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**Does the Current State of Politics Get You Angry?
Don’t Just Explode!
Join the League of Women Voters
and Do Something About It!!**

Join an organization that makes an impact in the community, the state and the nation.
Nonpartisan: We do not support candidates, elected officials or political parties.

Membership Information: call Myra Decker 643-2742 or send:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone No. (home) _____ (work) _____ Email: _____

Membership Dues: _____ \$45.00 Individual

(Check desired level) _____ \$65.00 Family

Make check out to: **Plattsburgh Area League of Women Voters**

Mail to: Myra Decker, 7 Woodland Hills, Morrisonville, NY 12962

THE INFORMER



**League of Women Voters
of the Plattsburgh Area**

January 2008 No. 5

**7 Woodland Hills
Morrisonville, New York 12962**

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Visit Plattsburgh LWV Web Site at www.plattsburgh.ny.lwvnet.org

Special

OFFER TO THE PUBLIC

If you wish to be put on the League's mailing list and receive the League Newsletter, "The Informer", to keep in touch about the League's activities, please submit \$5.00 to cover cost of postage and printing for 10 issues. Make check payable to **League of Women Voters, Plattsburgh Area** and send it to **Myra Decker, 7 Woodland Hill, Morrisonville, NY 12962.**

Come Join Us

Annual Pot-Luck Brunch

JANUARY 26th

11 am

Home of Kathy Schumacher

Guest speaker: Mayor Donald Kasprzak
Topic: "What's Happening in the City of Plattsburgh"

R.S.V.P. to Myra Decker (643-2742) or Kathy (562-0099) for reservations and directions.

Guests are welcome. **Please bring a dish to share.**

Hope to see you there!

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

ANNE WHITE

The League would like hear **your story** about how you became involved in the League. Please email your story to larry.arcarese@verizon.net.

REMEMBER: Donations to the local League of Women Voters are **tax deductible** if the checks are made out to the **LWV Educational Fund.**

Steps to access the Informer:

Log on to www.plattsburgh.ny.lwvnet.org. Click on "The Informer" either on the side bar or main part of the page.

Click on <http://www.lwvny-bulletins.org/Capital%20Region/Plattsburgh.htm>

The next page enables you to click on the latest or past editions of the newsletter. It will ask to either open it up or save it to a disk. You can then print it if you desire. You will get a larger print if you use **legal size paper.**



Recycling Committee Meeting

The next recycling committee meeting will be on **Feb. 14th at 1:00 p.m. at the Oak Street School.** Our Dec. meeting was very productive with plans for Earth Day and our recycling booklet. **Earth Day** is tentatively set for **April 27th from 12-2p.m. at Champlain Mall.** We could use more **help** so if you have some time to donate, **call Barbara Landes at 562-2897.**

Did you know ? that Verison in Plattsburgh collects no longer used wireless phones, batteries and accessories in any condition from any wireless service provider in stores across the country? The phones that can be reused are refurbished for reuse and those without value are disposed of in an environmentally sound way. Proceeds from this program have been used to provide wireless phones and cash grants to shelters that focus on domestic violence prevention and awareness.



Greetings from Florida



Hi Everyone,

Hope you all had a wonderful holiday. We missed having a "white" Christmas but not having to shovel all of that snow.

"Health Care Reform Issues" was the topic of our monthly meeting. Jim Nathan, a health care professional, began by listing the major issues with health care reform: --underfunded government reimbursement (10% reduction in Medicare reimbursement in Jan. 08); --physicians incentivized to do more to pursue hospital revenues; --inability to align incentives between physicians and hospital; --escalation of pharmaceutical and supply costs; --payer monopolies

The current reality is that "market forces and government policy cause shotgun weddings." This results in:--decreased physician reimbursement while increased bureaucratic requirements; --strict ant-trust regulations that widen the gap between independent physicians and hospitals; --limited non-employment options for subsidizing physicians; --fastest growing hospital expenses are physician subsidies (ex. anesthesia- \$4.5 million/yr medicare reimbursement)

"Medicare is approaching bankruptcy in 2019," he said. The U.S. government is the largest buyer of drugs and will not negotiate drug prices. (28% of drugs are paid by medicare)

The report card on U.S. health care shows it being number one in right care but #5 & 6 in safe, coordinated, patient centered care,

There is a big variation in practice (academic centers increase cost; varies from city to city). The more uninsured, the greater health care costs. Most hospitals lose money except teaching centers (50% of FL health care monies come from medicare). Medicare margin is structured to decline 1-2%/year. Ten percent of beneficiaries account for 60% of medicare expenditures (most at end of life). Medicare is a most efficient payer: 2% overhead; 98% of every dollar into medicare comes back to pay benefits. Most of profits come from commercial payers.

