



LWVLGA 2015-2016 PROGRAM CALENDAR

GUN SENSE IN AMERICA with Moms Demand Action

Tuesday, November 3, 7:30 pm

Stephanie Nelson's home

Please rsvp to crazybus22@gmail.com & you will receive directions

AMENDING THE US CONSTITUTION: CONSENSUS STUDY

this is a members only meeting

Saturday, November 7, 9am

May Klonowski's home

215 S. Brainard Ave., LaGrange

Potluck breakfast. Coffee & juice provided

see below for more information

RAIL CAR SAFETY

Tuesday, November 17, 7-8:30pm

LaGrange Public Library

10 W. Cossit Ave., LaGrange

see below for more information

HOLIDAY PARTY, POTLUCK, and SILENT AUCTION

Thursday, December 10, 6pm

Acacia Clubhouse

111 Cascade Dr., Indian Head Park

watch for an e-mail invitation from Paperless Post

January Book Discussion: The New Jim Crow
contact Verlaine Carnall to borrow a copy

February Supreme Court Decisions

March Gun Violence: drinks and discussion

March Cost of Pharmaceuticals

April Rape on Campus

May Annual Business Meeting

GREETINGS from the PRESIDENTS!

Dear fellow La Grange Area Leaguers,

Great fellowship (called Sisterhood by our State Senator Kimberly Lightford), good food and a chance to celebrate our most recent accomplishments in environmental projects, voter service, redistricting and programming kicked off our successful Fall Luncheon. The work of our Person of Impact, Tina Rounds, Executive Director of BEDS Plus, added a note of inspiration to the program. Our featured keynoter, State Senator Kimberly Lightford highlighted the challenges to resolving the budget impasse in IL and she outlined current legislation impacting education issues in IL. She peppered her speech with fascinating insights into the behind-the-scenes work of our State legislators and Governor. The event was truly a team effort and special thanks go to Ann Lee, Judy McAtee, Jean Klotter, Mary Lou Lowrey, Rose Naseef, Krista Grimm, Melissa Lieb and Jan Goldberg.

The League of Women Voters of IL (LWVIL) is raising \$1000 to contribute to the **Suffragists' Memorial** being constructed in Va. This donation will qualify LWVIL to be listed as a supporter. Our La Grange Area League Board has voted to contribute \$100. For more information go to suffragistmemorial.org.

Our Board also voted to become a member of the **Upper Mississippi River Region ILO** (Independent League Organization) at a cost of \$25/year. For more information go to youtube.com.

We need your help! The LWVIL Issues Committee has asked all 40 local Leagues throughout IL to join in a project that will underscore the hardships being generated by the budget impasse. We are to contact village/city managers, school districts and local social service agency to get this information for our area. Two of our members have already offered to coordinate the work for the school districts and social service agencies. **We need a third volunteer for our villages/city..** We estimate the work will take about 5 hours spread throughout the

month of November. Please contact Patty, patrocco29@comcast.net or Mary, maryklon@comcast.net if you can help.

There are so many exciting things going on in our La Grange Area League and it's a pleasure to serve as co-Presidents of such a vibrant group.

Mary and Patty

AMENDING THE US CONSTITUTION: CONSENSUS STUDY

We will be meeting on **Saturday, November 7th at 9am at Mary Klonowski's home** and share a potluck breakfast. Many of us have attended previous discussions. We'll be reviewing and discussion the consensus questions at this meeting. Any who has attended can tell you that amending the constitution is a hot issue with different groups in the US today. The LWV US wants us to have a voice in the future. And as we all know, consensus is at the core of what the league does because it allows to share to raise our voices and be recognized when the issues are discussed and voted on.

Following is some key information to review prior to the meeting:

GUIDELINES FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

- 1. Does the proposed amendment address matters that are of more than immediate concern and that are likely to be recognized as of abiding importance by subsequent generations?**
- 2. Does the proposed amendment make our system more politically**

responsive or protect individual rights?

3. Are there significant practical or legal obstacles to the achievement of the objectives of the proposed amendment by other means?

4. Is the proposed amendment consistent with related constitutional doctrine that the amendment leaves intact?

5. Does the proposed amendment embody enforceable, and not purely aspirational, standards?

6. Have proponents of the proposed amendment attempted to think through and articulate the consequences of their proposal, including the ways in which the amendment would interact with other constitutional provisions and principles?

7. Has there been full and fair debate on the merits of the proposed amendment?

8. Has Congress provided for a nonextendable deadline for ratification by the states so as to ensure that there is a contemporaneous consensus by Congress and the states that the proposed

amendment is desirable?

Source: *Great and Extraordinary Occasions: Developing Guidelines for Constitutional Change*. The Century Foundation Press, 1999.

Constitutional Amendment Consensus Questions

This study is in three parts. The questions in Part I are to develop guidelines for evaluating constitutional amendment proposals. Part II asks about aspects of an Article V Constitutional Convention that may be important in conducting such a convention. Part III asks two overall balancing questions between process and positions.

Answer each question, regardless of your answers to other questions.

Part I - Considerations for Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals

1. Which of these should or should not be a consideration in identifying an appropriate and well-crafted amendment?

a) Whether the public policy objective addresses matters of such acute and abiding importance that the fundamental charter of our nation must be changed.

PRO: *Amendments are changes to a document that provides stability to our system and should be undertaken to address extreme problems or long-term needs.*

CON: *When public sentiment is overwhelmingly in favor of change, restraint based on veneration of the document is misplaced.*

b) Whether the amendment as written would be effective in achieving its policy objective.

