



WATCHDOG

Winter Issue – 2014

Message From The President

The Weber League continues to accomplish many things and show a presence in the community. Thanks to Evelyn Bertilson and Marcia Harris, we became interested in the structure of local government, which led us to updating our 1981 study, and leads us forward to possibly looking at alternate forms of local government. This process began in the summer and was just recently completed with our consensus meeting. This is the first time in many years the Weber League has actually tackled a study, and I am very proud of the work done by Di Allison, Evelyn Bertilson, Marcia Harris, Lou Shurtliff, Marilyn O'Dell, Jenica Jacobson, and Sue Skordos. Each person performed a portion of the duties surrounding completion of the study. Thank you so much for your work.

We have had recent publicity about the results of the study. In fact, we were on the front page of the Standard! The Weber League definitely appreciates the interest the paper has shown in a very timely topic and in encouraging the public to read the study. Regardless of what form is the best, the fact that the local paper believes our work is important is an excellent compliment to our organization.

The Weber League is having our holiday social on Friday, December 12, at 6:30 p.m. at the lovely home of Marcia and Bob Harris. Please plan on attending and just visiting and relaxing. Refreshments will be served. PLEASE BRING FRIENDS AND SPOUSES!

With the holiday season approaching, I encourage everyone to remember what the season is about and to reflect on positive things in our lives. Please spend time with those that mean a lot to you and allow yourself a moment to breathe. I sincerely wish everyone a very safe and happy holiday season. I do appreciate all that our membership does.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSENSUS RESULTS

The consensus questions and our position statement on each question attained by our last meeting are below. Now that these positions statements have been agreed on, our local league can use them to support or oppose issues.

CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

1. Should Weber LWV support the principle of representation by geographic area based on the principle of "one person, one vote" as it pertains to county governance?

-The Weber LWV supports the principle of some form of representation by geographic area based on the principle of "one person, one vote" as it pertains to county governance.

2. Should Weber LWV support the concept of separation of legislative and executive powers as it pertains to county government?

-The Weber LWV supports the concept of separation of legislative and executive powers as it pertains to county governance.

3. Should the Weber LWV support a change in the structure form of Weber County government based on the larger population and demographic change?

-The Weber LWV supports a change in the structural form of Weber County Government based on the larger population and demographic changes in the county.



HOLIDAY SOCIAL

Date: Friday, December 12, 2014

Place: Marcia and Bob Harris' House

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Bring Spouses and Friends

Refreshments Will Be Served



NEW MEMBER BIO

Sarah Lovato

Sarah Lovato is a native of Northern Utah. She grew up in West Point, but currently lives in Ogden. Sarah graduated from Westminster College with a Bachelor's Degree in English and a minor in Political Science. She received a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science from the University of North Texas. Sarah is currently a librarian with the Weber County Library System. She spent eight years working in the Library's Youth Services division but is currently the branch manager of the Southwest Branch Library in Roy. She recently received her second Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Utah. Sarah is a member of the Friends of the Weber County Library, the Utah Library Association, Pi Alpha Alpha, and Leadership Northern Utah. Sarah's areas of interests in the community are childhood and teen education and intervention programs, outreach to at-risk populations, literacy programs, and the humanities. We are fortunate to have her in our group! Welcome!

VOTER TURNOUT

Weber County voter turnout for the recent election was very close to 39 percent with 37,139 ballots cast. According to Weber County election reports, 37 percent of those voted a straight party ticket. The Weber County League is very excited to see this rise in voter turnout. The National League states that the right to vote is not about politics or the outcome of elections. It is about equality and justice. We all need to continue to support bills that promote Voters' Rights. All citizens need to continue to make this percentage rise – only then can we say we truly have representative government. Voting is the most powerful way to have your voice heard, and it is the basis of democracy.

UTAH LEAGUE PRIORITIES FOR THE LEGISLATURE

Listed below are the priorities the Utah League has during this legislative session. These are positions that the league has studied and come to consensus on. Feel free to join league members at the capital for interim meetings or to visit the sessions. The state website – www.utahleague.org - has excellent information about bills to watch and activities that are happening.



Education

Support increased basic program funding and increasing equity in education funding
Support contracting transparency, demonstrated success and measurable goals in public education funding programs
Support specialized funding for preschool and focused early education programs
Monitor governance--partisan school board elections, and ultimate authority for higher education and public education
Refine and improve school and student evaluations in both public and charter schools

Voting

Advocate for same day registration
Monitor all bills regarding voters and voter turnout
Support direct election of the president, in particular National Popular Vote

Open Government

Watch for piecemeal attacks on the citizen's right to government information.
Support Legislation that adds greater transparency to the legislative process
Advocate for campaign finance reform

Taxation

Oppose reinstatement of sales tax on food
Support increase and broadening of severance tax on non-renewable resources

Natural Resources

Energy

Support energy efficiency
Support renewable energy
Support reduction in fossil fuel use and emissions

Federal Lands

Oppose transferring federal lands to state control
Support enlarging wilderness and designating national monuments

Environment

Oppose measures to weaken the public trust doctrine
Oppose weakening of agency boards and public participation

Water

Oppose new major water diversions
Oppose dedication of state taxes to water projects

Air

Support state efforts to restore clean air
Support restoration of funds to the Department of Environmental Quality and the Division of Air Quality.

Health

Oppose waiver requests that seek to avoid federal Medicaid guidelines
Advocate for full implementation of the Affordable Care Act
Support Medicaid expansion

Immigration

Oppose efforts of the state to infringe on federal immigration policy

Social Policy

Oppose action to dismantle affirmative action
Oppose attacks on reproductive rights, sex education in schools, and equality and personal freedom.
Watch for attacks on affirmative action, reproductive rights, equality, sex education and personal freedom that might appear in the guise of religious freedom.



DATES TO REMEMBER

December 12, 2014 – Holiday Social – Marcia and Bob Harris' House – 6:30 p.m.

January 12, 2014 – Consensus on State Tax Study – Weber County Library – 2464 Jefferson
7:00 p.m.

February 9, 2014 – Campaign Finance Presentation by Dr. Leah Murray – Weber County Library
2464 Jefferson – 7:00 p.m.

March 9, 2014 – Pros and Cons of Online High School – Weber County Library – 2464 Jefferson
7:00 p.m.

April 13, 2014 – Annual Meeting – 6:30 p.m. – Place To Be Determined

STATE CONVENTION IS ON MAY 16 AND 17 AT GRAND CANYON

Anyone who is interested is invited.

Please think about it and maybe take a little vacation as well.