



League of Women Voters of Haverford  
Township Newsletter

Written by Kate deRiel

April, 2012

Greetings and Happy Spring!

**Be sure to check our website for photos and information:** [www.lwvhaverfordtwp.org](http://www.lwvhaverfordtwp.org). Thanks to Cathy Yungmann for creating this for us!

**Redistricting**– This is both a state issue and a local one for Haverford Twp. You may have read about the new plan to split the Township, moving Wards 1 and 9 to a district in Upper Darby. Every ten years, the new census data is supposed to be used to redistrict in PA (and every other state). New lines should be drawn only if the population numbers more than 61,000 per district. Our population is about 55,000, so the plan was objected to by local citizens, by the commissioners, and by our representative, Greg Vitali. On January 23, 2012, the state Supreme Court threw out the new map and all the changes! This was the first time for the court to go against the political divisions since 1968. So it's back to the drawing board -- stay tuned! There won't be time to redraw the district borders before the primary in April.

**Billboards** – Lynne Caldarone has been closely watching the legal arguments and presentations at Township zoning board meetings. BIG has lost the request for the oversized electronic billboards, but they will probably appeal the Zoning Board decisions.

**Voter ID** – A bill calling for photo IDs for all voters in PA has passed the House and the Senate. The PA LWV has taken a stand against this bill, as it would make voting impossible for any resident who doesn't have a driver's license, is disabled, has no car to get him or her to the photo license center, and would cost the state more than \$13,000,000. With less than 4 cases of voter fraud in PA in the last 10 years, fraud didn't seem like a big issue that would need to inconvenience millions of citizens to obtain some photo identification in order to vote. However, that will now be for the courts to decide. For the primary, photo ids will not be required when you go to vote but you may be asked to show one.

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**USLWV positions:**

**Federal government and public schools.** We reached consensus on this issue and it is now a LWV position.

**Privatization** of some governmental assets, such as prisons and highways. We will be studying the use of government property and assets, and look at what is gained or lost by turning some of them over to private contractors, such as privately-run prisons and highways run by for-profit companies. We value your input as we study this important issue. Our meeting will be on April 19<sup>th</sup> at the Quadrangle (see calendar)

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**2012 LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS and answers from Greg Vitali (answers in bold)**

1. The need for campaign finance reform becomes increasingly apparent as we contrast public opinion and the proposed action of political officials – specifically regarding education vouchers and Marcellus Shale issues. What will you do to limit and clearly disclose the amount of special interest money that moves into campaigns, as well as gifts, for those seeking to be or serving as elected officials in our Commonwealth? **I support a total lobbyist gift ban and also support full penny disclosure if elected officials accept lobbyist gifts. I filed amendment number A04164 to HB965 that would put contribution limits on those**

running in statewide elections. The limits would be \$5,000 per person for statewide seats and \$1,000 per person for candidates seeking a seat in the General Assembly.

2. Increased consideration is being given to privatizing the resources and services of Pennsylvanians. This includes leasing public lands for drilling, leasing our turnpike, selling the State liquor stores, and privatizing prisons and schools. Why do you believe or question that such actions are in the interest of the public good? (Follow up.) Should such matters be submitted to public referenda? **I do not support privatizing state stores. I do not support leasing of any state transportation infrastructure assets including the turnpike. I have offered amendment number A06496 to HB3 that would guarantee that Commonwealth transportation infrastructure assets could not be leased without the approval of the General Assembly. I have also introduced HB150, which would put a three year moratorium on any new leasing of State forest land for Marcellus drilling.**
3. Many legislative initiatives have been proposed regarding public education. What are the three most important things you would enact to improve K-12 public schools in Pennsylvania?
  1. **Restore the over \$800 million in state funding for basic education that was cut in last year's budget. This has led to the elimination of important education programs and the elimination of an estimated 14,000 school employees through layoffs, furloughs and attrition. Included in these funding cuts were the Accountability Block Grant programs that provided \$259 million in funding for early childhood education and full day kindergarten.**
  2. **There is no conclusive independent research demonstrating that either charter schools or vouchers are systematically more effective than traditional public schools in improving student achievement. State education policy should be focused upon identifying, replicating and disseminating data-driven best practices that have been shown to be effective in improving student achievement and learning among our students who are living in high poverty districts.**
  3. **We should continue to identify and remove unfunded mandates that place a burden on our school districts, school boards and taxpayers.**
4. Citizens have expressed concerns that they believe their elected officials are not doing enough to protect the people - their air, water and land. What is your response to this concern? **I think they are absolutely right. I have introduced legislation that would protect the natural resources of Pennsylvania. HB33 would put into place a drilling tax of 5.9% on natural gas extraction and 1/3 of the revenue would fund the Environmental Stewardship Fund. HB150 would put a three year moratorium on any further state forest leasing for Marcellus gas drilling. HB1211 would require 2-mile spacing between Marcellus well pads. HB213 would require the Department of Environmental Protection to do three things:
  - Collect and publish information on air pollution emissions from Marcellus Drilling.
  - Require air pollution permits for Marcellus wellhead area emissions.
  - Increase air permit fees to help fund the DEP air pollution control program.**

5. Where do you stand on Voter ID? **I oppose voter ID, and voted against HB934 both in the House State Government Committee and when it was before the full House. There is little evidence of in-person fraud and the bill will only disenfranchise seniors and economically disadvantaged Pennsylvania residents who are less likely to have a photo ID.**