Health Care Challenges for 2008 include:

- aging population
- increased reliance on government funding (60%)
- health costs increase much faster than cost of living
- decrease in employer-sponsored health care
- increase in underinsured and uninsured (Tied in #2 spot with New Mexico (21.22%) with percent of uninsured. Texas is #1; Oklahoma #3; California #4)
- provider reimbursement flat; expense rising faster
- shortage of health care professionals
- increase consumer demand for accountability
- lack of political will to pursue systemic reform

In summary, he said that "There is no comprehensive vision of the future for health care delivery and financing."

He gave a website to view the candidate's stand on health care:

www.health08.org/sidebyside.cfm

In other League news, we're working on candidate and issue forums for January as well as legislative interviews. The interviews are a challenge because of the limited time that the legislators are in their home territory.

I decided to inquire about being a poll worker for elections here in Florida. You first go to an orientation program that gives an overview of the poll worker's responsibilities and take a quiz to see if you understood the material presented as well as exercises in alphabetizing names and distinguishing between similar but different names and addresses. I must have passed as I was notified that I'm going to be an inspector during the Jan. 29th primary in Florida. But first I have to attend a 3-4 hour class on the job of inspector. Each poll worker position (clerk, systems specialist, precinct tech, deputy) requires a different class. They use the iVotronic touch screen machines that cast ballots electronically and record votes. It is a counting machine, not a computer. By the August 26, 2008 primary election, Lee County will be using an optical scan paper ballot system. I'll let you know how it goes.

Don't get lost in the snow. Keep warm. Hopefully some of our warm, dry sunny weather will push itself north. Take care.

Stasia Arcarese

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Many women sought “companionate marriages,” in which husbands and wives would treat each other as equals. Birth rates fell, and although divorce remained rare, it became an option for some women. Other women choose not to get married at all.

The birth control movement was founded during the Progressive Era. Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) was educated as and worked as a nurse. In her work with poor women on the Lower East Side of New York, she was aware of the effects of unplanned and unwelcome pregnancies. Her mother’s health had suffered as she bore eleven children. She came to believe in the importance to women’s lives and



women’s health of the availability of birth control, a term which she’s credited with inventing. In the 1870s, the Comstock Laws had outlawed the distribution of birth control information and devices through the mail. In the 1910s, nurse Margaret Sanger began publishing articles on birth control, and founded the National Birth Control League (NBCL). While Sanger was in Europe, the NBCL was reorganized by Mary Dennett and eventually converted into the Voluntary Parenthood League.

In 1916, Sanger opened a birth control clinic in New York. She and a few of her supporters were subsequently arrested and convicted under the Comstock Laws. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, Sanger continued to advocate for the right of women to access birth control information and devices. In 1922, Sanger founded the American Birth Control League (ABCL). Many years later, the ABCL was converted into the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. (*womenshistory.about.com and Library of Congress*)

State Forms Broadband Council to Support Key Component of “I Live NY” Initiative

Governor Eliot Spitzer and First Lady Silda Wall Spitzer announced the formation of the New York State Council for Universal Broadband, which is charged with developing strategies to ensure every

New Yorker has access to affordable, high-speed Internet service. Increased access to broadband service combined with digital literacy programs can dramatically improve social, cultural and educational opportunities that ultimately lead to increased job creation and economic development.

The 2007-08 New York State budget appropriated \$5,000,000 to provide seed money through competitive grants to promote research, design and implementation of innovative solutions to affordable Internet access for underserved urban and rural communities. Grant applications will be accepted from eligible communities and organizations that create public/private partnerships to meet the strategic goals of the Council.



The strategic goals include:

- Supporting the “I Live New York” initiative to attract and retain New York’s next generation by ensuring every New Yorker has access to high-speed, affordable broadband
- Providing all New Yorkers with access to high-speed, affordable broadband Internet access for resident and businesses from anywhere, at anytime, by anyone
- Fostering economic development and building stronger public/private partnerships
- Creating jobs through innovative community-based digital literacy and technology training programs, including household technology adoption and support
- Closing the digital divide and Increasing digital literacy levels in unserved and underserved urban and rural communities
- Accelerating the use of state e-Government services offered through the Internet for residents, businesses and visitors

More and more of New York’s government services can be accessed online. These include applying for home energy assistance or tuition assistance, conducting job searches or posting career opportunities, renewing a professional license, or searching for shovel-ready building sites. Today, more than 350 state government services and transactions are available on the Internet.

