



LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS®

# The Lexington Voter December 2015

The League of Women Voters of Lexington

## 2015—Year in Review

**The end of a calendar year is always a good time to review work accomplished to see if we are, indeed, an active, contributing organization. Here is what the record for the Lexington LWV looks like for 2015:**

- Participated in two League days at the legislature, observing and lobbying
- Sponsored a movie night— “*Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot*”
- Held two Brunch/Dinner and Democracy events with speakers Charles Lanter (LFUCG Director of Homeless Services) and George Schuhmann (member of the national LWV Money in Politics Committee)
- Hosted for the KY League of Women Voters, a very successful weekend at Shakertown
- Registered voters at two naturalization ceremonies, as well as other public events
- Book club read: *My Beloved World* by Sonia Sotomayor, *A Fighting Chance* by Elizabeth Warren, *The Underground Girls of Kabul* by Jenny Nordberg, *Corporations Are Not People* by Jeffrey D. Clements, *The Empire of Necessity* by Greg Grandin, *The Roberts Court* by Marcia Coyle, *The Greater Journey*, *Americans in Paris* by David McCullough, *Founding Sisters and the Nineteenth Amendment* by Eleanor Clifton, *Being Nixon: A Man Divided* by Evan Thomas,
- Acted as volunteer docents for the traveling exhibit commemorating the 300th anniversary of the Magna Carta
- Published and updated the Blue Sheet of contact information for elected public officials
- Entertained with a second annual wine and cheese membership reception (this year at Equus Winery)
- Offered annual high school essay contest, this time attracting participants from the English as a Second Language program
- Held the annual membership meeting with Linda Gorton, former vice-mayor of Lexington, as the guest speaker
- Participated in two studies for action by the national League of Women Voters by coming to consensus responses on *Constitutional Amendment* and *Money in Politics*
- Participated in a televised debate between candidates for the office of lieutenant governor sponsored by KY LWV, WKVT and WLKY
- Participated in a televised debate between candidates for the office of governor sponsored by KY LWV, WKVT, WLKY and Eastern Kentucky University.
- Participated in the 9th annual Peace Fair at the Bluegrass Community and Technical College
- Were a contributing sponsor for the UK Martin School of Public Policy and Administration Voting Rights symposium
- In addition, many members regularly participate in the Christian Muslim Dialogues, Central Kentucky Peace and Justice events, and events sponsored by the Kentuckians for the Commonwealth.

**Yes, it has been a busy and productive year! If you are a LWV member and have not recently—or even ever—participated in some activity of the League, make your first New Year’s resolution now. Mark your calendar for the SAT., JAN. 9, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING at TATES CREEK CHRISTIAN CHURCH, 3150 TATES CREEK RD., to plan League activities for the 2016-17 year.**

**REMEMBER—YOU ARE THE LEAGUE!**



## Lexington LWV Consensus on Money in Politics Study

On Saturday, November 14, Lexington LWV members met to consider the study questions for the national LWV study on Money in Politics. In order to update the League's position on campaign finance, local leagues were asked to come to consensus on answers to these questions. Here are the answers agreed to by members who came to the central branch of the Lexington Public Library.

### **PART I. Democratic Values and Interests with Respect to Financing Political Campaigns**

#### **Question I. What should be the goals and purposes of campaign finance regulation?**

- a. Seek political equality for all citizens.  
 **Agree**    Disagree    No consensus
- b. Protect representative democracy from being distorted by big spending in election campaigns.  
 **Agree**    Disagree    No consensus
- c. Enable candidates to compete equitably for public office.  
 **Agree**    Disagree    No consensus
- d. Ensure that candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public.  
 Agree    **Disagree**    No consensus

**OUR COMMENT: Candidates should be able to demonstrate some minimal level of public support before assurance of sufficient funding. We think we should keep the issue of public financing separate from finance regulations.**

- e. Ensure that economic and corporate interests are part of election dialogue.  
 Agree    **Disagree**    No consensus
- f. Provide voters sufficient information about candidates and campaign issues to make informed choices.  
 **Agree**    Disagree    No consensus
- g. Ensure the public's right to know who is using money to influence elections.  
 **Agree**    Disagree    No consensus
- h. Combat corruption and undue influence in government.  
 **Agree**    Disagree    No consensus

