



VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR DEMOCRACY

**IN 2006, SAY "YES" TO FAIRNESS,
INDEPENDENCE and EQUAL JUSTICE**

This box will appear on your 2005 Income Tax Form; if you file electronically, similar information will appear on your software.

N.C. Public Campaign Financing Fund

This Fund pays for a nonpartisan voter guide and helps fund judicial candidates who accept strict fund-raising and spending limits. Do you agree that \$3 should go to this Fund? Filling in a circle will not increase or decrease your tax or reduce your refund.

<u>You</u>	<u>Your Spouse</u>
Yes 0	Yes 0
No 0	No 0

By saying "Yes", you will:

- * Be able to designate \$3 of the money you have already paid to support a fair and equal justice system.
- * Get a nonpartisan voter guide that helps you cast an informed vote.
- * Give all candidates, regardless of their personal wealth, a chance to run a fair and effective campaign
- * Help keep special-interest money out of our court system.

AND REMIND YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO SAY YES, TOO!

2004 STATE SUPREME COURT ELECTIONS ACROSS AMERICA DRIVEN BY SPECIAL INTEREST PRESSURE - BUT NORTH CAROLINA BUCKS TREND - SAYS NEW REPORT FROM JUSTICE AT STAKE CAMPAIGN

A perfect storm of hardball TV ads, millions in campaign contributions and bare-knuckled special interest politics is descending on a rapidly growing number of Supreme Court campaigns, but North Carolina's innovative reforms have protected its state appellate court races, according to a major new report from the *Justice at Stake Campaign* and its partners, the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law and the Institute for Money in State Politics.

"North Carolina's appellate court election system has become the envy of many states that suffer from costly and negative campaigns", said Bert Brandenburg, executive director of the *Justice at Stake Campaign*. "North Carolina
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NC LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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YOUR ELECTRONIC NC VOTER

JOIN THE CROWD. A number of members have signed up to receive the NC Voter electronically instead of receiving a paper copy.

Costs for the NC Voter are a large part of the annual budget, so every reduction in the number of paper copies that have to be printed and mailed is a saving to the League.

Save the trees, save the postage and minimize paper build-up in your house; call or email Betty Ellerbee and join the E-NCVoter Corps! 1.800.851.8683 or lwwnc@mindspring.com



2006 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

HB1566 SB 1042

VOTER-OWNED ELECTIONS FOR COUNCIL OF STATE RACES

Public financing of Council of State races is needed. This legislation, when passed, would create a public financing or "Voter-Owned Elections" option for candidates for Council of State races, excluding Governor and Lt. Governor. Beginning in 2008, races affected would include: Attorney General, Auditor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Commissioner of Labor, Commissioner of Insurance, and Superintendent of Public Instruction.

SB 539

JUDICIAL CAMPAIGN REFORM "FIX-IT" LEGISLATION

North Carolina has the strongest judicial campaign reform law in the country. However, some technical changes were made: the fund is now called the "NC Campaign Fund", and a \$50 fee will be included as a mandatory charge for attorneys in their Privilege License Fee. This successful legislation got off to a strong start in 2004; now we have to make sure that the system continues to work and is fully funded for future elections.

HB 851

SAME-DAY VOTER REGISTRATION

North Carolina ranks in the bottom 10 nationally in voter turnout. Voter participation numbers are lowest among young and low-income voters. Same-day registration legislation would allow voter registration to take place during

early voting periods (up until the Friday before Election Day) in North Carolina. Currently, the registration deadline in North Carolina is 25 days before the election. Many voters do not realize until after the current voter registration deadline that they are NOT currently registered due to change of address. This legislation could help to ease the need for provisional ballots to be cast on election day.

NEW LOBBY LAW

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 2007

Disclosure: Lobbyists will file monthly expenditure reports. Executive Branch spending will be filed quarterly.

Good will lobbying loophole closed: Reportable expenditures redefined to capture all expenditures above \$10.00 for direct or indirect lobbying.

Gift Registry: Legislators can place their name on a No Gift Registry to be maintained by the Secretary of State.

