



The League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund imPACT e-newsletter.

The purpose of these monthly emails is to provide League members and our partners with information on the most pressing reform issues affecting Ohioans today.

Want to learn more about the issues, how to vote confidently and how to connect with elected officials? Visit the LWVO ED imPACT website at www.ohioimpact.org for the latest information and resources to---Get Educated. . .Get Involved. . . and Get Results!

Check out the updated design on the imPACT website for each issue: on the right hand side of each issue's main page, there is a blue sidebar with links to recent news articles on that subject. Sign up for daily updates on these issues with the [RSS newsfeed](#).

Election Reform has been a high priority in the Ohio Secretary of State's administration and the League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund and imPACT are on topic. The 2009 Ohio Election Summit and Conference in March led to the gathering of various elections reform parties with Election Reform in mind: The League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund, [The Brennan Center for Justice](#), [Money in Politics-Ohio Citizen Action](#), [LWVO EF imPACT, Advancement Project](#), [Moritz College of Law](#), [ACLU of Ohio](#), [Common Cause](#), [Ohio AFL-CIO](#), [Ohio Votes](#), and the [Ohio State Bar Association](#), who discussed and generally came to agreement on the most critical aspects of election reform, particularly the areas of simplifying rules for provisional ballots, improving the state's voter databases, increasing locations for early absentee ballot voting, and streamlining voter identification rules. Lawrence Norden with Jessie Allen from the Brennan Center for Justice published [Final Report: 2008-2009 Ohio Election Summit and Conference](#), which had consensus by the various members of this elections workgroup. Voting is critical to the survival and health of a democracy, and concerned citizens should urge their representatives to facilitate these improvements to the voting process in Ohio.

Judicial Reform is gathering attention largely because of the Caperton v. Massey Coal Co. case in West Virginia. The League of Women Voters of Ohio joined an amicus brief in this case that calls on the United States Supreme Court. "The League is involved with this case because of its compelling importance - too much special interest money is being dumped into state court elections nationwide," said Mary G. Wilson, national President of the League of Women Voters. John Grisham, who wrote the bestselling book, *The Appeal*, said that the premise of the book "already happened. It happened a few years ago in West Virginia." Read LWVO [May 2009 Spotlight on the Judiciary](#) by Judicial Reform Specialist Nancy Brown on this critical case and why it is important to Ohioans, who also elect their judges. She stated, "...it is important that local leagues and league members continue efforts to educate the general public about the unique

role of the judiciary. Citizens who understand that the role of the judge is different than the role of other politicians are more likely to be able to consider relevant qualifications of judicial candidates and be less easily swayed by special interests pumping money into judicial campaigns."

Campaign Finance Reform is in the news, ranging from the White House's rewarding of big campaign donors with swanky ambassador posts to the Cuyahoga County Auditor reporting gifts and a central Ohio securities broker laundering illegal amounts of political donations to candidates on both sides of the aisle. Record amounts of campaign cash are being demanded from politicians, and some lobbyists fear losing access to lawmakers. In the meantime, citizen access to lawmakers is something we can all do with our calls, our emails, our letters, and most importantly, if possible, our visits in a face to face encounter. Learn the [do's and don'ts](#) of contacting and interacting with lawmakers.

This week in ***Redistricting Reform***, the Ohio Secretary of State will determine who the winner will be of the Redistricting Contest. Local leagues have sponsored several redistricting Town Hall Meetings to educate local citizens on the importance of redistricting. LWVO Redistricting Specialist Ann Henkener gave testimony on Senate Joint Resolution 5, "Any redistricting process should not permit either political party to manipulate the process to gain advantage disproportionate to its strength in the electorate. The process set forth in SJR5 improves on our current process of one party gerrymandering by providing a division of power between the two major parties in the drawing of districts."

Ohio will probably lose at least one Congressional seat as a result of the decline in population, and informing the general population about the importance of being counted in the coming census is sure to factor into the redistricting process. Receiving the correct number of federal Congressional seats are one aspect of getting full cooperation in being counted in the Census accurately. Maybe as importantly, with declining revenues and difficult economic times, more than \$300 billion federal dollars are meted out according to the population numbers determined by the Census. Learn more about the Census and how Governor Strickland has set up an [Ohio Complete Count Committee](#) to get the Census underway. Click here to go to the Ohio Census website.

Accountability and Government Transparency has Ohio Representative Boehner in the news with a suggestion for President Obama to "support a requirement that all bills in Congress be made public for review for at least 72 hours before a floor vote." This is a bone of contention for each administration, with the controlling party rushing bills through the House, and the opposition calling for transparency and review time. See the Brennan Center's [Transparency in the First 100 Days: A Report Card](#) to see how new Obama administration rates on Government Transparency.

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