#### **2. Evaluate whether the following activities are types of political corruption:**

- a. Candidate or officeholder agrees to vote or work in favor of a donor's interests in exchange for a campaign contribution.  
 **Agree**    Disagree    No consensus
- b. An officeholder or her/his staff gives greater access to donors.  
 **Agree**    Disagree    No consensus
- c. An officeholder votes or works to support policies that reflect the preferences of individuals or organizations in order to attract contributions from them.  
 **Agree**    Disagree    No consensus
- d. An office holder seeks political contributions implying that there will be retribution unless a donation is given.  
 **Agree**    Disagree    No consensus
- e. The results of the political process consistently favor the interests of significant campaign contributors.  
 **Agree**    Disagree    No consensus

### **PART II. First Amendment Protections for Speakers and Activities in Political Campaigns**

#### **1. Many different individuals and organizations use a variety of methods to communicate their views to voters in candidate elections. Should spending to influence an election by any of the following be limited? (Please respond to each item.)**

- a. Individual citizens, including wealthy individuals like George Soros and the Koch Brothers.  
 Spending banned    **Some spending limits**    Unlimited spending    No consensus
- b. Political Action Committees, sponsored by an organization, such as the League of Conservation Voters, Chevron, the American Bankers Association, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), whose campaign spending comes from contributions by individuals associated with the sponsoring organization, such as employees, stockholders, members and volunteers.  
 Spending banned    **Some spending limits**    Unlimited spending    No consensus
- c. For-profit organizations, like Exxon, Ben and Jerry's, General Motors, and Starbucks, from their corporate treasury funds.  
 **Spending banned**    Some spending limits    Unlimited spending    No consensus
- d. Trade associations, like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Wind Energy Association, and the American Petroleum Institute, from the association's general treasury funds.  
 **Spending banned**    Some spending limits    Unlimited spending    No consensus
- e. Labor unions, like the United Autoworkers and Service Employees International, from the union's general treasury funds.  
 **Spending banned**    Some spending limits    Unlimited spending    No consensus

**OUR COMMENT: If these groups want to influence candidate elections, they should create a PAC and be transparent with these funds.**

- f. Non-profit organizations, like the Sierra Club, Wisconsin Right to Life, Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, American Crossroads, and Priorities USA, from the organization's general treasury funds.  
 **Spending banned**    Some spending limits    Unlimited spending    No consensus
- g. Non-partisan voter registration and GOTV (get out the vote) organizations and activities, like the LWV and Nonprofit Vote.  
 Spending banned    Some spending limits    **Unlimited spending**    No consensus

**OUR COMMENT: Non-partisan groups should not be working to influence elections. Perhaps we need rules to be sure they are non-partisan. We weren't sure this question belongs here.**

*Continued on Page 3.*

*Continuation of questions for Money in Politics Study)*

h. Political parties, like the Republicans, Libertarians, and Democrats.

- Spending banned **X Some spending limits**  
 Unlimited spending  No consensus

i. Candidates for public office spending money the candidate has raised from contributors.

- Spending banned **X Some spending limits**  
 Unlimited spending  No consensus

j. Candidates for public office spending their own money.

- Spending banned **X Some spending limits**  
 Unlimited spending  No consensus

**2. The press plays a major role in candidate elections through editorial endorsements, news coverage, and other communications directly to the public that are often important to the outcome. Should such spending to influence an election by any of the following be limited?**

a. Newspapers, like the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal.

- Spending banned  Some spending limits  
 Unlimited spending **X No consensus**

b. Television and other electronic media, like Fox News, CNN, MSNBC and CBS.

- Spending banned  Some spending limits  
 Unlimited spending **X No consensus**

**OUR COMMENT: If radio and TV were required to provide equal time to candidates, we would not limit spending.**

c. Internet communications, like Huffington Post, Breitbart, Daily Kos, and individual bloggers.

- Spending banned  Some spending limits  
 Unlimited spending **X No consensus**

**OUR OPTIONAL COMMENTS (250 word limit):**

c. We don't know how internet communications could be regulated.

