

LWVNC ADVOCACY COMMITTEE REPORT, June 16, 2007

PART I

GOALS:

- Empower all League members to be effective advocates with their elected officials
- Educate members on the legislative process and issues
- Prepare Leaguers for contact with their legislators in their home districts
- Engage members in the formation of public policy
- Encourage coalitions with other organizations which are working on related issues
- Increase visibility and the presence of the LWV at the Legislature
- Influence legislation related to LWVNC priorities.

FOUR PART PROGRAM:

Field Trips Mary Klenz led three Field Trips to the legislature for local Leagues during April. Orange/Durham/Chatham, Henderson, Dare and Currituck Leagues have attended. They were very productive meetings.

An Advocacy Committee The Advocacy Committee Point People met on April 17 to share with each other which bills each person would be following in this legislative session and to coordinate their efforts with Paula Wolf, the lobbyist. Subsequently, the Point People have been attending legislative meetings and sessions.

A lobbyist, Ms. Paula Wolf, League lobbyist, has been attending the committee meetings where our issues have been discussed and has been issuing a weekly email update and action alerts on our legislative priorities. Two hundred and ten people have signed up for the legislative updates.

Local League Visits with Legislators in their Home Districts Mary Klenz and June Kimmell met with Beverly Purdue on the Earned Income Tax Credit.

PART II

At State Convention in March 2007 the delegates voted on four Issues for Emphasis for 2007-09: tax reform, redistricting, moratorium on the death penalty and campaign and election reform. In addition the delegates voted to act on "other issues on which the League has a stated position as directed by the Board." The Advocacy Committee then formed with the following Point People:

- Tax Reform – Mary Klenz
- Redistricting – Jan Richmond
- Death Penalty Moratorium – Sara Stealy
- Campaign and Election Reform – Louise Romanow

- Aging Issues – Joan Robertson
- Natural Resources/Environmental Quality – Jeri Gray.

All of the information below has been supplied by Paula Wolf, the League Lobbyist, or by the Point People and is up-to-date as of June 12, 2007.

TAX REFORM

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC) SB 955 and HB 6

Legislators are negotiating a budget and tax plan now. Proposals are on the table for a *non-refundable* state EITC. The House budget included a 5% EITC. The Senate did not include an EITC in its budget plans and is resistant to one.

2007 STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL MODERNIZATION STUDY COMMITTEE

“The Governor, Speaker of the House and President of the Senate appointed members to this committee. It has been meeting for about six months. There are 5 subcommittees that have met on the topics of the NC Income tax, sales tax, local tax options, infrastructure and program responsibilities. June Kimmel and Mary Klenz and others have observed several meetings of the full committee and subcommittees. There is some thought that it will be 2009 before some of the major reforms are approved but they will involve major changes in NC’s Tax code.” Quoted from Mary Klenz’ Advocacy Report

CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION REFORM

For these topics we work with the NC Voters for Clean Elections and the Same Day Registration (SDR) Coalition.

H-91-REGISTRATION & VOTING AT ONE-STOP SITES would allow a person to go to an early voting site during the early voting period, show proper ID, fill out the registration form, and vote -- all on the same day. This bill is scheduled to be heard in the Senate but will most likely not be heard this week.

The House bill to expand North Carolina's public financing program to a limited number of Council of State seats ([HB-1517](#)) is in the House Election Law and Campaign Finance Reform Committee. Eight of the 16 members on this committee are co-sponsors of HB-1517, so the bill faces good chances of success. If it passes Election Law it will be referred to House Appropriations.

The NC House passed [HB-483](#) "Chapel Hill Campaign Options," 65-51 in late May. The bill would allow Chapel Hill to institute a campaign public financing system for its 2009 and 2011 town elections and if passed would make Chapel Hill the first municipality in North Carolina to receive state authorization for a local campaign public financing program. The bill will now go to the Senate, where its been referred to the Committee on State & Local government.

An instant run-off ballot will probably be piloted in Cary in 2008. LWV members and others met with Bob Hall to evaluate possible ballots.

"Voter-Owned Elections" Lobby Day 2007

NC Voters for Clean Elections is sponsoring its annual 'Voter-Owned Elections' Lobby Day Tuesday, June 19th at the General Assembly in Raleigh. The campaign

finance reform advocacy coalition is working to create an alternative to the politics of 'pay to play'--which is skewed against the public interest--in favor of a cleaner system of elections. Their alternative would give the public more 'ownership' over elections by offering candidates who demonstrate community support and who agree to strict fundraising limits a public grant to run their campaigns. The system would reduce the impact of big-moneyed special interest groups on public policy and give qualified candidates who don't have access to wealth a chance to competitively run for office. They have several bills that are making great traction in the legislature right now, and you could help them in their efforts by attending their lobby day June 19th.

9:30-11am - Morning briefing in ClamBake room of the Clarion Hotel (320 Hillsborough Street)
11am - Press Conference, Legislative Bldg.
12-1pm - Lunch in 1100 court of Legislative Bldg.
10am-2pm - Meetings with Legislators!

REDISTRICTING No bills/action.

DEATH PENALTY MORATORIUM

HB 784-EXECUTION/CHANGE AGE was ratified and sent to the Governor on June 7th. This bill amends the NC first degree murder statute to conform with a US Supreme Court ruling that the execution of a defendant who was under eighteen years of age at the time of the murder is unconstitutional.

NATURAL RESOURCES/ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Report to LWV-NC Advocacy Committee on environmental issues. By Jeri Gray (4/2007)

Many environment-related bills, perhaps scores, have been introduced in the General Assembly. Since LWV-NC is a member of the Conservation Network, I get regular reports from ConNet on environmental legislation. ConNet follows a subset of bills based on priorities selected by the Watershed Alliance, and, based on our broad positions for action, I have selected some of the bills for League attention.

S 765 The Governor's Budget 2007 (same as H708) Our interest here is in a fee increase to support more inspectors for the state erosion and sedimentation control program.

The Conservation Network and its partners will be focusing on improvement of the state's erosion and sedimentation control program, hog farm issues (waste management, moratorium and Smithfield Packing request to expand), and Interbasin Transfer.

AGING ISSUES

Joan Robertson has been attending the meeting of the NC Coalition on Aging as the representative of the League.