With revenue being the most important issue facing the legislature this session, our Day at the Legislature will feature speakers who will give us the details and offer some possible solutions. Even though Oregon’s economy is doing well, the state’s income is lagging behind the need to provide health care, education and public safety. In fact, the budget shortfall, based upon the current services level, is $1.8 billion.

There are a number of reasons for the shortfall. One is that more Oregonians than ever now have health care coverage. The Affordable Care Act’s expansion of Medicaid allowed the coverage of many more Oregonians. The coverage rate is now 95 percent. It has meant that many folks are now receiving care and having better health outcomes than ever before. But, the coverage comes with a cost. For the last three years, the federal government has paid for expanded Medicaid. Now, that support will drop to 90 percent. This is not responsible for all of the shortfall, but is a considerable part of it.

Another problem facing the legislature is that there may be a need to build another prison. The Women’s Prison at Coffee Creek is overcrowded. The League is working with the Partnership for Safety and Justice to find ways to avoid that. With crime rates decreasing, this coalition is an important voice in trying to slow down the costs of incarcerations.

Finally, education funding is again short. One issue is that the voters passed a measure to require that $800 million be devoted to reducing high school drop-out rates. While this is very important, it will have an effect on all other K-12 budget dollars. In addition, state higher education needs more money just to come back to where it was before the last recession. Most colleges, including community colleges, are raising tuition rates.

We will bring together speakers to address the options for legislators. The Action Committee hopes that many will be able to attend to learn what the League can do to try to solve these problems.
Supporting League’s Next Hundred Years, Making Democracy Work™

Did you see this amazing article about the League? [http://wapo.st/2kx9NyU](http://wapo.st/2kx9NyU) LWUS President Chris Carson says she has never seen this level of interest and growth in her 33 years with the League. New members are joining; Leagues are forming in new locations.

In easy political times, we take for granted that League’s work on voting rights, good governance and civil discourse will always be there. In fact, in good times, we even become complacent. In more challenging times, we are reminded that League has a long history, continues to be valued and needs to plan for future financial stability as well a meaningful advocacy and membership growth.

**LWVOR sees this as a key time to launch a significant fund raising campaign for the next hundred years. We know that people respond more to a personal phone call or visit rather than a letter or an email.** A significant opportunity exists to ask those who we have identified who have already donated to LWV to dig a little deeper—roughly half are League members, others are contributors but not members.

If you’d like to join this exciting opportunity to fundraise, contact Chris Vogel, LWVOR Development Chair, 503-586-8314, [ChrisVogelVolunteerLWVOR@gmail.com](mailto:ChrisVogelVolunteerLWVOR@gmail.com) and plan to attend a fundraising workshop on Friday, March 24 in Eugene, 11:00-2:30. Join us for a training session that will launch our Legacy Campaign—Supporting League’s Next Hundred Years, Making Democracy Work™

**Welcome New Members**

We are delighted that you have found or remembered us when looking for a way to be involved. We hope to provide you with avenues that match your interests and skills.

If you are interested in what the Oregon Legislature is doing in tax reform, climate change, anti-poverty programs, money in politics or any of the myriad topics that we, the League, follow, please sign up for our Legislative Report ([http://lwvor.org/home/take-action/legislative-reports/](http://lwvor.org/home/take-action/legislative-reports/)) and then contact one of the coordinators listed in the Taking Action Through Advocacy. They have ways for you to help even if you can’t be Salem.

If you have joined recently and have thoughts or questions, drop me a line. I would enjoy hearing from you.

Kathleen Hersh
Membership Director
k.hersh@lwvor.org
**LWVOR Convention 2017**

By Libby Medley

“Engaging our Communities, Preserving our Principles” is the theme of our State Convention being held May 5-7, 2017 at the Holiday Inn, Wilsonville, and hosted by the League of Women Voters of Clackamas County. The theme serves to provide direction in facing challenges for the coming year(s). It is based upon healing a divided nation at the grassroots level through two approaches: (1) working to engage our local communities in nonpartisan conversations about the critical issues facing us, and (2) standing behind our League Principles in the face of movements to limit citizen participation in government.

State conventions, the major biennial gatherings of League members from around the state, serve a multitude of purposes, not the least of which is just to see old friends and become reinvigorated as we catch up on other Oregon local League activities and experiences. The official primary purposes are to select state League leaders and adopt a program for the coming couple of years, along with a budget and “such other business as may be presented.”