Excerpted from Press release Dec. 6, 2007 from Governor Spitzer’s Office.

The Informer

League of Women Voters of the Plattsburgh Area



January 2008

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League of Women Voters First Friday Forum

January 4, 2008

12 noon

Butcher Block Restaurant



Topic: “Update in the efforts to bring broadband to the North Country”

Speaker: Julie West, Project Coordinator of CBN CONNECT
(CBN-community broadband network)

\$12.00 Soup and Salad Bar

RSVP by January 3rd to Carole Cao-Ba 563-3903 or tzivia12@aol.com

January 4, 2008	First Friday Forum: Update on Broadband
January 26, 2008	Annual Pot Luck Brunch- see p. 1
February 1, 2008	First Friday Forum: TBA
February 14, 2008	Recycling Committee Meeting - see p.1
March 7, 2008	First Friday Forum: TBA
April 4, 2008	First Friday Forum: TBA
April 27, 2008	Earth Day - tentative date



December First Friday Forum Report

by Betsy Metz

Dr. Colin Read, Dean of the School of Business and Economics at Plattsburgh State, discussed issues affecting the value of the U.S. dollar at the December First Friday Forum..

Trade facts:

- * Greatest volume of trade is with Canada and China.
 - * Canada and U.S. have greater bilateral trade than any other countries in the world.
 - * The strong Canadian dollar is due to high oil prices. The demand for oil is “fueled” by the strong growth in China and India. Canada has the second largest crude oil reserves in the world. The high cost of crude makes drilling cost effective. Note: Venezuela has the largest reserves, but the oil is less accessible at 200 feet below the earth’s surface. Canada also exports the highly desired minerals of copper, aluminum and gold.
 - * Concerns about inflation increases in the U.S. has prompted the Fed to try to slow the economy while also trying to ward off a recession due to the Chinese trade balance. The Chinese flow of U.S. dollars back to the States keeps interest rates low.
 - * The strong Canadian dollar benefits the local economy which is counter cyclical, as is that of Alaska [due to high oil revenues]. The weaker U.S. dollar makes our goods more competitive.
 - * Import/export impact - Canadian border used to be commerce not security based, ex. Chrysler car parts cross the border 15 times during the production of a car. Security inspection delays are significant.
- Major factors led to the current U.S. trade and budget deficit. Historically, Japan was in a developing status. In the 1970’s oil crisis, Japan produced the only gas efficient vehicles so became a major supplier. In the 1980’s the U.S. initiated a huge spending push to out-strip the Russians. Russia could not keep up, so the U.S. won the economic war. Japan did not want to buy U.S. products, but did want our stocks, bonds, and companies. Thus, the U.S. “banked” with Japan until Japan’s 1987 collapse.

Currently the U.S. “banks” with China which holds \$1.4 trillion of U.S. reserves. The U.S. sells bonds to China. The total current U.S. debt is \$9 trillion. The U.S. trade deficit and budget deficit are almost the same. The country is approaching the point when more debt will be foreign owned than self-owned.



Dr. Colin Read, Inge Sapp, Myra Decker

Production has slipped from 60% of the U.S. economy to 20%. The high cost of production precludes a reversal. Chinese goods are under-priced. The U.S. labor force now provides services [70-80% of the economy] in our country and should do so in the world - it should try to compete in the high tech field. As efficiency increases, the cost decreases.

Chinese goods are very expensive in regards to environmental degradation and job loss. The European Union has higher environmental criteria than the States. The U.S. has not supported the Kyoto Accords and hurt its own environment during its Industrial Revolution so should not moralize.

The inferior quality of Chinese products is possibly overblown for political reasons. China complies with the EU’s higher standards for manufactured products.

The Canadian economy is resource driven. China is driven by manufacturing with cheap labor and excess people. The U.S. is consumer driven. India is the world leader in banking. The U.S. typically wants other countries to adjust their economies to shore up the U.S. problems, for example, wants China to revalue its currency. Chinese currency is

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other states, one party or another draws the districts so they will have many more seats that they would be entitled to if fair lines were drawn. In either case, the people are locked out. Decisions are not made by the electorate, but by politicians manipulating the electorate.

The Progressive Era Woman

The efforts of women during the Progressive Era significantly impacted the lives of countless Americans and led to many of the “luxuries” we take for granted today - including clean water, trash collection, hot lunches at schools, community playgrounds, fire codes for office buildings, public libraries, and so much more.



