



The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

# The Voter The Voter

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## Table Talk Adopts Consensus on State Early Childhood Issues

By Kathy Utz

Members who attended the December Table Topic meeting were able to participate in the development of the Leagues state's consensus on Early Care and Education. A copy of the state study, "Early Care and Education of Young Children Birth to Five" was included in the fall edition of the LWV Voter.

An educational system that is financially challenged in seeking to live up to our state's mandate to provide effective education for the traditional age groups covered by our public schools is now being asked to take on more responsibility. The need for early education has become a matter of public focus. Scientific studies show that "from the time of conception to the first day of kindergarten, development proceeds at a pace exceeding that of any subsequent stage of life."

The State study provided an overview of the many and diverse programs that now provide help for children from birth to 5. They are limited, however, in terms of the number of children in this age group who can be reached due to financial constraints

Our consensus response to State League on the question of what should be funded by the State of Washington follows: For children from birth to 3 home visiting and special needs programs should be fully funded, with partial funding for programs provided by family, friends and neighbors. For children between 3 and 5, partial funding should be provided for child care, programs for parents and quality improvement initiatives. The group consensus was "Yes" to including early care and education in Washington State's basic education funding formula and "Yes" we should support public-private partnerships as a means of expanding the early care system.

We submitted our statement in time to meet the deadline of Dec. 8, 2009. The results of studies authorized by the Legislature on this subject are expected to be submitted in December. Having a consensus statement will allow League to play an active role in the review process.

Thanks to the effort of Marilyn Perkins, we had informative presentations by Stephanie Tinsky and Karen Pharaoh, principals in ECEAP, on the subject of early childhood education at our Christmas party. ECEAP is a comprehensive pre-kindergarten program. It has been housed by the Kennewick School District since the 1980's and similar programs, on a smaller scale, are now available in Pasco and Richland.

The speakers from ECEAP said that they were interested in community involvement and assistance with their program. If you are interested in volunteering, please call Marilyn for contact information.

### A Message from Our President Ginger Vetrano

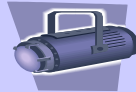
With winter in full swing, we still have many issues that should warm our hearts. By the time you read this, a group of us will have met with our District 8 legislators to talk about their and our priorities. Those issues will be a good subject for January's Table Talk. That will give us time to discuss where priorities clash or meld. The other big issue we have to discuss is the National Popular Vote project — how to make electing a president based on how the people voted rather than the electoral votes. Doing away with the Electoral College means a Constitutional change. There are ideas on how to do it without changing the Constitution. Let's talk about it.

LWV of Benton Franklin County

Working for a Better Future

Working for a Better Future

## Member Spotlight : Leona Hassing Board Member



By Leona Hassing

I joined League in 2001 when Sharon Ferrigano, asked me if I was interested. For many years I had the thought about joining but the thought remained in the back of my mind but when she asked I said, "Yes, I think I will." And I have not been sorry since.



I am a true Washingtonian. I was born in Goldendale and attended a small country school near there with grades 1-8 and only three teachers. From there I went to Goldendale High where I graduated in a class of 97 students. After graduation, I headed for WSU, with thoughts of becoming a County Extension Agent or Elementary School Teacher. Growing up in a rural, agricultural community, 4-H was popular, I had many projects. including livestock, cooking and sewing. The summer between high school graduation and entering WSU, I went to Washington DC on a 4-H sponsored trip.

After my first year at WSU, I started leaning toward Education. In 1971, I graduated with a BA in Elementary Education; in 1979 I received a Masters in Education degree.

My student teaching experience was at Marcus Whitman Elementary in Richland in fifth grade. It was an enjoyable 18 weeks (1/2 semester). That next fall, I was hired in Pasco to teach 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I remained in Pasco 32 years, retiring in 2003.

I have always been active and involved in groups including the Teachers Union, school committees, political party campaigns, and many service clubs. Later, I got the traveling bug and enjoyed foreign ports. International conventions took me to Taipei, Taiwan and Montreal, Canada. Pleasure trips took me to the Eiffel Tower, the Kremlin, the Greek Isles, north to Alaska, Argentina — the homeland of Evita, "Downunder" to Australia and New Zealand and many other destinations. I wish I could say I have traveled to all seven continents, but that's still on my "Bucket List"

I continue my involvement in service clubs, political campaigns, traveling and whatever else comes along at this stage of my life. League is a priority.



### *January Calendar*

**January 8th** Table Talk Alice Bryant's 2408 Alexander, Richland, 5:30 Soup and Salad Dinner (\$3.00 Donation), **Program** Report on Meeting with Legislators, National Voter Compact, State Program Plans.

**January 14th** Health Care Study Group 6:00 Kathy Utz's 2320 Benton, Richland

**January 22nd** Business and Planning Meeting Lampson Building, Kennewick

**January 27th** Climate Change/Energy Study Group 6:30 Kathy Utz's 2320 Benton, Richland

*Welcome 2009!*



## Health Care Study Group To Meet

For members interested in our healthcare overhaul study, there will be an introductory meeting on Wednesday, January 14th at 6:00pm at the home of Kathy Utz, 2320 Benton Ave., Richland. Kathy's number is 375-1852. Snacks will be provided. We will view a PBS Frontline program "What it is like to be sick around the World". Our commentator takes us to five countries and examines their health care systems. Discussion to follow. Call Susan Kayser, Healthcare Committee Chair, at 375-0641 with questions.

## Observer Corps Reports

Starting this month reports from member of our observer corps will be included with The Voter. This is a great program which has received positive press for our League.

## *Climate/Energy Study Group to Meet*

There will be a showing of a DVD from a PBS program entitled "Global Warming" on Tuesday January 27 at 6:30 P.M. at the home of Kathy Utz (2320 Benton Ave.). Ellyn Murphy, Chair for our climate study group and member of the National Task Force on this subject, will be leading this meeting. Members interested in studying the issues surrounding Climate Change and Energy should plan on attending. Please call Ellyn, Veda or Kathy to let them know your plans. Veda Guynes, chair of our local study of Energy, will also be in attendance. Both Ellyn and Veda agree that these two issues need to be considered together.