertise and hard work to the project for the upcoming 2015 event. Many thanks to our Local Leagues for contributing to this year's National Voter Registration Day event.

GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE—CONT'D

radio from the campuses of The University of Alabama and Auburn University. We felt confident that he believed in the wisdom of the process.

In response to the *Anniston Star* article LWVAL Co-President Scarlett Gaddy commented, “The League has a well-deserved reputation of presenting fair debates asking timely questions on the issues of the day. It is very disappointing that there will be no gubernatorial debate this year. How especially disheartening for those voters who want to make up their minds for themselves by watching both candidates *in action* as they address the issues!”

“Both UA’s Student Government Association and Honors College were looking forward to creating student and public interest in the election process,” added Gaddy. It was planned that students would make up the majority of the audience. “The League is committed to stimulating interest in the political process and the issues of the day in our young people. They are our future leaders and constituents,” Gaddy concluded.

[Note: The above article is an adaptation of the LWVAL written response to the *Anniston Star’s* article. Regrettably, our response was not published.]



TRANSPARENCY GALA FUNDRAISER BY GINA FINNEGAN

Please plan to celebrate transparency in grand style with LWV-AL as we recognize Alabama political leaders who have been champions of open and inclusive government. The state League of Women Voters is planning a transparency gala to be held during our state conference in April or May of 2015 in the Auburn/Opelika area.

This fundraising event offers us the opportunity to really highlight the actions of those involved in

Alabama politics, on a local or state level, who toil to make our government inclusive and honest. Too often this work is not rewarded.

We are still in the planning stages, but we propose a Friday evening function, open to the public, that will offer cocktails, an enticing and expansive array of hors d’oeuvres, and a keynote speaker, in addition to the awards ceremony. Because this will be our first such affair, we will likely choose to honor more

than one individual. We aim to make this a fun and enjoyable event. If you would like to help, we would love to have you join the planning committee; please contact Gina Finnegan at ginaofinnegan@gmail.com or 251-656-0130.

AN ANALYSIS OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ON BALLOTS STATEWIDE IN ALABAMA GENERAL ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 4, 2014 (TAKEN FROM THE LWVAL WEBSITE)

In the general election on November 4, 2014, five proposed amendments to the Alabama state constitution will be on [every ballot in Alabama](#). The voter is asked, "Shall the following Amendment to the Constitution of Alabama be adopted?" followed by the "PROPOSED AMENDMENT WHICH APPLIES STATEWIDE."

The League of Women Voters presents here an analysis of each of these five proposed amendments. For each amendment, this paper presents the background of the amendment, a list of supporters and their argument for the amendment, and opponents and their arguments against the amendment. This analysis is a public service of the League of Women Voters of Alabama Education Fund. Every effort has been made to present factual and unbiased information regarding the amendments. We hope that you find this information helpful in deciding how you will vote on these amendment referendums on November 4.

Amendment 1

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, to prohibit the State of Alabama from giving full faith and credit to public acts, records, or judicial proceedings of another state that violate the public policy of the State of Alabama and to prohibit the application of foreign law in violation of rights guaranteed natural citizens by the United States and Alabama Constitutions, and the statutes, laws, and public policy thereof, but without application to business entities. (Proposed by Act 2013-269)

Yes ()

No ()

Background: Thirty-two or more state legislatures have had bills introduced that contain one or more of the provisions outlined in the proposed Alabama amendment. Early versions of the legislation specifically named Sharia law, but more recent legislation has focused the wording on foreign law in general. The Alabama amendment uses the foreign law reference, too. It exempts business entities from the impact of the amendment. It also seeks to prohibit full faith and credit of laws and actions taken in other states that conflict with Alabama public policy.

Trial courts have used international law for over two centuries. They have also considered the laws of other nations in their decision making as long as the laws do not conflict with existing public policy or the U.S. Constitution. The business exemption in the amendment is needed in order to maintain foreign companies investing in the state and to maintain contractual obligations. Trial courts, particularly family relations courts, take religious law is taken into consideration as long as they do not conflict with existing public policy. Prenuptial agreements, divorce, and child custody cases are just a few examples.

An amendment passed in Oklahoma specifically barring the use of Sharia law in all circumstances. A federal judge invalidated the Oklahoma amendment and blocked its implementation. The decision said the amendment violated the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment of freedom of religion provision. At the time of this writing the Oklahoma Attorney General is considering whether to appeal.