**Convention Highlights:**

**Keynote Speaker:** Rick Shenkman, author of *Political Animals- How Our Stone Age Brain Gets in the Way of Smart Politics*, will provide an explanation for what actually influences voters in his presentation titled: “The Mysterious Voter: How They Make Up Their Minds.”

An award-winning investigative reporter, writer, historian, college lecturer and founder of the History News Network, Mr. Shenkman resides in Seattle, WA. To learn more, visit [http://www.rickshenkman.com/](http://www.rickshenkman.com/).

**Luncheon and Workshop Speaker:** Amy Hjerstedt, LWVUS Board member and LWVOR liaison, who co-chaired the Young People Task Force and served as a LWVUS Diversity Advisor, is a former member of the LWV of Portland, OR, currently residing in Arlington, VA.

**WORKSHOPS:**

**Parliamentary Procedure:** Friday evening

Additional workshops: Saturday afternoon-- Civil Discourse, plus Engaging New Members

**OTHER OPPORTUNITIES:**

**Local Historical Presentation:** Learn about the Willamette Falls Legacy Project, a long-term effort to restore access to an important Oregon historical and cultural treasure: Friday afternoon.

**Dine-Around:** Friday evening

Presidents’ Reception: Saturday evening

Caucuses: Friday and Saturday evenings, TBA

**Extended opportunities:** Come early or stay late and enjoy the hotel’s reduced rate while exploring historical sites/museums at the end of the Oregon Trail, visiting the nearby Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge, riding the Canby Ferry across the Willamette, shopping or just visiting family or friends.
The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good.

The LWVOR Legislative Action Team prioritized four key areas for the 2017 session:

- **REVENUE AND TAX REFORM** by adopting stable and fair revenue policies and tax reforms to adequately fund services and functions critical to the well-being of Oregonians.
- **PROTECTING DEMOCRACY** by minimizing the influence of money in politics and promoting more representative elections systems.
- **ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE** by supporting legislation to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions fast enough to avoid serious damage to the global climate ecosystem.
- **ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS** to help low income citizens move toward financial stability.

LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. You may follow League action activities, read positions, subscribe to our Legislative Reports, and follow League testimony at [http://lwvor.org/home/take-action](http://lwvor.org/home/take-action). Direct legislative inquiries to: Alice Bartelt, Action Chair, 503.246.0496, a.bartelt@lwvor.org or contact legislative coordinators listed below in governance, natural resources, social policy and education. General questions about LWVOR may be directed to Norman Turrill, President, 503.827.8251, n.turrill@lwvor.org or Sarah Andrews, LWVOR Office Coordinator, 503.581.5722.

**GOVERNANCE**

Addresses campaign finance reform, citizen participation and access, economic development, fair election laws, public records law and fair redistricting. Actively lobbies for fair and equitable tax and revenue policies and revenue stabilization that adequately fund services and functions critical to the well-being of Oregonians.

Governance Coordinator: Becky Gladstone, 541.510.9387, rebecca.gladstone@gmail.com

- Revenue and Tax: Alice Bartelt, Chris Vogel, Claudia Keith, Peggy Lynch, a.bartelt@lwvor.org
- Campaign Finance Reform, Redistricting: Norman Turrill, n.turrill@lwvor.org
- Election Issues: Kappy Eaton, gopher44@comcast.net
- National Popular Vote: Marge Easley, marge.easley@frontier.com

Public Access Coordinator: Paula Krane, 541.752.2361, kranep@peak.org
SOCIAL POLICY

Addresses adult corrections, judicial, public safety, gun safety, health care, mental health, housing, juvenile justice, foster care, social services and women’s issues. Actively lobbies for anti-poverty programs to help low income citizens move toward financial stability.

**Social Policy Coordinator: Karen Nibler, 541.752.8567 niblerk@comcast.net**

- Housing: Debbie Aiona, mdjaiona@aracnet.com
- Gun Safety: Marge Easley, marge.easley@frontier.com
- Death Penalty Repeal: Alice Bartelt, a.bartelt@lwvor.org
- Adult Corrections: Barbara Ross, bross@exchangenet.net
- Women’s Issues: Debbie Runciman, runciman@onlinemac.com

EDUCATION POLICY

Addresses early learning, bridging P-3, K-12, career technical programs, higher education; and advocates to minimize factors impacting education for children at risk, historically underserved and underachieving youth.