Cooling off Period: Lawmakers, Council or State elected officials, and state agency heads may not engage in lobbying within six months after the end of their term or separation of their employment.

HB 433

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

A bill to create a state earned income tax credit. Offers those who file a federal EITC a state tax refundable credit up to 10% of their federal credit.

TAX MODERNIZATION

NC, like many other states, is in need of modernizing its tax code to better reflect the shift from an industrial to a service economy. Many fear that without this change the state will continue to be unable to generate adequate revenue to fund needed services. The LWVNC will be following this issue. *For information:* Peg Chapin, 704-846-2540, ehchapin@aol.com.

NC LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

NC BUCKS TREND, JUSTICE AT STAKE REPORTS

Continued from page 1

is the only state where candidates have access to full public financing, and where voters receive a judicial voter guide in the mail to help them make an informed choice when voting for appellate judges. North Carolina is way ahead of the rest of America.”

The study compared the source of contributions to North Carolina Supreme Court candidates from 2002 to 2004. It found that contributions from attorneys fell from 40 percent in 2002 to 11 percent in 2004, and that 64 percent of all money raised by high court candidates in 2004 came from the public fund. North Carolina is the only state in the nation with a full system of public financing for judicial candidates.

Among the key findings nationally

- An estimated \$24.4 million was spent on TV ads in state high court races, obliterating the previous record of \$10.6 million set in 2000, and TV ads in high court campaigns ran in 4 out of 5 states in 2004, up from 1 in 5 in 2000.
- Of the 22 states that use head-to-head elections to choose members of their Supreme Court, nine states broke combined candidate fundraising records. Two candidates in one record-setting race in Illinois combined to raise over \$9.3 million, more than candidates in 18 of last year's U.S. Senate races.
- State Supreme Court elections attracted record sums from business interests, a reflection of the importance of state courts in setting corporate damage payments.

For the first time since these records have been tracked, business contributions outpaced those from the legal community.

Interest groups are bringing the culture wars into state court elections by demanding “positions” on hot-button social issues from state court candidates.

Television advertising has become a major weapon for groups doing battle over state high courts. In 2004, 17 interest groups in six states spent roughly \$7.4 million on television ads accounting for about 30% of all spending on TV in these races. Money plays a major role in determining who wins Supreme Court races in the states. Winning candidates who raised money averaged \$651,586, a whopping 45 percent increase in the average cost of winning since 2002.

The *Justice at Stake Campaign* is a non-partisan organization working to keep the courts fair and impartial. The League of Women Voters Judicial Independence Project is a partner. More about the *Justice At Stake Campaign* and this complete report is available by calling 202-588-9454 or at www.justiceatstake.org.

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE SESSION HELD IN GREENSBORO, NOVEMBER 12.

League members and friends from Guilford, Union, Moore, Orange, Chatham, Wake and Durham counties attended the second in a series of three leadership development workshops in Greensboro on Saturday, November 12th. The workshop was hosted by the LWV of Piedmont Triad.

Henderson LWV President Lee Luebbe facilitated a session of “Building a Better Board (Beginning with the Nominating Committee)”. Most agreed that the Nominating Committee is one committee that does not get the attention it deserves but, in fact, is a key to developing leaders, diversity and community outreach.

In the session, participants discussed strategies to develop and support the Nominating Committee and make it an integral part of League development. This session built upon the first workshop which was held in August at Lake Junaluska for Leagues in the western part of North Carolina. A third workshop on the topic is scheduled for the LWVNC Council on March 24-26th in Wilmington.

The second session for the day, “Getting Your Message Out” was facilitated by June Kimmel and Mary Klenz, LWVNC Board members. This session was also presented at the August workshops and is part of a leadership development program that the LWVNC and Democracy NC have sponsored for several years.

Comments by attendees such as “Building a Board was wonderful and made me think more about diversity” and suggestions for other topics will help shape future workshops.

Thank you to the LWV of Piedmont Triad for arranging for the meeting room and Trudy Whitacre for the coffee and homemade rolls.

For information and suggestions on future programs contact Mary Klenz, Vice President, 704-542-9858 or klenzm@bellsouth.net.

