



Tennessee Voter

League of Women Voters of Tennessee

P.O. Box 158369

Nashville TN 37215-8369

www.lwvtn.org; LWVtenn@gmail.com

Winter 2012 – 2013



Officers and Directors for 2011-13

Officers

President: Margie Parsley, Nashville
1st Vice President: Kathy Edwards, Oak Ridge
2nd Vice President: Jo Singer, Nashville
Secretary: Judy Poulson, Knoxville
Treasurer: Marian Ott, Nashville

Directors

Barbara Devaney, Nashville
Alan Karp, Johnson City
Laurel Karp, Johnson City

Nominating Committee

Nancy Stewart (Knoxville), Chair
Barbara Gay (Nashville)
Kelley Thomas (Memphis-Shelby County)

Off-Board Position

Lynn Williams, PR/Communications

Webmaster

Alan Karp

LWVTN Voter Editor/Field Service

Laurel Karp

LWVTN Education Fund Board of Trustees

The elected officers

Brief Calendar for 2012:

Dec. 15: Bill of Rights Day
Jan 1: Quarterly PMP due to LWVTN
Jan 1: Deadline for LL bylaw amendments
from LLs to LWVTN for comment
Jan 31: Membership Count deadline
(LWVUS for PMP)

* * *

President's Column

Election activities have wound down and I hope Vote411.org as well as other Voter guides have helped voters make their choice.

We now have a reconfigured Tennessee and U. S. legislature. As active citizens we will need to develop relationships with our new and continuing legislators so that we can know their points of focus and assess those in light of League priorities. LWVTN will provide tools (talking points, research papers, Lobbyist reports) to enable our members to be informed on issues that will be of concern in the state legislature. You will find these on our website. LWVUS will provide tools and information for us to be informed constituents on the national level, and we can use these when contacting our U. S. legislators. An important issue now is the expanding of Medicaid. This should be a topic you discuss, using information from our website, as soon as possible. Please do not wait until you have an issue to discuss with your new legislators. If you have met with them before terms begin—or at least before voting on new bills begins—it will be easier for all. Find out what their interests are, where you may share an interest or have information that will help them. You will find that having a personal connection will ease the exchange of ideas.

Our state Action Committee will develop a data base that will enable us to target members whose legislators are vital for the vote on an issue we have deemed a priority. Using the information you have learned from the League, your personal relationship will enable you to be a more effective volunteer lobbyist.

Margie Parsley
LWVTN President



THE STATE ACTION COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!

The new General Assembly that convenes in 2013 will consist of 75 percent Republicans. This will be the first time that both the Senate and the House have been led by Republicans since the nineteenth century. Within that group will be a sizable number of tea party members. Many members who had served in the Legislature for decades have decided not run again. Others have lost in their primaries. There will be a large new group of legislators whom the League will get to know. We must continue to advocate good government and fair elections and let our elected officials know where we stand on issues.

On October 16th First Lady Chrissy Haslam gave a riveting speech about education and reading at a Nashville League fundraiser hosted by Colleen Conway-Welch at her home. Mrs. Haslam reported that the number of jail cells needed in the future can be predicted by reading scores of children in the third grade. She has instituted a program in many of our schools in which parents pledge to read to their children at least 20 minutes per day. House speaker Beth Harwell and Nashville State Representative Brenda Gilmore and many Nashville members also attended.

The LWV fall conference attendees voted to ask Lobbyist Stewart Clifton to focus lobbying primarily on Open Government and Voter issues and other emerging key issues. He will continue to track legislation and send members semi-monthly reports on key legislation. The Action Committee will email LWVTN members a survey after the November elections to select key issues they want to advocate, to tell us about relationships they already have with General Assembly members and to give the action committee suggestions on how to improve its operation.

The Action Committee is committed to having at least one member from each league and many members at large to call in on our Action Committee meetings. We intend to improve our telephone connection, to have succinct, agenda-driven meetings that focus on the entire state and to encourage members from across the state to join us on these calls.

We hope that LWW members will be a very visible, vocal voice in our legislature. Since we send action reports by email we encourage all of you to make sure that LWWUS has your current email, address and phone number so that you can stay informed. If you want help learning how to lobby or connect with your legislators we are there for you.

We need YOU on our Action Committee. Please Email me at bedevaney@gmail.com if you want to join the committee.

We have already raised over \$3000 for our lobbyist fund. Thank you so much for those who have already given. If you haven't given yet we hope you will. Our goal is \$9,000. Thank you for your participation.