Amendment 2

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, as amended, relating to the Capital Improvement Trust Fund, to increase the amount of the General Obligation Bonds authorized herein; to provide for additional payments from the Alabama Trust Fund to fund any bond issued; to provide for competitive bidding of the bonds; and to provide for the distribution of the proceeds for plans, construction, and maintenance of Alabama National Guard armories. (Proposed by Act 2013-266)

Yes ()

No ()

Background: Passage of Amendment 2 would give the State new authority to borrow up to \$50 million from the Capital Improvement Trust Fund for the purpose of the planning, constructing, and maintaining National Guard armories. Matching funds from the Department of Defense are possible.

The funds would be raised by issuing bonds that must be repaid within 20 years. Alabama Trust Fund proceeds would be used to repay the bonds. The Legislative Fiscal Office estimates the potential cost to the Trust Fund to be \$3.7 million per years for 20 years.

The Alabama Trust Fund is funded by revenues generated by oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico. The recent economic downturn reduced revenues coming into the fund.

The Armory Commission of Alabama for Alabama National Guard armories would be in charge of fund distribution.

(Continued on page 5)

[CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS—CONT'D

Amendment 3

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, to provide that every citizen has a fundamental right to bear arms and that any restriction on this right would be subject to strict scrutiny; and to provide that no international treaty or law shall prohibit, limit, or otherwise interfere with a citizen's fundamental right to bear arms. (Proposed by Act 2013-267)

Yes ()

No ()

Background:

This and similar legislation introduced in other states is largely a defensive move in response to efforts by the United Nations to establish a legally enforceable Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to control illegal arms sales and thereby reduce war, terrorism, and other actions that destabilize nations. President Obama has given basic support to this effort, and in September 2013, the ATT was signed by Secretary of State John Kerry, but it has not yet been ratified by the senate. Over 100 nations have signed, but ratifications numbers are low so far.

Passage of this amendment would elevate gun ownership to the level of a fundamental right, and would mean that any attempts to establish curbs on that right would be subject to the highest level of scrutiny in the courts.

Amendment 4

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, to prohibit a general law, whose purpose or effect is to require a new or increased expenditure of at least \$50,000 of local funds annually, from becoming effective with regard to a city or county board of education without enactment by a 2/3 vote. (Proposed by Act 2014-185)

Yes ()

No ()

Background: The 2/3 voter requirement now exists for other governmental entities due to Amendment 621. The school boards would now operate under the same procedures. Other elements of Amendment 621 are also involved. (See Arguments for Amendment.)

Amendment 5

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, to amend Amendment 597, now appearing as Section 36.02 of the Official Recompilation of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, as amended, to clarify that the people have the right to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife subject to reasonable regulations that promote conservation and management of fish and wildlife and preserve the future of hunting and fishing. (Proposed by Act 2014-286)

Yes ()

No ()

Background: In recent years this amendment has been introduced in various forms in several state legislatures. One of its major supporters is the National Rifle Association which has supported it and other amendments (see proposed Amendment) as a way to place references that support the right to bear arms into state constitutions.

For detailed information on each amendment please visit our website, www.lwval.org/learn-vote/amendments2014.

THE TUSCALOOSA UPDATE BY SHARI AUGINS

The League of Women Voters of West Alabama is having a very busy fall. We were very fortunate to have two outstanding speakers at our September Lunch Meeting. Barbara Caddell, a member of the Mobile LWV gave a lively talk about the National Convention.. She told us about a new database for communicating and record keeping with social media, preparation for the LWV 100th Anniversary, and up-grade on the Vote411web site. She encouraged us to save now so that we will be able to send people to the National Convention in Washington D.C. in 2016.

Myra Evans, also a member of the Mobile LWV and the LWV Ruth S. Shur Fellows team, works to support state coaching teams in mentoring local Leagues in recruiting and engaging members and the community through the Membership and Leadership Development Program. She spoke to the members about the work that she is doing with the Shur Fellows team.

Voter registration is very important to our League. This fall we are focusing on registering eighteen year olds. To do this our volunteers are going to almost all of the high schools in Tuscaloosa City and County. We set up a table in or outside the lunch room, and try to grab as

many eligible young people as we can as they go to lunch. Those who do register are very proud of themselves and express an eagerness to vote in November.

But League of Women Voters of Greater Tuscaloosa is not all work and no play. One of our favorite activities occurs whenever a month has a fifth Tuesday as it did in September. Over thirty people, members and guests, gathered at a member's house for a pot luck dinner. Since we don't have an opportunity to socialize at our monthly meetings, we all appreciate the opportunity to get to know one another at these gatherings. It is also a wonderful time to invite prospective members. And indeed, we did have several people join at the event.



Registering voters at Tuscaloosa schools!



Members enjoying Tuscaloosa's Fifth Tuesday Event

Barbara Caddell sharing information about the national convention.