**PART III QUESTIONS: *Methods for Regulating Campaign Finance to Protect the Democratic Process***

**In order to achieve the goals for campaign finance regulation, should the League support?**

a. Abolishing SuperPACs and spending coordinated or directed by candidates, other than a candidate's own single campaign committee.

- X Agree**  Disagree  No consensus

b. Restrictions on direct donations and bundling by lobbyists? (Restrictions may include monetary limits as well as other regulations.)

c. Public funding for candidates? Should the League support: (*You may respond to more than one item in Question 1 c.*)

i. Voluntary public financing of elections where candidates who choose to participate must also abide by reasonable spending limits?

- Agree **X Disagree**  No consensus

ii. Mandatory public financing of elections where candidates must participate and abide by reasonable spending limits?

- X Agree**  Disagree  No consensus

iii. Public financing without spending limits on candidates?

- Agree **X Disagree**  No consensus

**How should campaign finance regulations be administered and enforced?** (*You may choose more than one response for Question 2.*)

a. By an even-numbered commission with equal representation by the two major political parties to ensure partisan fairness (current Federal Election Commission [FEC] structure)?

**X b. By an odd-numbered commission with at least one independent or nonpartisan commissioner to ensure decisions can be made in case of partisan deadlock?**

**X c. By structural and budget changes to the FEC (e.g., commission appointments, staffing, security, budget, decision making process) that would allow the agency to function effectively and meet its legislative and regulatory mandates.**

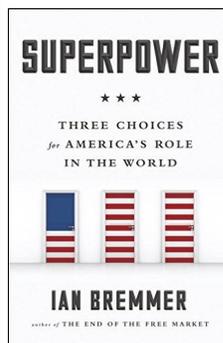
d. No consensus.

**OPTIONAL COMMENTS (250 word limit):**

**Commission must have non-partisan staff.**

**Committee must not be dominated by any one party.**

### LWV Book Club Takes on *Super Power*



The book for the **January 19** meeting of the LWV book club is *Superpower: Three Choices for America's Role in the World* by Ian Bremmer. Bremmer theorizes that America can be one of three forces—Independent America, Moneyball America, or Indispensable America.

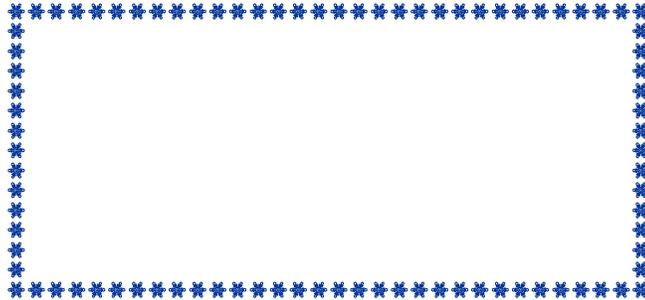
Come to Terry Naydan's house, 3013 Charleston Gardens Blvd. at **1:30 p.m.** to discuss these options.

**The VOTER now goes on winter break with a wish for...**



**and tolerable weather! The next issue will come out the end of January with information about the February 13 general meeting. Watch your email and/or the website for news until then.**

**The VOTER editor is Judy Johnson. If you have a question or concern about the newsletter please contact her at [judydex@twc.com](mailto:judydex@twc.com).**



Return Service Requested

Lexington League of Women Voters  
PO Box 22045  
Lexington KY 40522



## Calendar

LWV of Lexington Website: [www.lwvlexington.com](http://www.lwvlexington.com)

Phone: 859-494-3203      Email: [lexingtonlwv@gmail.com](mailto:lexingtonlwv@gmail.com)

Facebook: League of Women Voters of Lexington, KY

**NOTE:** Board meetings are open to all MEMBERS; programs are open to the public.

Sat.. Jan. 9 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Lexington LWV Board Retreat at Tates Creek Christian Church, 3150 Tates Creek

**Sat.. Jan. 9, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. LEXINGTON LWV PLANNING MEETING AT TATES CREEK CHRISTIAN CHURCH, 3150 TATES CREEK Rd.**

Tues. Jan. 19 at 1:30 p.m. LWV Book Club at Terry Naydan's house, 3013 Charleston Gardens Blvd.

Thurs. Jan. 21 at 6:30 p.m. LWV Board Meeting, Faith House, at Faith Lutheran Church, 1000 Tates Creek

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