Barbara Devaney, State Action Chair

The State League gratefully acknowledges the following donors:

Contributors 7/1/12 through 10/1/12		
LWVTN Lobbyist Effort	LWVTN Operating Fund	LWVTN Educational Fund
<p> Burkley Allen Megan Barry Elaine Breslaw Janice Brown Martha Butterfield Chloe Cerutti Virginia Dunlap Karen Edwards Ann Foltz Jo Ann Garrett Barbara Gay Silvine Hudson Terri Lawson Linda Lawson Jane Lester Nancy Lofaro Mary Frances Lyle Detlef Matt Ruth Neff Marian Ott Diana Page Judith Palmer Elizabeth Peelle Elizabeth Pierce Judy Poulson Marjorie Reynold Anne Roos Karen Weeks Janis Williams </p>	<p> Ann Foltz Penelope Frere Doris Gove Ann James Teresa Lawson Jane Lester Detlef Matt Judy Poulson Martha Salk Georgiana Vines Barbara Walker Karen Weeks Mary Zelle </p>	<p> Mary Daugherty Jerry Kinnamon </p> 

Expanding Medicaid Makes Financial Sense for Tennessee

The Supreme Court ruled in June that the new health reform law permits, rather than requires, states to expand their Medicaid programs to cover people with incomes up to 138 percent of the federal poverty line. Now, Tennessee must choose whether to expand Medicaid. Some have argued that this expansion is too expensive. In fact, Medicaid expansion will generate enough new state revenues to more than offset additional state costs. Increased receipts from Tennessee's tax on HMOs will be enough, by itself, to cover the new costs. Federal revenues will generate economic activity that will increase other state and local tax revenues, as well. In addition, Medicaid expansion will reduce the amount of money the state spends paying for health care for people who do not have health insurance.

The federal government will pick up **all** of the cost of Medicaid expansion for the first three years (2014-2016). It will continue to cover at least 90 percent of the cost after that. This will bring an estimated **\$10.5 billion additional federal dollars to Tennessee between 2014 and 2019**. 1) Medicaid expansion in Tennessee will cover an estimated 330,000 additional people. Between 2014 and 2019, the expansion would **increase state spending by 1.5 percent (\$421 million)** over what the state would spend without expansion. 2) **But the state will more than get that money back through a mix of savings and increased tax revenues**, as explained below.

Tennessee requires all health maintenance organizations (HMOs) doing business in Tennessee to pay a 5.5% tax on all premium dollars collected from or on behalf of enrollees. 3) Because of the significant tax revenues that would be generated in the first four years of Medicaid expansion, only in 2021 would the cumulative costs for the state exceed the cumulative additional revenues generated by the HMO tax.

The 1.5 percent increase in state spending overstates the net impact of Medicaid expansion on the state budget. It does not count the money the state will save on health care for people who are now uninsured but will be covered by the Medicaid expansion. State and local governments now pay about 30 percent of the cost of care that is provided to uninsured patients who cannot afford to pay.

4) Expanding Medicaid will greatly reduce the number of people without health insurance and thus the costs of uncompensated care. The new law will **lower state costs for uncompensated care by as much as \$1.6 billion between 2014 and 2019**, with much of the reduction due to the expansion of Medicaid. 5) Hospitals, doctors, and other health care providers will also be paid for much of the care that they now provide without being paid.

This still does **not** count all of the savings that Tennessee will experience if it expands its Medicaid program. Other savings include:

- Lower state costs for providing mental health services to the uninsured (including costs to local governments, because many people with mental illness currently end up being warehoused in jails for lack of treatment);
- Potential state savings on the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) after 2015;
- Higher federal payments for some people who are already eligible for TennCare; and,
- Higher sales tax receipts resulting from the increased payments to hospitals and other health care providers.

Just like a new factory or federal project, Medicaid expansion will bring a lot of money into Tennessee's economy. That money will be spread among all 95 counties. It will increase incomes for all types of health care service providers, including hospitals and their employees, doctors and nurses, nursing homes, and medical suppliers. Health care providers and businesses will spend large portions of their revenues and salaries in the local economies. As a result, the Medicaid expansion will create jobs in all parts of the state economy. 6) Between 2014 and 2019, if Tennessee expands Medicaid, the federal funding will produce 18,000 jobs.