Puck cartoon depicting the “New Woman” in a variety of situations, always on a bicycle, 1895, Library of Congress

At the end of the nineteenth century, women were considered the “moral guardians” and protectors of the home. During the Progressive Era, female reformers used this ideology to argue that in order to protect the home, women should move into the public sphere where they could exercise their moral authority over issues such as public sanitation and education, which ultimately affected the home. In massive numbers, women joined volunteer organizations to work for reform. Efforts often began at the local level, and expanded to the state and national level. Women conducted research, implemented programs, and lobbied for legislation to address social, political, and economic problems.

Middle-class clubwomen and settlement workers organized to address issues of education, health-care, and political corruption. Working women organized on their own and in partnership with middle-class women to raise wages and improve working conditions. African American women

organized to combat racism and provide mutual support. Together, their efforts led to real improvements in the lives of many Americans.

The status of women was changing rapidly in the Progressive Era. For the most part, middle-class white married women still did not work outside the home. Women workers were primarily young and single, or widows, divorcees, poor married women, and/or women of color. In addition, most women continued to work in agriculture, in factories, and as domestic servants. African American women, in particular, worked as domestic servants in large numbers.

However, new jobs were opening up for some women as well. Many women began to find employment in department stores. Middle-class women were able to find jobs as clerical workers (typists, clerks, and telephone operators). Finally, more middle- and upper class women were graduating from college and entering white-collar professions. A few women excelled as lawyers, doctors, journalists, and scientists. At the time, however, professional women often chose or were forced to remain single.

Recognizing the changes that were occurring in the lives of some women, the public and the press coined a phrase for these women, the “New Woman.” The “New Woman” was supposedly young, college educated, active in sports, interested in pursuing a career, and looking for a marriage based on equality.

The Birth Control Movement

Women in the reform movement also worked on many issues related to sexuality, marriage, and childbirth. Some reform women worked to censure pornography, abolish prostitution and “white slavery” (today called trafficking in women), and raise the age of sexual consent. Other women worked to hold men to the same standards of sexual conduct as women, promoted sexual education, and asserted the right of wives to refuse sex within marriage.

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continued from p. 6 “National Mail Vote Form” We do not support, however, the approval of any additional unspecified changes that might be deemed to be “technical.” It is unclear what criteria or indicators the EAC, the staff, or the states might use to differentiate a “technical” change from other types of changes. In voter registration, “technical” requirements quickly become barriers to participation, and we see no authority for the EAC to approve such barriers without public notice and comment on a specific proposal. We do not support an indefinite, general or open-ended category of changes.

The League believes that the supplementary description in the proposal, quoted below, best summarizes the proposal, and we support it:

“The agency should administratively transfer regulations previously adopted and maintained by the FEC regarding the NVRA. The administrative transfer would move the existing FEC regulations (11 C.F.R. 8) to the EAC’s Code of Federal Regulations site and only make technical changes to the mailing address and contact information for the agency.”

League Urges FEC to Reform Campaign Contribution Requirements

The League and other groups recently submitted commentary to the Federal Election Commission, urging the agency to reform the campaign contribution system and shed light on the “bundling” practices of lobbyists.

The bundling disclosure requirements in section 204 of the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, Pub. L. 110–81, 121 Stat. 735 (HLOGA), are key provisions in this important new ethics and lobbying reform law. The principle behind these reform provisions is simple: to shed light on a growing campaign finance practice whereby lobbyists organize and provide large sums of money to federal candidates in an effort to gain access and influence over decisions made by federal officeholders. Through the practice of

bundling, lobbyists get recognized for delivering total contributions far in excess of the limits imposed on the contributions they can make in their own name. And with that recognition comes the opportunity for the lobbyist to influence government decisions on behalf of their clients. There has never been systematic disclosure of this practice, although it is widespread, growing, and of acknowledged importance among the professional lobbyists who are in the business of influencing Congress. For the first time, because of this reform, the public will receive information about which lobbyists engage in bundling, which federal candidates they provide money to, and how much they provide to each federal candidate in “bundled” contributions.

Americans for Redistricting Reform

On November 29, the Campaign Legal Center, the LWVUS and the Council for Excellence in Government named Pam Pryor project director for Americans for Redistricting Reform. The project is scheduled to launch officially in early 2008 and has been guided by a broad coalition of organizations. With initial funding provided by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the new initiative’s goal is to build public support and be a resource for state-level redistricting reform efforts throughout the country. Redistricting reform is an issue that goes to the heart of our democratic system of government. Representative democracy depends on the voters freely choosing their elected officials. When, instead, officials choose their voters, our system cannot work for long.

