

Twp of Ocean League of Women Voters Meeting

January 30, 2013
Home of the Curtises

ATTENDING:

Marie Curtis	Peggy Dellinger	Dallas Grove	Bill Madden
Don Curtis	Ted Dellinger	Robert Grove	Sally Madden

DISCUSSION and DECISIONS:

Citizen's Guide

- Don moved to order 50 copies, Bill seconded.
- *Discussion:* We will give copies to guests on "Facts and Issues" program, members, and the subject matter experts in Town Hall who were interviewed for the update of *Know your Town*.

LWVNJ Convention

- Saturday, May 4 in West Windsor.
- Will ask if Sue Sferas is able to represent us

Callathon

- Agreed to participate. Will call our own members, as in the past. Will pass information on to Sue.

ILO update (Marie)

- Fundraiser: March 7. Dinner and theater (\$40); Call the Curtises for tickets 732-222-8675
- Human Trafficking Program: April 25, Brookdale Community College

Website/Know your Town (KYT) (Ted)

- Ted will add the Hudson Reports to the website
- Know Your Town update 95% complete, Will continue to add and refine content
- Peggy will draft a marketing plan for our March meeting
- Peggy will draft a letter to subject matter experts interviewed for KYT for team to deliver with Citizen's Guide

Observer Corp Report (Bill and Sally): January Council Workshop and Public Meetings

- Residents from Peachtree and Branch Roads attended Council meetings to express concern about flooding along Whalepond Brook. Dredging is scheduled, to start at Takanassee Lake and work westward. More immediate relief to Oakhurst residents is under consideration using a Mosquito Control Permit.
- The Army Corps of Engineers' plan for a retention pond and 15' berm on Joe Palaia Park is still under consideration to alleviate flooding along Poplar Brook. We met with Andrew Brennan two years ago on the topic and offered our support for what we thought was an alternative plan, At the time, the focus was on flooding at Poplar Village. The alternative plan was to secure a FEMA grant to remove the buildings along the brook. Our League wrote Sen. Menendez and Rep. Pallone urging their support of the grant. The grant was awarded and the buildings razed. Bill will call Andrew in March to request time to meet with us for an update.

LWVUS Coaching Program and our own future plans (Sally)

- Sally reported on her participation as a coach in the LWVUS program designed to boost local League effectiveness in the areas of membership and leadership. She testified to the success of the techniques and suggested that our League might consider participation in the program. The fundamental issue is our vision (or lack thereof) for the future of our League.
- LWVTO members will come to our March meeting prepared to discuss our vision of our growth and future and our participation in the LWVUS coaching program.

State Program (Robert)

After discussion, we reaffirmed all the state League positions. We offered comments on “Office of Lieutenant Governor” (retain position to allow us to influence the formalization of the role and to address the issues of succession) and “Smart Growth” (concern about changes to the state Development/Redevelopment Plan that make our support of it inconsistent with the principles laid out in the rest of the position). **Peggy to submit the Response Form to LWVNJ February 14 and post our responses on our lwvto.org website.**

Questions came up in the discussion of the state League Education positions on 1) the use of public funds for transportation and textbooks for non-public schools, and; 2) the authority of a single municipality to veto a school regionalization plan. **Robert agreed to research the League position more deeply and send a clarification to the members attending the meeting under separate cover. [HIS RESEARCH IS ATTACHED TO THIS DOCUMENT.]**

Next Meeting: 6:30, Wednesday, March 13, at the Groves (Ted will lead the meeting)

[SEE PAGES 3 -5 below for Robert’s clarification of the questions we had on state positions]

There are no specific references to textbook or transportation issues in the LWV positions. I think that textbooks and transportation are too granular a level.

The following are references of various NJ laws on the subjects:

1. THE NEW JERSEY NONPUBLIC SCHOOL TEXTBOOK LAW

N.J.S.A. 18A: 58-37.1 et seq.

The New Jersey Nonpublic School Textbook Law requires the board of education in each public school district in New Jersey with state funds to purchase and loan textbooks, upon individual request, to all students attending a nonpublic school located in the public school district. The students are enrolled full-time in grades kindergarten through twelve in a nonpublic school in New Jersey which complies with compulsory school attendance requirements and with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

.Nonpublic School. means an elementary or secondary school within the State other than a public school

.Textbook. means books, workbooks or manuals, whether bound or in loose-leaf form; or electronic textbooks including but not limited to: computer software, computer-assisted instruction, interactive videodisc and other computer courseware and magnetic media, intended as a principal source of study material for a given class or group of students, which is available for the individual use of each pupil in such class or group.

Computer software must be prepared educational programs which are subject-oriented and for student instruction. Under textbooks, the following materials are excluded:

1. Reference materials - encyclopedias, almanacs, atlases and general special purpose dictionaries, of which the student does not have individual use.

2. Supplementary materials - supplementary books, magazines newspapers and audiovisual materials normally housed in the school library.

3. Other Materials - tests and testing materials, teachers' editions of textbooks and review books, computers (hardware), computer software materials such as blank disks or tapes or cassettes, computer chips, consoles (hardware), computer correction devices and cassette recorders

Education Funding Report

Similar to security aid, the SFRA defines a two part transportation aid formula, which includes a calculation for regular students and one for special education students. For each regular and special education student, the SFRA describes a base per-pupil amount in addition to a per-mile average distance to school amount.

Charter School Transportation Procedures

The district in which the student resides shall provide transportation or aid in lieu of transportation to eligible charter school students in accordance with *N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1 et. seq.* and *N.J.A.C. 6A:27-3.1.*

LWV position:

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey has a half-century history of support for public education.

- We oppose allowing established private and parochial schools to obtain a charter.*
- We oppose any charter school that promotes a specific ethnic theme.*
- We believe that the State Board of Education must develop special regulations relating to student enrollment for any charter school located within a school district that has a court-ordered desegregation plan.*
- We support close monitoring of for-profit corporations' involvement in charter schools*

We also support state funding of transportation to charter schools

There was some discussion on the role of smaller school districts in decision making with respect to mergers. The LWV position is to respect the rights of local districts, regardless of size to have a say in any merger activity.

School District Regionalization – 2007 (Excerpts from LWV position)

As long as the constitutional right to equal access to educational opportunities is not abridged, the League of Women Voters believes that the final decision on regionalizing school districts should lie with the citizens in the affected districts.

Initiation of such consideration should come primarily from local school boards or their citizens, secondarily from the county or state

The law provides that the Commissioner of Education has the authority, in extreme cases, to form regional districts without the concurrence of the local districts involved. However, the League feels that the local districts should have the option of choosing between potential benefits and disadvantages of its organizational structure

Lack of direct citizen participation in the governance of the education of their students in nonoperating and sending districts, the tax inequities inherent in non-operating districts, a possible lack of continuity of education in non K-12 district, and racial imbalance in the schools are problems of concern to the League. However, it does not feel K-12 regionalization should be mandated for their solution

The question about tenure is resolved with a more complete quote for the LWV which includes teachers.

Tenure – 1982

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey believes that changes in the present system of tenure are essential. It believes that tenure should be retained for teachers but that modifications to both laws and procedures are necessary. Superintendents and principals should be removed from the coverage of tenure; provisions should be made for them to be covered by multi-year contracts.

The most important modifications needed are those that will strengthen the evaluation process for both probationary and tenured teachers. The League supports measures that will expedite the dismissal process, making it less burdensome and more equitable. It also recommends a reexamination of seniority regulations as they apply to reductions in force.