NC LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

PLANS SHAPING UP FOR STATEWIDE MEETING/COUNCIL 2006, MARCH 24-26

This year the State Board and its planning committee wish to emphasize that our upcoming Council meeting, held every other year, will be an event that is informative, instructive and fun. They encourage all League members in the state to attend for the planned activities.

Yes, we will have a brief business meeting but the other sessions will offer help and insights for all members of Leagues whether the League is a long time established one or a recently formed League. We are planning for some excellent speakers as well. Then, of course, there will be time to enjoy the beach or breathe the river air in charming Wilmington. We hope it will become a tradition for all members to try to attend this STATEWIDE LWV-NC MEETING.

"... AN EVENT THAT IS INFORMATIVE, INSTRUCTIVE AND FUN"

We have scheduled the Council in Wilmington for a two night period to allow a good weekend trip to enjoy the beach and river environment. The Wilmington Hilton offers us rates of \$109/night per double room in a lovely modern facility. Registration materials and publicity will be coming in January and it is hoped a good carload from each League will be able to come.

And the dates, chosen to avoid the May/June crunch, are March 24 – 26, 2006. The League of the Lower Cape Fear is looking forward to seeing you there. Audrey Albrecht, President, LWV Lower Cape Fear

AND THE QUESTION IS, WHAT LEAGUE

- members may have the best opportunities for ocean views of anywhere in the state?
- was formed in 1985?
- recently changed its name?
- [is the site for the 2006 NC Council?](#)
- recently had two issues forums: "The Sewer System: Problems and Solutions," and "Landfills: the Impact on YOU."
- includes four coastal counties?
- has the name of a river in its name?
- spotlighted diversity in new members: minorities, men, those under fifty?
- meets in a local boutique restaurant? (Temptations, by name.)
- has traditionally planned and executed two to three Civics 101 programs each year?

AND THE ANSWER WOULD BE . . . **LWV of the Lower Cape Fear**, serving Brunswick, New Hanover, Onslow and Pender Counties. In addition, we worked or helped with five different candidate forums for municipal elections and will be organizing for the Spring Statewide Meeting and Council to be held in March. We have a committed membership of approximately sixty with several new members, unfortunately offset with some non-renewing members. We continue to try to encourage diversity in our membership.

FIELD TRIP TO THE LEGISLATURE

Join League members from other counties on WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

10 a.m. - Meet in the Legislative building on Jones Street – 1300 Lobby for
- orientation to the Legislature and building
- update on LWVNC priorities for 2006 session
- plans for Lobby Corps

12 noon – Lunch in legislative cafeteria with possible speaker.

1 p.m. – Attend the Revenue Laws Study Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Paul Luebke and Sen. John Kerr.

This is a good opportunity to invite other interested friends and/or potential Leaguers. For more information, contact Mary Klensz at klenzm@bellsouth.net or Judie Burke at philjudi2@earthlink.net.

CIVICS 101-JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

A number of Leagues around our state have applied for and received a grant from the State League to host programs on the North Carolina Judiciary. There is grant money left for other Leagues to try this. The advantages of doing this program are several. Your League gets exposure in the community as an educational entity. The employees in the judicial system are appreciative and helpful. There are other organizations in your communities with which you can partner in this endeavor, and that might help in other League projects later on, (e.g., your library or your local bar association). If your League is interested, please e-mail Carole Ellis at Cellis3@bellsouth.net and let her know of your interest and your questions.

NC LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

THANKS TO ALL WHO GAVE

4,042 results of the 2005 Annual Fund Drive are in!
THANK YOU:

Citizen Education Foundation - \$1247
CEF Endowment Development Fund - \$1500
Annual Fund - \$1295

Your generosity has been outstanding in the climate of disasters and emergencies we have all been asked to support. **THANK YOU AGAIN!** Our work across North Carolina will truly be enriched because of your gifts, and our links with local Leagues and state wide educational efforts will be strengthened.

The Endowment Development Fund is growing – now over \$33,000 and invested for our future. A committee of past presidents will be meeting shortly to develop strategies for goals and a timetable to reach our first \$100,000. Some have already made pledges of \$1000 each year for 5 years. Helen Pratt, recently deceased, was the first to complete her pledge. She is an inspiration to others. A spring event will be forthcoming to celebrate the Fund's beginning with Diana Phillips and the continued efforts of others to reach our goal.