The problems with unfair and partisan gerrymandering are as old as the Republic. But today, with the advent of modern computers and intensifying partisanship, it is possible to create legislative districts where the results of an election will be known before any votes are cast or tabulated. This is just what is happening across the nation. And it threatens our democracy.

In some states, incumbents of both parties get together to protect themselves from real elections. In

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not as under-valued as the U.S. says. China needs money for building and infra-structure improvements, including efforts for the 2008 Olympics.

The U.S. budget could be fixed by reducing involvement in international conflicts. The Afghanistan & Iraq wars currently have cost \$1 trillion which is 10% of the total economy. The equates to a tax bill of \$5,000-\$10,000 for every citizen.

China’s government is very Communist and undemocratic, but it tries to keep everyone happy. Popular projects are buildings [currently 1,000 cranes in Beijing are building hi-rises], infrastructure and manufacturing products. China must meet its basic necessities for food and shelter before it has the “luxury” of addressing the environment and democracy.



Elle Berger, Kathy Schumacher, Carole Cao-Ba and Pearlie Rabin

What the U.S. can do:

- Change or eliminate subsidies which have SEVERELY impacted African cotton and Mexican corn production. African and Mexican farmers cannot compete with the prices of the U.S. products.
- Teach how to produce products and help develop markets for those products, thus people can make a living in their native lands.
- Educate people to take over low level jobs, ex. 1 laptop/child in Africa [The purchase of a laptop in the States at a higher price pays for the purchase and shipment of a 2nd laptop to a child in Africa.]

Developing countries have the advantage of implementing the newest technologies such as satellite communication instead of wire transmission.

In closing, the housing financing problem was discussed.

Bill of Rights Celebrated 217th Anniversary

December 15th marked the 217th anniversary of the signing of the Bill of Rights. League of Women Voter’s President Mary Wilson called for the continued protection of civil liberties and constitutional protections at home and continued commitment to fostering democracy abroad.



“Today we celebrate the Bill of Rights, a living reminder of our fundamental civil and human rights such as the freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion; protections against unreasonable searches; and the right to counsel and a jury trial,” said Wilson. “For 87 years, the League has been a defended these civil liberties, and we continue this emphasis today..”

“Throughout the year, League members work in their communities to protect the liberties that this document guarantees all American citizens,” said Wilson. “At the same time, the League works to promote democratic participation and respect for civil liberties across the globe.”

The protection of the individual liberties laid out in the Bill of Rights has been central to the League’s work throughout its history. During World War II, the League worked to balance the preservation of civil liberties with the importance of national security. During the Communist “witch hunt” period of the early 1950s, the League conducted a community education program known as the Freedom Agenda, providing Americans with the opportunity to discuss and learn about the Bill of Rights. More recently, the League has urged lawmakers to protect civil liberties, promoted an independent judiciary,

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continued from p. 4 “Bill of Rights” and sponsored numerous education projects aimed at informing citizens of their rights. “The Bill of Rights is not only an important part of our nation’s history, but also a living document that will guide us into the future.” Wilson concluded.

Discussions around the Red-Blue Divide

On Wednesday, November 28th, 2007, the League of Women Voters and Elderhostel kicked off a special nationwide series addressing the “Red-Blue Divide”. The day-long launch event, held at the National Press Club, featured an impressive lineup of special guests, including noted political scholar Marvin Kalb and a number of premiere political scholars and practitioners.



To listen to the following discussions, go to www.lwv.org, and click on the title.

Is Everything Really Red or Blue? (And Should We Care?)

First panel of “An Era of Polarized Politics -- and Does it Matter?” Panelists include Donna Addikson, Senior Associate, Lake Research Partners; Kat Barr, Director of Education, Rock The Vote; Peter Harkness, Editor, Governing Magazine and Nancy Tate, Executive Director, League of Women Voters of the United States.

Other Players in the Game: Who Makes a Difference --- For Better or Worse?

The second panel of “An Era of Polarized Politics -- and Does it Matter?” Introduction by Mary G. Wilson, President of the LWVUS. Panelists include Terence Smith, Former Media Correspondent, The News Hour, PBS and Allison Fine, Author and Senior Associate, DEMOS.