PRO: *Amendments that may be unenforceable, miss the objective or have unintended consequences will not work to achieve the policy objective.*

CON: *It's all right to deliberately put something in the Constitution that will need to be interpreted by courts and legislatures over time.*

c) Whether the amendment would either make our political system more democratic or protect individual rights.

PRO: *Most amendments have sought to make our system more democratic by extending voting rights, for example, or to protect the rights of minorities from powerful interests.*

CON: *What has been typical in the past is not a good measure of what's appropriate or necessary today or in the future, especially since there have been relatively few amendments.*

(d) Whether the policy objective can be achieved by a legislative or political approach that is less difficult than a constitutional amendment.

PRO: *Due to the difficulty of amending the Constitution, it is important to consider whether legislation or political action is more likely to succeed than an amendment, in order to achieve the objective and to expend resources wisely.*

CON: *Important policy objectives should sometimes be pursued through a constitutional amendment even though it may be difficult for it to be enacted and even when other options are available.*

e) Whether the public policy objective is more suited to a constitutional and general approach than to a statutory and detailed approach.

PRO: *It is important to consider whether the goal can best be achieved by an overall value statement, which will be interpreted by the courts, or with specific statutory detail to resolve important issues and reduce ambiguity.*

CON: *Getting action on an issue is more important than how a policy objective can best be achieved.*

Part II - Aspects of an Article V Constitutional Convention

2. What conditions should or should not be in place for an Article V Constitutional Convention initiated by the states?

a) The Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret.

PRO: *The public has a right to know what is being debated and voted on.*

CON: *The lack of public scrutiny and the ability to negotiate in private may enable delegates to more easily reach agreement.*

b) Representation at the Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote.

PRO: *The delegates represent citizens and should be distributed by U.S. population.*

CON: *The U.S. is really a federation of states that must agree by state to any change in the Constitution.*

c) State delegates must be elected rather than appointed.

PRO: *Delegates represent citizens and therefore need to be elected by them.*

CON: *Appointment allows for experts who wouldn't run in an election.*

d) Voting at the Convention must be by delegate, not by state.

PRO: *As at the Articles of Confederation Convention, delegates from one state can have varying views and should be able to express them by individual votes.*

CON: *Because any amendment proposal will go to the states for ratification, voting by state blocs-however the delegates are originally chosen-reflects the probability of eventual ratification.*

e) The Convention must be limited to a specific topic.

PRO: It is important to guard against a "runaway convention".

CON: The convention alternative was provided for a time when Congress was not listening, so the delegates should not be constrained.

f) Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Convention must be called. __

PRO: *Counting state requests by topic ensures that there is sufficient interest in a particular subject to call a convention, and enhances citizen interest and participation in the process.*

CON: *There is no requirement for Congress to count state requests by topic and when enough states are unhappy enough to ask for a convention, it should happen.*

g) The validity of state "calls" for an Article V Constitutional Convention must be determined by the most recent action of the state. If a state has enacted a rescission of its call, that rescission should be respected by Congress.

PRO: *A state legislature should be free to determine its position in regard to an Article V Constitutional Convention. A rescission should be equally acceptable to Congress as a state's call for a convention.*

CON: *A state legislature's call for a Convention can not be overturned because the process may never end.*

3. Should the League oppose an Article V Constitutional Convention to propose amendments to the U.S. Constitution because of unresolved questions about the powers and processes of such a convention?

PRO: *The Constitution is too important to trust an unknown or uncontrollable process. It is unclear whether conditions or safeguards regarding powers and processes for a convention can be successfully put in place.*

CON: *A convention is intended to be an unrestrained process to propose amendments to the Constitution.*

Part III - Balancing Questions

4. Should the League consider supporting a Constitutional amendment that will advance a League position even if:

a) There are significant problems with the actual amendment as proposed?

PRO: *Our positions have been studied and agreed to. If other organizations are supporting an amendment in a policy area we also support, we might participate even though it is inconsistent with the evaluation guidelines we support under Part I.*

CON: *If the League has a consensus on the evaluation guidelines outlined in Part I, then the League should not campaign on an amendment when it is inconsistent with those standards, even though the League supports the policy outcome.*

b. It is being put forward by a procedural process the League would otherwise oppose?

PRO: *Our positions have been studied and agreed to. If other organizations are supporting an amendment in a policy area we also support, we might participate even though it is inconsistent with the process criteria we support under Part II.*

CON: *If the League has a consensus on the process criteria outlined in Part II, then the League should not campaign for an amendment when the process being proposed is inconsistent with those standards, even though the League supports the policy outcome.*

Oil by Rail: How Safe Are We?



As part of our everyday life we often find ourselves stopped at a train crossing as a BNSF freight train passes through our neighborhoods as we go about our daily activities. But did you ever stop to think about the safety of our neighborhoods as those trains transport millions of barrels of crude oil travel along these tracks annually?

Are we safe? What measures does BNSF take to minimize the likelihood of an accident? How are our first responders prepared in the event of such a disaster?

Get the answers to these questions and hear more about this topic at a presentation entitled "Oil by Rail: How Safe Are We?" on Tuesday, November 17 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the LaGrange Public Library, 10 West Cossitt Avenue, LaGrange.

Sponsored by the **League of Women Voters of the LaGrange Area**, the event will feature representatives from BNSF as well as local fire departments and other experts on the topics.



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