We welcome your suggestions (and always your gifts!) as we work to realize our dream of financial stability for the future. It is always the "right time" to give to this Fund – to recognize outstanding Leaguers, as bequests, for birthday or anniversary "gifts", and with tax refunds. Checks should be payable to LWVNC-CEF with the notation Endowment Development Fund. Send to LWVNC, 3801 Barrett Drive, Suite 204, Raleigh, NC 27609-7214. Gifts for the other funds are also greatly appreciated. Lee Evans

HELEN DEITZ PRATT 1922 –2005

Helen Pratt passed away on November 13, 2005 at the Forest at Duke in Durham. Helen had been a member of the League in Durham since 1966. Prior to that she had been a League member in Columbus, Ohio for many years.

Helen was intensely interested in government and worked tirelessly for citizen education and voting rights. She served on the Board of the Durham League; she opened her home for League meetings, and she researched many areas for League studies. She served on the State Board and was an original contributor to the League Endowment Fund. Helen will be greatly missed by all who knew her. Helen is survived by her sister, Mrs. Louise Crawford, 120 E. 90th Street, Apt.14-E, New York, New York 10128.

THE PEOPLE SPEAK, 2005 A SUCCESS

Between September 1 and November 30, 2005, more than 13,000 events called *The People Speak, 2005* were held in all fifty states and thirty-eight countries. Sponsored for the third year by a group of nonpartisan organizations, including the League of Women Voters, and initiated by the United Nations Association, the program's intent is to bring together diverse citizens, groups and organizations to discuss issues of international importance in open and civil exchanges. The theme for 2005 was "Building a Safer World: Defining the US-UN Relationship for the 21st Century".

In our own state, twenty-five events were held including two by our Leagues. LWV Pitt County League, co-sponsored with the East Carolina University Sociology Dept., and with the help of the ECU Alpha Kappa Delta Honor Society and the ECU Undergraduate Sociological Society, presented a forum to discuss the issues of poverty, hunger and health and how the US and UN relationship impacts those problems. Nearly fifty people attended. The Orange, Durham and Chatham League with co-sponsor UNA-USA West Triangle Association held an event in Chapel Hill attended by nearly one hundred people who discussed the same issues as the Pitt County League event had. Judie Burke, our state president, moderated the forum.

Congratulations to LWV PC and LWV ODC on their successful events.

THE ISSUE OF PRESIDENTIAL PUBLIC FINANCING

The following very brief excerpt is from an appearance on Capitol Hill on Dec. 9, 2005 by League President Kay Maxwell. The full speech may be viewed at LWVUS.org

"Today we once again face significant challenges to our political system. The 2000 presidential election caused many to question the basic mechanics and fairness of our election systems, from voting machines, to voter registration, from unfair purging to partisan administration of elections.

Americans have said time and time again that special interest groups have too much influence over Washington. They want the average citizen to have just as much say in who becomes President as large corporations, lobbying organizations and wealthy donors. Our system belongs in the hands of its rightful owners – the American voters, and the League will continue to do its part, both at the grassroots level and nationally, to see that it happens."

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2006 COUNCIL WILL BE MARCH 24 - 26 IN WILMINGTON



CONNECT WITH OTHER LEAGUE MEMBERS, HEAR
INTERESTING SPEAKERS, ATTEND
INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS; ENJOY THE
BEAUTIFUL BEACH AND RIVER SIGHTS AND
SOUNDS.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation of citizens in their government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership is open to all women and men who are age 18 years or older and are U.S citizens. Check out the membership information at www.lwvnc.org or email lwvnc@mindspring.com; call 800 851 VOTE or 919 783 5995. Activities are funded through membership fees and donations. If you would like to help fund this important work, please send a donation to: LWVNC, 3801 Barrett Dr., Suite 104, Raleigh, NC 27609-7224. Checks should be made out to LWVNC. Donations to our Education Fund are tax exempt and checks for the Fund should be made out to LWVNC CEF.