

News From *Your* State League

Update from LWVNYS

November 2007

State League Resources

The LWVNYS State Board Report comes out in August, October, December, February, and April. It is available on the state League website (www.lwvny.org) in its entirety to anyone who is interested in information on various League issues and in the internal workings of the State League.

In addition, our state League website offers a variety of wonderful resources and continues to grow and improve. In addition to Membership Training, Advocacy, and Voter Service materials, you will find updates on league action, speaker notes, League publications, board updates, and much more. Go online and see for yourself.

Gloria Steinem to Visit Albany

NYS Pay Equity Coalition, of which LWVNYS is a primary member, is planning a series of exciting events - a legislative event, a luncheon fundraiser, a press event, and a town hall meeting - on April 2, 2008, when Gloria Steinem comes to Albany to bring attention to pay equity. Watch the state League website for details as they become available.

Urban Sprawl contributes to Global Warming

We have argued all along that curbing urban sprawl helps to preserve farmland and open space, protect water quality, improve health by providing more opportunities for physical activity, reduce pollution from automobile emissions, reduce the isolation of those who can't drive, and save taxpayers money by reducing the costs of the infrastructure. A recent report raises the stakes even higher. In *Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change*, a 2007 book published by the Urban Land Institute, a team of leading urban planning researchers report that the key to mitigating climate change is less auto-dependent development, and curbing urban sprawl is a key aspect of this. To learn more about this report, go to

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/gci/index.html>

Direct Distribution from your IRA Can Help You and the League

A little-known tax break may enable you to donate to the Education Foundation, while minimizing your own tax liability. The rub is that this provision is set to expire on December 31, 2007.

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows some individuals to have a distribution of income from an IRA, a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) made directly to one or more charities of their choice. Here is how it works. Individuals 70½ years of age or older during a tax year must take required minimum distributions (RMDs) from their IRA accounts or face tax penalties. This distribution is normally subject to income tax. By having the IRA's custodian make a distribution directly to a charity, the amount distributed to the charity is counted in the RMD requirements but is not subject to federal income tax. For individuals who do not itemize deductions and therefore cannot deduct charitable contributions, this provides the opportunity to reduce tax liability through donations to their favorite charities. For higher income individuals who do itemize deductions, a QCD may serve as a tax-planning device that would reduce income and thus preserve the full value of other charitable deductions.

To learn more about this little known provision, contact us at 518-465-4162 or lwvny@lwvny.org. We would be happy to work with your attorneys or accountants to maximize the use of this benefit before it expires.

Go Global with League-Sponsored UN Briefing on The Effects of War on Women

As we wind our way into fall, it is time to plan for the League's annual United Nations briefing to be held on November 28. This year's topic is the most timely and equally tragic Effects of War on Women.

In a departure from tradition, the League is catering to individuals who travel by holding the briefing after lunch. The day will begin with a tour of the United Nations at 10:00 a.m., followed by a gourmet international buffet luncheon in the elegant Delegate's Dining Room, at 11:30 a.m. The Briefing will begin at 1:00 p.m. Thus, those who prefer the comforts of bed to traveling through the night can begin their trips at a more reasonable hour.

LeaderSpark Update

Preparations for the 2007-2008 LeaderSpark programs are underway. Two Coordinator Training Sessions were conducted in October. On October 2, 2007, Karen Dawson, Director of LeaderSpark Inc., and Kris Hansen-Myers, LWVNYS Executive Director, conducted a dialogue-based training in Albany. Participants had an opportunity to brainstorm, discuss ideas for funding opportunities and community collaborations, share best practices, and also discuss any barriers they had encountered. On October 3, the formal Coordinator Training was held in Syracuse. Attending were LeaderSpark representatives from the Schenectady County League; the Geneva League along with the Geneva LeaderSpark Partner, the Red Cross; and a new participant, the Buffalo/Niagara League.

Next on the schedule is Facilitator Training by region. The first of these sessions will be held for the Western New York region on December 5, 2007, at the Town of Amherst Harlem Road Community Center. The other regional training sessions are still in the planning process and will be held in the Capitol Region and on Long Island.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE

62 Grand Street
Albany, NY 12207-1403
(518) 465-4162
Fax (518) 465-0812

Web Address: www.lwvny.org
e-mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

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