**Education Policy Coordinator: Chris Vogel, 503.586.8314, chrisvogelvolunteerlwvor@gmail.com**

- Higher Education: Alice Bartelt, a.bartelt@lwvor.org
- High School, Local School Boards: Judy Ball, baljk@aol.com
- Early Learning and P/3: Nancylee Stewart, nancylee.b.stewart@gmail.com
- Great Schools, Great Communities: Robin Wisdom, rwisdom@jeffnet.org

NATURAL RESOURCES

Addresses improved air quality, combating climate change, coastal management, clean energy, proper disposal of hazardous materials and solid waste, conservation, land use, parks, clean and abundant water supply for all, and resource preservation. *Actively works on budgets related to Oregon's 14 natural resource agencies.*

**Natural Resources Coordinator: Peggy Lynch, 541.745.1025 peggylynchor@gmail.com**

- Climate Change: Claudia Keith, ca.keith@comcast.net, Cathy Frischman, cathyberry13@hotmail.com
- Land Use/Aggregate: Marge Easley, marge.easley@frontier.com
- Energy (Northwest Energy Coalition Rep): Theresa Gibney, theresa_volunteer@comcast.net
- Statewide Transportation Issues: Robin LaMonte, robinlamonte3@gmail.com
- Elliott/Forestry: Jennifer Haynes, jennifer.a.haynes@comcast.net
- Air Quality: Marilyn Koenitzer, marwilko@comcast.net
- Columbia River Treaty: Phillip Thor, pratthor@gmail.com
We live in challenging times. The new national administration and congressional leadership have been making ominous sounds. The League, however, cannot react to ominous sounds or even to what appear to be poor presidential appointment choices. Because the League is strictly nonpartisan and never supports or opposes any candidate or political party, we also cannot support or oppose any personality or political appointee, no matter how bad their ideas seem to be. We must patiently wait until we can apply our positions to concrete issues and proposals.

Likewise, at the state level with the legislature now in full swing in Salem: Thousands of bills have been proposed and drafted. However, the LWVOR cannot react or advocate about the personalities and their ideas. We must patiently wait until the ideas are drafted into bills that start moving through the hearing and adoption process. Then is when we can start advocating based on our positions.

Even when a bill starts to move in the legislature and gets a public hearing, we should not over-react because many bills that are being heard in committees in February and March are only getting a “courtesy hearing” to test the waters for their ideas. This is when the League should begin to apply our positions strategically, testifying only where we have the volunteers, resources and positions to make a difference on behalf of our members and the citizens of the state. There are many important bills being heard at this stage of the legislature, but only a few of these bills can truly make a difference and can gain our support or opposition.

If you have been following the work of our amazing Action Team through our Legislative Report (LR), then you know that we are following hundreds of bills that are now beginning to move. However, although we discuss in the LR only bills where we have applicable positions, only a few of these bills are strategically important. Strategically important means we (1) have an appropriate position, (2) we have appropriate resources in money, volunteers and staff time, and (3) we have an appropriate opportunity with effective legislators and other organizations supporting or opposing the bills.

There are many merely important issues and bills that will be discussed during this legislative session and that are detailed in the LR and elsewhere in this Voter. However, only by applying a strategic filter to these issues, can the LWVOR be successful and truly make a difference.

Patience is a virtue.
Norman Turrill, n.turrill@lwvor.org
What is Voter Education?

Anne Emmons, Mock Elections Chair

In every election, voter and civic education are necessary to ensure that all citizens understand their rights, their political system, the contests they are being asked to decide, and how and where to vote. Outreach to citizens with visual or hearing impairment is a critical component. Information in minority languages must also be made available. Additionally, Oregon voters must understand how to mark their mail-in ballots properly to make sure their votes are counted. If these needs are not met, there is a risk that many voters will be unable to make informed decisions.

For an election to be successful and democratic, voters must understand their rights and responsibilities, and must be sufficiently knowledgeable and well informed to cast ballots and participate meaningfully in the voting process.

The League of Women Voters has a long history of providing these resources for Americans!

Is Voter Education Important?

Many people feel that voting and voter education doesn’t matter. But our democracy only works when well-informed citizens participate.

In many democracies, voter education, and the broader concept of civic education begin in elementary school. This prepares students to understand the role they can play in democracy when they become eligible to vote. It also enables them to relay information to their parents about the electoral process. The LWV provides nonpartisan resources to our elementary, secondary and university students, as well as reaching out to all constituents.

"A Voteless People is a Hopeless People" was a national program during the 1930's when many African-Americans had the right to vote but were prevented from voting because of poll taxes, threats of reprisal, and lack of education about the voting process.

The League is committed to making sure that there are no “Voteless/Hopeless” people in the United States. And, even though we have just completed a presidential election cycle, it is time to begin the work anew that will encourage all eligible voters to participate.
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