6. If you had a magic wand, what legislative priorities would you like to see signed by the Governor this year?

**Marcellus Shale Drilling Tax-HB33**

**Increasing Alternative Energy Standards Portfolio (AEPS)-HB80 of 2010-2011 session**

**Increasing funding for Public Education**

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## 2012 LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW ANSWERS from Senator Daylin Leach

(Same questions as those above)

1. **I believe we must do all we can to get money out of our political process. I am currently drafting legislation to provide for publically funded campaigns in Pennsylvania, and I support Sen. Costa's proposal to limit how much can be contributed by individuals to candidates.**
2. **As a legislator I get to see the positive benefit of government on the lives of individual Pennsylvanians and their families on a daily basis. I believe that public assets - land, roads, prisons, schools, etc. - are best managed by a government that is**

efficiently run and accountable to the people who created it. Accordingly, as a general rule, I support keeping public resources public.

3. First and foremost we must change the way we fund public education in Pennsylvania. Too often the quality of education provided by a school district is limited by the value of property in the neighborhood. The result is that the areas with the greatest need tend to be the areas with the least means. I support increasing the state share of education to its historical 50% level. This alone will not fix some problems in our schools, but it will greatly increase the means of each school district to educate young Pennsylvanians, and give each of them the opportunity to fulfill their potential and live out their dreams. Next, I would increase funding for world language study in our public schools. Finally, I believe we must focus on improving student safety in our public schools.
4. I think this is a legitimate concern, we have a very explicit environmental protection clause in the Pennsylvania Constitution and yet our policies show a reckless disregard for preserving our natural resources for our children. We need to immediately implement regulations on the Marcellus Shale gas companies to prevent the contamination of our water, harm to our citizens and the degradation of our environment.
5. Voter ID is not yet enacted and is currently in the Appropriations Committee of the Senate. I am very opposed to this piece of legislation. At its least pernicious it is a solution in search of a problem. We have had less than ten cases of voter fraud in PA in the last decade and none of them would have been stopped by this legislation. Most were cases where people legitimately believed they were eligible to vote but were not, it was not even attempted fraud, simply mistaken eligibility. At its most pernicious it is a systematic attempt to disenfranchise voters. Approximately 700,000 PA voters do not have a photo ID and would be unable to vote under HB 934. These voters are disproportionately senior citizens, young people and minorities. In addition to the moral implications of preventing citizens from voting, the costs are rather high for the prevention of a non-existent problem. \$11 million would need to be spent to implement this wrongheaded policy.
6. My magic wand would be used to prevent Governor Corbett from signing and implementing many of the policies his administration has been pushing. Backwards policies such as vouchers, the backend referendum, and dramatically decreased state funding would destroy our promise of quality public education for our kids. Voter ID laws, gerrymandering and a plan to alter the Electoral College would fundamentally unbalance our democratic process in favor of one party. The complete lack of regulation, taxation and supervision of the Marcellus Shale play would jeopardize our natural resources and the health of our citizens. My magic wand will have to be busy over the coming year to stop these policies, but I believe it is the best use of my allotted pixie dust.

If there is any left over, I would have Governor Corbett sign my bill (SB423) to end the death penalty in PA. It is an inaccurate and broken government program that is costing us millions and is wrongfully dealing out irrevocable punishment. We should be better than that as a society.

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The LWVUS now has a position on the Federal Role in Public Education! The LWVUS Board approved a new Education position at its March 2012 meeting. The position is based on responses received from the 377 Leagues across the country that participated in the Education Study. The position states that "the League of Women Voters believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12. A quality public education is essential for a strong, viable and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right." Thanks to the many local and state Leagues and ILOs that held meetings, involved their communities, and worked to reach consensus on this critical issue of importance to all Americans.

On Tuesday, April 10, 2012 at noon, the Radnor LWV will welcome Amanda Holt to talk about her redrawing of the voting districts in PA at the Overbrook Country Club, Godfrey Road, Bryn Mawr. The cost is \$20, payable in advance, by reservation only. RSVP by April 7<sup>th</sup> to Susan Smith, 1 Wistar Road, Villanova, PA 19085

Our League will hold a consensus meeting on the topic from the National League, privatization of public services. This should be an interesting and informative meeting first to understand the issues of privatization

and second to reach consensus on our own opinions. The results will be sent to the LWVUS along with those from Leagues around the country. All members of the League are urged to attend and participate in this grass roots process! It will be held at the Quadrangle on April 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m.

**Voters Guides:** The Voters Guides for the April primary will be available in the April 11<sup>th</sup> News of Delaware County and also at the Township building, the Library, the Quadrangle, and the Senior Center at Brookline School. Thanks go to Rosemary Kesling!

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### League Calendar:

April 9	Commissioners' Meeting
April 10	Amanda Holt on redistricting – Overbrook CC 12 noon
April 19	Consensus on privatization for LWV members at the Quadrangle, 7:30 p.m.
May 7	LWV Board Meeting, Genevieve Berner's house, 7:30 p.m.
June 3	Township Heritage Festival, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. (LWV will have a table)
June 8 - 12	National LWV convention, Washington, DC
June ??	LWV Haverford Township Annual Meeting – to be announced