



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

October 2009

President: Patte Newman
President-Elect: Mary Boschult
Secretary: Carol Connor
Treasurer: Margaret Remmenga
Voter Editor: Jim Johnson

Calendar of Events

October 15 (Thursday): Noon
LWVLL Lunch & Learn.
Guest: Lori Seibel
Topic: *Update of the
Mayor's Health Care
Task Force*
US Bank Bldg 20th Floor,
13th & M Streets, Lincoln.
Reservations required by
Monday noon, October 12.
*Reservations must be
honored.*
Contact the League office
by email at
lwv-ne@inebraska.com
or by phone at 475-1411
Include your name, the
number of reservation
requested, contact
information (phone and/or
email) and if you want a
vegetarian meal.
See article at right.

League of Women Voters Lunch and Learn to Focus on Health Care for all Residents of Lincoln

Join us to hear how city and county officials are working with private providers to help address the care needs of our residents.

In May, 2009, Mayor Beutler appointed a 26 member task force to conduct a comprehensive review of Lincoln Health Care Safety Net for residents who have no long term health insurance. After a lengthy process, the committee has formed their short and long recommendations. Lori Seibel, the CEO of the Community Health Endowment of Lincoln, will discuss the Advisory Committee process and their recommendations to help increase access to medical care for all Lincoln residents.

In the past 10 years, as CEO of Community Health Endowment of Lincoln, Mrs. Seibel has been involved in the establishment of the Endowment, as well as its funding priorities and investment strategy. She serves a 15 member governing Board of Trustees.

Prior to her current position, Seibel served as an Aide to Mayors Mike Johanns and Dale Young. She was also the City of Lincoln's epidemiologist for six years. Lori Seibel attended Peru State College and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she received a Master's Degree in Preventive Medicine.

Lunch and Learn events are open to the public. Mrs. Seibel will speak on Thursday, October 15th at 12:00 noon on the 20th floor of the US Bank Building, 13th and M Streets. The cost is \$10 and includes, lunch, speaker, tax and gratuity. **Binding Reservations are required** by noon, Monday, October 12th and can be made by contacting the League Office by email at lwv-ne@inebraska.com or by phone at 475-1411. Include your name, the number of reservations requested, contact information (phone and email) and if you want a vegetarian meal. All reservations are expected to be honored.

The League of Women Voters Lunch & Learn events are held on the third Thursday of each month from September through May at noon on the 20th floor of the US Bank Building, 13th and M Streets. With advance reservations, all luncheons are open to the public. The November Lunch and Learn will feature Jim Otto, President of the Nebraska Retail Federation, speaking on Economic Retail Trends.

LWVLL Participates in Health Care Rally

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that quality affordable health care should be available to all U.S. residents.

Local League of Women Voters members participated in healthcare rallies in August and September to push for healthcare reform.



On Tuesday, August 25th a crowd estimated at between 600 and 800 crowded the west Capitol steps to listen to speakers representing the medical profession, teachers, small business owners, faith communities and State Senators Jeremy Nordquist and Amanda McGill in support of reform. Nick Rathod, associate director for intergovernment affairs representing the White House discussed the options being considered and encouraged people to make their views known to their elected officials.



Event sponsors included AARP Nebraska, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Nebraska, AFL-CIO, Center for People in Need, Center for Rural Affairs, Change to Win, Interfaith Workers Justice, League of Women's Voters Lancaster County, Nebraska Alliance for Healthcare Reform, Nebraska Appleseed, Nebraska Association of Social Workers, Nebraska Health Care for America Now, Nebraska State Education Association, Organizing for America, SEIU Change That Works Nebraska, Voices for Children in Nebraska.

Our thanks to Martha Hunter for working diligently to get the national position of the League included in the press packets and distributed at the rally. Thanks to Chuck Bentjen for sharing his photos.

A second event attended by League members was a vigil to support a public option at Woods Park, Wednesday, September 2nd. We encourage all League members to get educated on this topic and weigh in.



Editor's Note: The following story appeared in the Lincoln Journal Star on September 18, 2009, quoting from Jim Partington's appearance at the September 17 Lunch & Learn.

