



Why We Need The Equal Rights Amendment

We need the ERA because:

... **WE DO NOT HAVE IT YET.** The only Constitutional right that specifically affirms equality of men and women is the right to vote.

... **THE EQUAL PROTECTION CLAUSE OF THE 14TH AMENDMENT HAS NEVER BEEN INTERPRETED TO GUARANTEE EQUAL RIGHTS IN THE SAME WAY THE ERA WOULD.**

... **WE NEED ITS PROTECTION AGAINST A ROLL-BACK OF RECENT ADVANCES IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS OVER THE PAST HALF CENTURY.**

... **OTHERWISE WOMEN WILL HAVE TO CONTINUE LONG, EXPENSIVE, AND DIFFICULT LEGAL BATTLES TO ENSURE THAT THEIR RIGHTS ARE CONSTITUTIONALLY EQUAL TO THOSE OF MEN.**

... **WE NEED A CLEARER AND STRICTER JUDICIAL STANDARD FOR DECIDING CASES OF SEX DISCRIMINATION. SEX DISCRIMINATION SHOULD GET THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF STRICT JUDICIAL SCRUTINY JUST AS RACE DISCRIMINATION DOES.**

... **IT WILL IMPROVE THE STANDING OF THE UNITED STATES GLOBALLY. MANY COUNTRIES WITH NEWLY-MINTED CONSTITUTIONS AFFIRM LEGAL EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN.**

— Excerpts from ERA Task Force
(www.equalrightsamendments.org)
National Council
of Women's Organizations

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*League of Women Voters
of Champaign County*

The 2014 political season is over — a good time to take stock of League's contributions and collaborations with other like-minded organizations that made the efforts so successful. Thanks, volunteers, for making everything work!

First, the candidates forum/debate done with long-time partners *The News-Gazette*, NAACP, and *WILL*. While candidates shied away from this great opportunity to introduce themselves and their purpose for running, AAUW and our student unit pitched in to assist with ushering and collecting questions to make the process go smoothly. **Business and Professional Women** borrowed our DVD of the September meeting — a presentation on the Champaign school referendum — to educate themselves on this important tax question.

The **Champaign-Urbana Junior League** approached LWVCC about co-producing an *Election Resource Guide for C-U*. This guide identifies election year services — including websites — on the local, state, and national level. It neither mentions nor endorses candidates, giving the guide a long life span. **Junior League** also invited me to woman a resource table prior to their October meeting. I took a wonderful brochure from **LWVIL** with information about the numerous ballot referenda and League's position on each.

LWVCC was also one of six co-sponsors of the October AAUW meeting regarding the ERA and the three-state strategy to approve the amendment in Illinois soon. Others lending their name and support were: the **Women's Resource Center**, **YWCA-UI**, **NOW-UIUC**, and **PDA**. Hooray for League! Hooray for Women!

Sincerely,

Barbara Wysocki
LWVCC President

League Charter School Study Ending In November

At their 1 p.m. Nov. 18 monthly meeting at Clark-Lindsey Village, LWVCC members will be asked to come to consensus on a set of questions provided by the state League on the current Charter School position.

The Charter School study committee, which has met twice in October, will be meeting several more times before the November 18 consensus meeting to continue studying the issue and plan the best way to present the topic and the questions to the membership at that time. The results of this consensus meeting are due to the state League by January and will be reported in the December/January **Voter**.

The consensus questions center on accountability, transparency and funding: topics pertinent to the changed nature of charter schools, most particularly in Chicago, since 1997.

The committee hopes that a large number of members are in attendance on November 18.

Three pieces of information that will help prepare you for the meeting:

- What is a charter school? (article below. For complete definition, see **LWVIL prepared document Frequently Asked Questions about Charter Schools, July 24, 2014.**
- ILWVIL's current position on charter schools (article below)
- Video of a Charter School Panel discussion hosted by the League of Women Voters Oak Park/River Forest (9/10/14). View on the Internet at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oX-OvdZeNv4> or search for **Charter School Study Panel Discussion** on www.youtube.com

Position In Brief: Charter Schools 2001

The League of Women Voters of Illinois believes that:

- The Illinois State Board of Education should continue to monitor the progress of existing charters before supporting expansion, specifically looking for improvement in individual student test scores and achievement of the specific goals stated in the school's charter.
- Charters should be established by local school boards, with adequate provisions for public education and participation in the decision making process.
- An appeal process to the State Board of Education should remain in place as an option for charters who have been denied by their local school boards.

While we feel that advantages of charters largely outweigh the disadvantages, we have identified the following areas of concern:

- School funding. Charters do nothing to address the issue of equitable and adequate funding of education, including special education.
- Financial impact on underlying school districts, especially smaller districts. Charters place financial pressure on smaller districts by drawing money out of the traditional public schools.
- Privatization and profit-making. The LWVIL opposes the presence of private, for-profit companies in the governance of public education, as there could be a conflict between the interests of shareholders in the corporation and the citizens of the state.

LWVIL has also identified areas of opportunity resulting from charter schools:

- Innovation. Charters have a mandate to share innovations in teaching methods, curricula and standards of assessment for all stakeholders.
- Increased parental choice and involvement within the public school system.