TECH TIPS FOR LEAGUES AND LEAGUERS BY JEAN JOHNSON

What Rocks the Millennials?

If you and your League are interested in capturing the attention of the younger generation, Frontline's "Generation Like" is a must see. The documentary reveals how "Millennials," (aka "Generation Y" born early 1980s to early 2000s), use social media and how industry uses that information to influence them.

<http://video.pbs.org/video/2365181302/>

Twitter Speak

Do you ever wonder what those abbreviations and acronyms in a tweet really mean? If it looks like Greek to you, check these resources.

Top Twitter Abbreviations You Need to Know
<http://www.socialmediatoday.com/content/top-twitter-abbreviations-you-need-know>

The Twitter Dictionary, aka Twittinary
<http://twittinary.com/>

Get Social with Alabama Leagues

Are you social? Get in touch with the Leagues in Alabama through these social networks and websites. You don't know what you're missing unless you "Like" these Facebook pages and "Follow" these Twitter accounts

LWVAL and Local Alabama FACEBOOK accounts

Please "like" these if you have a Facebook account. (If you don't have a Facebook account, consider opening one here.

<http://www.facebook.com>

LWV Alabama <https://www.facebook.com/LWVAL>

LWV Greater Birmingham <https://www.facebook.com/LWVGB>

LWV Montgomery <https://www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Montgomery-Alabama/256977891011723>

LWV Baldwin County <https://www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Baldwin-County-Alabama/448836761826261>

LWV Greater Tuscaloosa <https://www.facebook.com/LWVGreaterTuscaloosa>

LWV Mobile <https://www.facebook.com/LWVMobile>

LWV East Alabama <https://www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-East-Alabama-LWVEA/320133784750087>

LWVAL and Local Alabama TWITTER accounts

LWV Alabama: @LWVAL

<http://www.twitter.com/LWVAL>

LWV East Alabama: @LWVEastAL

<http://www.twitter.com/LWVEastAL>

LWV Greater Birmingham: @LWVGB

<http://www.twitter.com/LWVGB>

LWV Mobile: @MobileLWV

<http://www.twitter.com/MobileLWV>



LWVAL and Local League WEBSITES

(Note: Some Leagues use Facebook accounts rather than their website to keep the public and members informed.)

LWV Alabama: <http://www.lwval.org>

LWV Baldwin County: <http://www.lwvbaldwinco.org/>

LWV East Alabama: <http://www.lwv-eastalabama.org/>

LWV Greater Birmingham: <http://www.lwvgb.org>

LWV Greater Tuscaloosa: <http://www.lwvtuscaloosa.org/>

LWV Mobile: <http://www.lwv.org/local-league/lwv-mobile>

LWV Montgomery: <http://www.lwvmontgomery.org/>

A Live Online "Television Show"?

Yes, according to an intriguing interview on the Social Media Examiner podcast at <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/google-hangouts-what-marketers-need-to-know-to-get-started/>, a live online League "TV show" is not only possible, but it is also free. The show would be very similar to a webinar or videocast. However, this would be a live streaming show with up to ten interactive participants and an unlimited number of viewers. Teasers: Imagine interviewing a local or state official "on air" and taking questions live from nine other people or multiple people at nine remote locations. Or, imagine live streaming (broadcasting) your next important League meeting or forum. After the live presentation, a recording of the show could be available online – on your website, Facebook page, or blog. To accomplish this project, you will need a Google+ account, a Google On-Air account, and a YouTube account, but the good news is that they are all free!

Would your League be interested in testing a pilot show? Listen to the podcast linked above, and let's discuss. (Note: The podcast starts with a bit of a commercial. Skip forward to about the 6:30 mark where the interview of Brandee Sweesy, Google+ marketing expert, begins.) Contact Jean Johnson (jjohnson@lwval.org) if you're interested in pursuing this.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS OF ALABAMA**

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**LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®**

M A K I N G D E M O C R A C Y W O R K !



Officers 2013-2015

Scarlett Gaddy & Leonette Slay, Co-Presidents

Kathy Byrd, 1st Vice President

Laura Hill, Secretary

Lynne Richardson, Treasurer

Barbara Caddell, Director

Gina Finnegan, Director

Hattie Kaufman, Director

Joyce Lanning, Director

Anne Permaloff, Director

Jeanine Normand, Director

ABOUT THE LEAGUE

The League of Women Voters is a citizens' organization that has fought since 1920 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. We operate at national, state, and local levels through more than 800 state and local Leagues, in all 50 states as well as DC, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong.

League of Women Voters Mission Statement

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.

League of Women Voters Education Fund Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters Education Fund works to encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government to increase understanding of major public policy issues.