Restaurant executive promoting immigration coalition

By Art Hovey / Lincoln Journal Star | Posted: Friday, September 18, 2009 4:30 am

Over a long career that he ended as a rear admiral, Jim Partington heard the deafening roar of Navy jets off the coast of Vietnam.

Now the executive director of the Nebraska Restaurant Association is listening to the debate over immigration reform and finding it almost as overpowering.

"I think the level of noise has just gotten too high," he told a League of Women Voters audience in Lincoln on Thursday.

Partington would like to lower the volume. He also has a more specific goal: He wants to form a Nebraska coalition of business leaders, academics and others to counter the emotion surrounding immigration reform.

It's important to understand the pros and cons, he told about 50 luncheon listeners, "but at least let's get a rationale debate going."

"If we don't want immigration, we're going to have a stagnant economy."

From a Nebraska perspective, 50 percent of the population growth from 2000 to 2008 was of Hispanic origin. And demographics translate to economic development.

In a more practical vein, he conceded that a highly restrictive version of immigration reform "would affect the restaurant industry quite severely."

In an interview after his hour-long presentation, Partington readily acknowledged the coalition isn't a reality yet.

Nor does he have a specific endorsement from members of the association at either the state or national level to promote such goals as increasing the number of visas for legal immigration or creating a national identification card.

"They are very interested in comprehensive immigration reform," he said.

At the state level, "I expect to reach that point" of a coalition within in a year. He wants it to be one that emphasizes education over political lobbying.

When the time came for questions after Partington's remarks, it seemed apparent there's no such thing as an audience without reservations about where immigration reform might go.

Deb Andrews, who's back in Lincoln after living in Portland, Ore., for several years, said she found it "very disconcerting" to see Hispanic demonstrators waving Mexican flags during a reform rally in Portland.

Diana McNeil clearly had misgivings about penalty-free amnesty for 12 million or more people already living in the United States without legal status.

"If I broke the law," McNeil said, "I would have to answer for that.

"I don't think you can ever get it away from being political, because it is political."

Partington said reform should include some sort of penalty for illegal entry.

However, "it shouldn't be too onerous and we shouldn't be sending them back to their country of origin."

When it comes to rational debate, he said, "we should take this out of the realm of politicians who use it as a wedge issue against each other."

Securing borders is an important part of that debate, Partington said, but he sees making that the top priority as the politically correct approach.

"The truth is if we don't have a legal way for people to come across the border. ... We're not going to get control of our international borders."

Another sign of strong and conflicting feelings about immigration in Nebraska is an ongoing battle over a proposed ordinance in Fremont that failed by one vote at a City Council meeting last year.

As summarized Thursday by City Administrator Bob Hartwig, the failed ordinance "relates to harboring, hiring or renting to illegal aliens."

It is now before the Nebraska Court of Appeals.

Hartwig isn't sure what would happen next, regardless of how the court rules.

"Anything is possible now," he said. "I wouldn't even try to give options for the future."

Reach Art Hovey at 473-7223 or ahovey@journalstar.com.





League Dedicates Oak Tree to Helen Boosalis

Thanks to the generosity of League members and friends, over \$1300 was raised in the name of Helen Boosalis to give back to the community.

The League-sponsored Lancaster County Directory of Elected Officials and yearbook are being finalized and distributed this autumn, financed in part by some specifically designated memorials.

On September 17th, several dozen League members, friends and family of Helen gathered to dedicate a red oak planted in her honor. The tree will provide future shade for benches next to the Boosalis bike trail off 38th and Highway 2. A commemorative plaque marks the spot noting Helen's lifetime membership in the League of Women Voters.

League President-Elect Mary Boschult opened the ceremony recounting some of Helen's noteworthy accomplishments. Representatives read letters from United States Senators Nelson and Johanns and Congressman Fortenberry. City Parks and Rec Director, Lynn Johnson spoke about Helen's commitment to a strong Parks system and thanked the League for this gift to further that commitment. Former Mayor Coleen Seng and former County Commissioner Jan Gauger reminded the group of the trails that Helen blazed for women in this community. Mike Boosalis and daughter Mary Beth Davis closed up the ceremony with personal anecdotes and remembrances of their wife and mother.

