

REPORT TO LWV WILMETTE BOARD - CONVENTION 2010 ATLANTA

First of all, thank you for sending me to this convention. I learned a lot and came back enthused and inspired. There were many opportunities to look back at the history of the League because of the 90th anniversary and it is remarkable how much has been accomplished.

It was my first convention so I cannot attest to this personally but several people told me this was an extremely “activist” convention in that the rank and file attendees proposed and approved quite a few actions, sometimes against the wishes of the board.

I attended all the plenary sessions, two workshops and three caucuses as well as the banquet.

I have copies of the official “Report of Convention Action” for each day and will bring those with me to the board meeting.

Here, in condensed form, is what was approved:

1. Study of the Federal Role in Public Education (Board recommended)
2. Study of impact of privatization of Government services (Not Board recommended)
3. A concurrence to amend and update the Arms Control position (Board recommended) - scope amended to cover non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction; oppose explosive testing of nuclear weapons; cover transfer between non governmental entities; support bilateral non-proliferation negotiations; maintain open lines of communication with everyone and strengthen international laws, oversight and engagement.
4. A concurrence to support marriage equality by extending civil marriage and benefits to all while respecting the right of religious organizations not to perform same sex marriage ceremonies or recognize same sex marriage. (Not Board recommended)
5. A concurrence to support a National Popular Vote Compact as an interim measure to overcome the Electoral College until a Constitutional Amendment is passed. (Not Board recommended)

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6. A resolution to ask the Federal Government to lift Cuba travel restrictions for Americans (Proposed from the floor)
7. A resolution to ask the Federal Government to augment regulations covering mining and drilling to improve safety and environmental controls (Proposed from the floor)
8. A resolution to encourage a change in Senate rules to limit the use of the filibuster (Proposed from the floor)
9. A resolution to add Transparency to the list of attributes for fair elections (Proposed from the floor)
10. A resolution to continue to push for Medicare for all i.e. a single payer health care system (Proposed from the floor)
11. A resolution to urge the Federal government to ensure BP and related corporations are held responsible for covering the costs of the oil gusher in the Gulf and that all Federal and State resources are immediately mobilized to try to minimize the impact of the disaster. (Proposed from the floor)

Workshops and Caucuses

One of the workshops I attended outlined some innovative and highly successful programs undertaken by various Leagues. These were under the auspices of the Leagues new membership development initiative which they plan to roll out to all 50 states over the next couple of years. This was really an inspiring workshop and I look forward to sharing some of the details with you at the next board meeting.

The other workshop I went to dealt with leadership development in the League. Some of the ideas were interesting but I think we are already doing some of what they discussed. The key takeaway from this was their recommendation on how the nominating committee should function. A link to a great resource "The Little Green Book" is at:

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=For_Members&CONTENTID=13644&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm

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The caucus on responding to the Citizens United decision with a push for a constitutional amendment was also interesting, particularly as various attendees shared their personal experiences pushing for the ERA.

A caucus sponsored by the Glenview League on sustainable and healthy food was interesting in that they are in the early stages of their work and it was informative to see how these issues “get off the ground” in the League world.

A healthcare caucus seemed enthusiastic but less focused than I would have liked to see.

Other matters

A new board was elected. Elizabeth McNamara of Atlanta took over as League President.

Speeches by civil rights leader and current Congressman John Lewis and Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sibelius were well received. A panel of past League Presidents talked about the things they focused on during their respective terms as President. This was one of the highlights of the entire 4 days.

Thank you,

Lali Watt

Board member, LWV Wilmette