Nine Sundays - Expanding the Political Discourse

Luncheon address from “An Era of Polarized Politics -- and Does it Matter?” Panelists include Mary Wilson, President, LWV and Marvin Kalb, Senior Fellow, Shorenstein Center, JFK School, Harvard University

How Divided Have We Been and Where Can We Go from Here?

Third panel of “An Era of Polarized Politics -- and Does it Matter?” Panelists include Nancy Tate, Executive Director, LWV; Dr. Pietro Nivola, Vice President, Brookings Institution, Director of Governance Studies Program, and editor of “Red & Blue Nation”; Dr. William Galston, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution and Ron Brownstein, Political Director, Atlantic Media, and author of “The Second Civil War.” Closing comments by Mary Wilson, President, LWV.

LWV Tackles Voter Disenfranchisement in the States

Phase II of the League’s Public Advocacy for Voter Protection Project is now in full swing, expanding critical statewide efforts to oppose voter disenfranchisement and improve election administration. To learn more about one issue that has a significant negative impact on voter participation read **Michael Slater’s article** in the **October 2007 issue of *The National Voter***.

Purchase “Choosing the President 2008”

The LWVEF has once again updated our comprehensive guide to the presidential election process, *Choosing the President 2008*. Read about the participants (the voters, candidates, parties, media, and who gives and who gets the money) and the process (the primaries and caucuses, nominating conventions, the general election campaign and Election Day). This book is an essential tool for everyone – students, first-time voters and long-time voters – as we prepare for the 2008 Presidential election. We are offering this exceptional guide at a discounted price of \$11.00! Go to www.lwv.org to purchase.

Presidential Questionnaire Results

The LWVs of IL, MI, MN, OH and WI participated in the Midwest Democracy Network (MDN), an informal alliance of 20 civic and public interest groups in those states. MDN invited all presiden-

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continued from p. 5 “Questionnaire” tial candidates to answer a set of questions on federal political reform issues including campaign finance, government ethics, communications policy, election laws, voting rights and redistricting. To see the results go to www.midwestdemocracynetwork.org.

League Calls Presidential Public Financing Bill

Washington, D.C.– The League of Women Voters praised the introduction of the bipartisan Presidential Funding Act of 2007 by Senators Russ Feingold (D WI) and Susan Collins (R ME) and Representatives Chris Shays (R CT) and David Pryce (D NC). The legislation would revive the federal election process and level the playing field for all candidates.

“The dollar sign has too tight a hold over our democracy,” said national League president Mary G. Wilson. “All signs point to the 2008 election being the first billion-dollar presidential election in our nation’s history. That is a new record that many of us will not be celebrating,” Wilson said. “I can’t imagine that our next president wants the label – “Billion Dollar President” – affixed to their legacy.”

“This is a make-or-break year for the presidential public financing system in this country,” said Wilson. “This legislation is an essential step toward leveling the playing field and revitalizing our elections. “For the past thirty years, every president has been elected based on a publicly-financed general election. The next president should come into office on the strength of public funds, not private donations primarily from wealthy donors and special interest bundlers,” Wilson stated.

“Americans deserve a fair and healthy election system – one in which candidates are more concerned with the issues than their daily fundraising reports,” added Wilson. “It is imperative that this Congress address the fundamental weaknesses in our presidential financing system before it is too late.”

League Supports Change in Authority Over National Mail Vote Form

The League of Women Voters of the United States is pleased to support the proposal to administratively transfer to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) regulations previously adopted and maintained by the Federal Election Commission regarding the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA).

We appreciate that the EAC has sought public comment on this proposal because we believe that providing the opportunity to comment helps build understanding and support for the work of the EAC, leads to better decision-making in the long term, and is provided by law.

Section 802 of the Help America Vote Act transferred to the EAC all the authority under the NVRA exercised by Federal Election Commission. Thus, the League supports the proposed transfer of the appropriate regulations. We note that “this administrative transfer of the regulations would make no substantive changes to the FEC regulations.” We support the approach of making no substantive changes.

In addition, the proposal states that “the only changes made would be technical, such as the address and contact information for the responsible agency.” The League strongly supports the proposal to allow the responsible agency in each state and the EAC to update the single address to which voter registration applications forms should be submitted or to which requests for information should be directed. It is important that the public have the current address of the appropriate agency and that the state-specific portions of the mail voter registration application form contain this information. We believe that the EAC should update the address and contact information on a regular, periodic basis and that the chief State election official should provide that address and contact information to the EAC as part of that official’s responsibilities under Section 10 of the NVRA.