It was noted that the oak was Helen's favorite tree and this was a perfect tribute for a long lasting memorial from the League.

Special thanks to all who helped organize, attended, donated or participated in making this dedication a memorable event.

Please note that a copy of *"Mayor Helen Boosalis, My Mother's Life in Politics"* has been donated by Mary Beth to the League of Women Voters local library for checkout. It is personally inscribed: *To the Lincoln League of Women Voters, where Mom's political path began. The LLWV was always near and dear to her heart. Best wishes from another Leaguer, Beth Boosalis Davis.*



LWVUS Action Request: Pass JUSTICE Act to Protect Privacy

Judy Duffy, LWVUS Advocacy Chair, has asked local Leagues to announce that League has signed onto a letter supporting a bill that was heard September 15 in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Letter is posted below, or see <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=14158> to see the full letter including the list of sponsors and recipients.

(Addressed to the 10 members of the Senate Judiciary Committee)

Dear Senator,

On behalf of a diverse group of public interest and other advocacy organizations, we wish to express our support for S.1686, the Judiciously Using Surveillance Tools In Counterterrorism Efforts (JUSTICE) Act. We commend you for introducing legislation that will amend many provisions of law that have diminished Americans' privacy over the last eight years and we urge Congress to pass this bill as soon as possible.

Your legislation recognizes that amending the three expiring provisions of the Patriot Act is only the first step towards restoring Americans' privacy. Passed in 2001, the Patriot Act and its reauthorizing legislation in 2006 loosened restrictions on domestic surveillance. The 2008 FISA Amendments Act removed the warrant requirement for wiretapping certain communications going into and out of the country. Taken together, these two laws vastly expanded the government's ability to collect information on Americans.

As Congress begins the process of reauthorizing portions of the Patriot Act, it is critical to take this opportunity to consider and amend these broader authorities that grant the government extraordinary authority to conduct surveillance on U. S. soil. For example, while authority for National Security Letters does not expire this year, the Department of Justice Inspector General found substantial NSL abuses, while a federal appeals court has ruled that the gag provisions of the national security letter statute violate the First Amendment, demonstrating a clear need for reform. Moreover, several other Patriot Act provisions have also been found unconstitutional.

We strongly urge the adoption of the JUSTICE Act, which addresses many of these problems. For example, JUSTICE would:

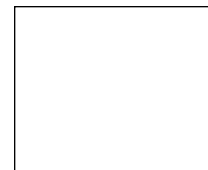
- Increase protections for communications such as phone calls and emails. S. 1686 amends the FISA Amendments act of 2008 to insure that international wiretapping programs are more targeted and that calls or emails into or out of the U. S. have greater protections. It also requires FISA wiretap orders to identify either the person or place to be tapped instead of permitting warrants that reference neither.
- Provide reasonable safeguards for sensitive records. The Justice Act requires some nexus between a suspected terrorist or spy and private records to be seized. For example, it restricts the national security letter statute and the FISA business orders provision of the Patriot Act so that government requests must relate to terrorists, their activities, or those in communication with them, thereby protecting the phone, credit, library and other records of innocent Americans. The bill also provides a meaningful opportunity to challenge in court both the order to produce records and the accompanying gag order.
- Respect the privacy of homes and businesses. S. 1686 amends the so - called "sneak and peek" provisions that make it easier for the government to search a home or business in criminal cases without simultaneously telling the owner. The bill insures that secret searches do not become the norm by carefully limiting the circumstances in which this power is available.

Once again, thank you for sponsoring the JUSTICE Act to reform the provisions of law that have so seriously infringed on our privacy. We look forward to working with you to make sure this important piece of legislation becomes law.

Sincerely,

(signed by 37 sponsors, including League of Women Voters of the U.S.)

The Lincoln Lancaster *Voter*
League of Women Voters ®
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