What Is A Charter School? (Partial Definition)

A charter school shall be a public, nonsectarian, nonreligious, non-home based, and non-profit school. A charter school shall be organized and operated as a nonprofit corporation or other discrete, legal, nonprofit entity authorized under the laws of the State of Illinois. **(105 ILCS 5/ Art. 27A-5(a))**

NOTE: While in Illinois the charter is held by a nonprofit corporation, that body can hire a for profit management organization to run the school. In other states, there are for-profit charter holders.

A certified charter shall constitute a binding contract and agreement between the charter school and a local school board. The charter may not waive or release the charter school from the State goals, standards, and assessments... **(105 ILCS 5/ Art. 27A-6(a) (b))**

A proposal to establish a charter school shall be submitted to the State Board and the local school board in the form of a proposed contract entered into between the local school board and the governing body of a proposed charter school. **(105 ILCS 5/ Art. 27A-7)**

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Membership Form – League of Women Voters of Champaign County

****RENEW ONLINE! www.lwvchampaigncounty.org****

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Zip: _____

Preferred Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Include this email address in the League Membership Directory? YES NO (please circle one)

Please circle the type of 1 year membership: Individual Dues* \$65.00 #New Individual Dues \$32.50
Student Dues* \$5.00 Household Dues* \$97.50 #New Household Dues \$48.75

Dues for new members, for one year, are half the amount paid by continuing members.

* Dues and donations are not tax deductible as charitable contributions from your federal income tax return. You may, however, make a tax deductible contribution to the Education Fund (of LWVCC) by writing a separate check made payable to "LWVIL Education Fund". Please include "Champaign County" on the memo line of your check to the Education Fund.

Please make checks payable to LWVCC, and mail to: Kat Bork 1508 Greenridge Drive, Urbana, Illinois 61802

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

KIM DEGIACOMO — Our Student Intern last year is now working with **Teach for America** in a contract school in Chicago. She writes: "... my school has a contract with CPS [Chicago Public Schools]. It is an alternative school serving students 16-21 years old and is run by a corporation. We run on the CPS calendar, serve CPS lunches, etc., but is a lot more structured than CPS schools. I love my school.

I am working with the LWV in my neighborhood to spread information about the upcoming elections to my students! It has been awesome to continue working with the League!"

HILARY ALLEN — Our current student intern will be leav-

ing the UI at the end of the first semester to experience Brazil in an immersion program. In her absence, **KARI GIBSON**, the vice-president of the student unit will assume the internship during the second semester. Kari is from Monticello. She and some other members of the student unit will be our guests at the Jan. 20 meeting to give us a recap of the first semester's activities and the plans for second semester.

KAT BORK — one of our newer members and now our Membership Manager – successfully passed the Bar Exam in July! On Nov. 6, Kat was officially sworn in as an attorney at a ceremony in Springfield. Now she can hang out her shingle as a lawyer. Nice going!

LWVCC Board - 2014-2015

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Do you have friends or acquaintances who might be interested in the League? Email Kat Bork at katdenbk@gmail.com or phone her at (217)840-0450 with names and addresses and we will send them *the Voter* for the next three months.

What Is A Charter School?

(Continued from Page 2)

NOTE: *In other states, charters may be issued by entities other than school boards, including universities and nonprofits.*

The governing body of a charter school shall be subject to the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act. (105 ILCS 5/ Art. 27A-5(c))

For a complete definition, see the LWVIL prepared document "Frequently Asked Questions about Charter Schools," July 24, 2014.

NOVEMBER 2014 — JANUARY 2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

LWVCC GENERAL MEETING

WHEN: Tuesday, Nov. 18

TIME: 1—3 p.m.

WHERE: Clark-Lindsey Village

TOPIC: Local Consensus Meeting

Re: Charter Schools

LWVCC BOARD MEETING

WHEN: Tuesday, Nov. 25

TIME: 9 a.m.

WHERE: 108 W. Holmes, Urbana

NO GENERAL LEAGUE MEETING IN DECEMBER

LWVCC BOARD MEETING

WHEN: Tuesday, Dec. 16

TIME: 9 a.m.

WHERE: 2013 Silver Ct. W. Urbana

NO NEWSLETTER UNTIL EARLY JANUARY, 2015

[HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY SEASON!]

LWVCC GENERAL MEETING

WHEN: Tuesday, January 20, 2015

TIME: TBA

WHERE: TBA

TOPIC: Social/Meet The New Student Intern

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VOTER CONTINUES MOVE TOWARD E-NEWSLETTER

We hope you have enjoyed receiving access to the **Voter** newsletter electronically before your paper copy arrives. Please note, however, that the paper version is not being discontinued. You will continue to receive a paper copy. In the next few months we will allow you to choose the method you receive the newsletter: electronically, on paper or both!

If you do not want to receive your newsletter via e-mail, contact Margaret Olson at olson@shout.net and you will be removed from this list.

Next month you will again receive an e-mail with a link to the online newsletter. We will also include the newsletter as a PDF attachment to the e-mail for those of you who prefer to read it that way. In the future, we will also provide the option to remove your name from the paper newsletter mailing list so you will no longer receive the paper copy.

If you have any questions or comments about this process, please feel free to contact our webmaster, Corrie Proksa, at webmaster@lwwchampaign-county.org.



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League of Women Voters of Champaign County

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www.lwwchampaigncounty.org