(continued on next page)

Expanding Medicaid Makes Financial Sense for Tennessee (continued)

7) Federal officials have confirmed that states that expand Medicaid can always drop the new coverage at any time without incurring a penalty. Tennessee can therefore eliminate the Medicaid expansion if at any time it ceases to be advantageous to the state.

Medicaid Expansion will keep Tennesseans' federal taxes in Tennessee. If Tennessee does not accept Medicaid expansion, other states like California, New Jersey and Washington, which have already approved expansion, will get the benefit of Tennesseans' federal tax dollars. This means a significant loss of jobs and revenue in Tennessee.

1. John Holahan and Irene Headen, *Medicaid Coverage and Spending in Health Reform: National and State-by-State Results for Adults at or below 133% FPL*, Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured (May 2010) at 40, Table 6, available at <http://www.kff.org/healthreform/upload/Medicaid-Coverage-and-Spending-in-Health-Reform-Nationaland-State-By-State-Results-for-Adults-at-or-Below-133-FPL.pdf>.

2. *Id.* at 40, Table 6.

3. Tenn. Code Ann. 56-32-124(a). For more information on the impact of the Medicaid expansion on the state's HMO tax receipts, see "Medicaid Expansion in Tennessee Will Produce Additional Revenues That Will More Than Offset the Additional State Costs Through 2020," available at: <http://www.tnjustice.org/resources/affordable-care-act/>.

4. Matthew Buettgens et al., *Consider Savings as Well as Costs*, at 10, Robert Wood Johnson Found. & Urban Institute (July 2011).

5. *Id.* at 11, Table 7.

6. John E. Gnuschke, et al., *A Study of the Economic Impacts of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act on Tennessee*, Sparks Bureau of Business and Economic Research, The University of Memphis (March 2012), at 24-25, available at http://www.thcc2.org/PDFs/economic_impact_of_hcr.pdf.

7. This estimate is based on the estimates of Gnuschke, et al., *supra*, but limited to only the increased federal funding for Medicaid, instead of the Affordable Care Act as a whole.

<http://www.tnjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Expanding-Medicaid-Makes-Financial-Sense-for-TN-FINAL-unbranded.pdf>

For more on this topic, go to the following website:

<http://www.tnjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Expanding-Medicaid-Will-Produce-Additional-Revenues-That-Will-More-Than-Offset-the-Additional-Costs-Through-2020-FINAL-unbranded.pdf>



COUNT YOURSELF IN – VOTE!

One vote per precinct: That is the margin of victory that elected John F. Kennedy president in 1960. One vote per precinct: That is the margin that gave women the right to vote in California one century ago. ONE VOTE can change our democracy and each vote counts. One vote can make an impact this year.

The League has long considered the value of each vote and engaged in Get-Out-the-Vote activities. The National League, under the direction of Elisabeth MacNamera, launched a campaign to *Power the Vote*. *Power the Vote* reminded us of the importance of our of traditional League activities – voter registration, forums, voter guides (VOTE 411) – each designed to give the voter facts and information that empowered them to make an informed decision for themselves and to VOTE! These activities required countless hours of consideration and time on the part of League members. Thank you to all members who have work so hard year after year to keep things moving and fresh with new focus and new activities that meet the need of our communities. It's not over yet. Voters need to stay informed for every election. Votes still need to be cast and counted for every election.

As a visible reminder to Get-Out-the-Vote, the LWVTN adopted the “Count Yourself In – Vote“ campaign. Buttons and bumper stickers were distributed to each LL. Wear yours each day to remind people to stay in the “Know”. Sometimes it only takes ONE.

Kathy Edwards, Voter Service



OH, THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF TECHNOLOGY!

WEBSITE NEWS – READ ABOUT MEDICAID REFORM

Access LWVTN.ORG/Health.html to read “Medicaid Reform is a Lifeline for Tennessee’s hospitals”.

REMEMBER -- NEW WORDING

“THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NEITHER SUPPORTS NOR OPPOSES ANY CANDIDATE, PARTY OR POLITICAL APPOINTEE.”

IMPORTANT: The League studies issues in-depth and takes a position after the study is completed. The League does not take a stand on candidates, parties, or political appointees.

ANOTHER TIMELY REMINDER: You can find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TNLeagueOfWomenVoters?ref=hl> or by searching for League of Women Voters of Tennessee. Please “LIKE” us!

MAY THE HOLIDAYS TREAT YOU WELL AND THE NEW YEAR BE EVEN BETTER THAN THE LAST!

