



Tallahassee VOTER



League of Women Voters of Tallahassee, Florida

Purpose: To Promote Political Responsibility Through Informed and
Active Participation of Citizens in Government

President - Mrs. N. E. La Seur
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Editor - Mrs. M. A. Dyckman
1609 Hasosaw Nene

Vol. VIII, No. 4 October, 1969

CALENDAR

- October 9 - 8:00 p.m. Membership Coffee. Home of Mrs. Robert Garvue, 3211 East Lakeshore Drive.
- October 14 - 10:00 a.m. Membership Coffee. Home of Mrs. William Watson, 2528 Mission Road.
- October 19 - 3-5 p.m. UN Day Tea, Lemoyne Art Foundation, 135 North Gadsden.
- October 22 - 8:00 p.m. Evening Unit on National Program Planning and Education and Overseas Education Fund (EF & OEF), Unitarian Church, 2810 North Meridian Road (The church is almost directly across from the Waverly Hills sign at Cold Stream Drive.)
- October 23 - 9:30 a.m. Morning Unit on National Program Planning and EF and OEF. First Presbyterian Church, Adams & W. Park Avenue.
- November 12 - 8:00 p.m. Evening Unit on Electoral College. Unitarian Church, (Resource Material and consensus questions on colored sheets.)
- November 13 - 9:30 a.m. Morning Unit on Electoral College. First Presbyterian Church.
- November 19 - 8:00 p.m. Regular Board Meeting, Home of Dorothy Sidwell.

MEMBERSHIP COFFEES

A cordial invitation is extended to all members and prospective members by Ann Megargee, membership chairman. Please come and get acquainted and "re-acquainted."

UN DAY TEA

Our League will co-sponsor the UN Day Tea with the United Nations Association. A special invitation has been given to the International Students Club. Hostesses for the League at the front door will be Frieda Emil, Jean Chaudheire, Charlotte Elee and Juanita Forbes.

Attention Members - Annual dues were due in April. If they are not paid by October 20th your name will not be in the new Membership Year-book and this will be the last Voter you will receive. Please mail your dues of \$7.50 to Mrs. William Watson, Treasurer, 2528 Mission Road, Tallahassee, Florida 32304.

Publications chairman, Abby Summerville has moved to Washington, D.C. We will miss her. Our new Publications chairman is Mrs. Wayne L. (Jackie) Mattice.

Our thanks for their enlightening presentations to Mrs. Wilma Sullivan, County Supervisor of Registration, and Mr. Louis Cook, City Auditor and Clerk.

TIMES FOR ACTION

CONTINUATION OF PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1964 (H. R. 513 and S. 1809)

Reasons for this Time for Action. Failure to renew authorization for programs authorized under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 is threatening the very existence of antipoverty agencies. Congressmen need to be reminded that there is strong support in their jurisdictions for programs supported by EOA legislation. Unless Congress acts soon, sagging morale can result in irreversible damage to the OEO and to community action agencies across the country. House leadership has hesitated to move this legislation out of committee for lack of assurance of sufficient support on the floor to get it passed. A strong show of support from the grassroots now can shift the balance of power in Congress to assure passage of a 2-year renewal of OEO authorization without crippling amendments.

What the League Can Do.

Every member of the Senate and House should hear from his constituents now of their support for the antipoverty program and their concern that OEO legislation be renewed for 2 years, with no weakening amendments.

Item: The Foreign Assistance Act of 1969 (H.R. 11792 and S. 2347)

NOW IS THE TIME FOR LETTERS FROM LEAGUES AND INTERESTED CITIZENS ON FOREIGN AID. More specifically, the right moment has come for Leagues whose Congressmen are on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to communicate with their representatives expressing support of the development aid provisions of the foreign aid bill.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TAILORING YOUR LETTERS

In this transitional year for foreign aid, it is essential to stress the need for continuing effective and adequately funded programs of development assistance to the poor countries.

It is, of course, important that your communications be tailored to fit your particular Congressman. Long standing opponents of foreign aid (some Republican and some Democrats) may well be resistant to any attempts at conversion no matter how effectively done.

The Congressmen most likely to respond to friendly persuasion are those with open minds on the subject or those who have begun to have doubts -- reflecting concern with competing budgetary demands for helping the poor at home or concern about foreign aid leading to military and political commitments by the United States, etc. For Congressmen in a reevaluation mood, it is especially appropriate to place

emphasis on new directions or needed improvements.

Item: Commemorative Stamp. Over the past two years many members have written us to suggest that the League request a Commemorative Stamp be issued in honor of the League's 50th Anniversary and to ask what they could do to help. The national Board agreed with the members that it would be appropriate for the League to ask that this be done.

Short notes to your Representatives and Senators might point out that

- ... the League will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 1970
- ... the League has provided civic education on a nonpartisan basis for five decades
- ... the League is a prime example of responsible political participation.
- ... the League has 157,000 members in 1275 communities in every state in the union, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia

and ask that the Congressmen endorse the idea of a stamp commemorating the League in a communication to the Postmaster General.

OCTOBER UNITS

National Program Making and a brief explanation of the League's two funds, Overseas Education Fund and the Education Fund are on the agenda. This is the first step of choosing the national LWV program for 1970-72 so come and take part in the discussion and share your ideas.

Babysitting will be available for the morning unit at the First Presbyterian Church at 50 cents a child.

LWV of Florida has published an Amendment Broadside concerning the proposed amendment on the November 4th ballot. The proposed amendment would reinstate authority to issue the bonds or certificates to provide funds for capital outlay (buildings and equipment) for state universities, junior colleges, and certain vocational schools until June 30, 1975. We will have these for you at all the coming meetings.

change it. An unusual interest in the electoral college built up during the 1968 election because of the possibility of a close race for the presidency between the major parties and the emergence of a third-party candidate. Thus, the electoral college became once again a unique showcase and interest in its reform, if not complete abolishment, has remained high even after the election.

As you know, the Electoral College system is an indirect method of selecting a president. We vote for electors which are usually chosen by the respective political parties. These electors vote as an Electoral College. In some states they are bound by law to vote for the candidate receiving the highest vote of the state. In other states, they may exercise independent judgment. This prerogative is rarely used but is always a possibility.

Many, many people realize that the present method of electing our President could become very complicated and feel that something should be done. But the big problem is....what do we substitute for the Electoral College plan? To date, no Congress has been able to provide the answer. The major alternate proposals are:

THE AUTOMATIC PLAN: This would do away with individual electors, retain the electoral vote, and provide that the candidate getting the most votes in a particular state would get all the electoral votes of that state...winner take all.

THE PROPORTIONAL PLAN: This plan would: 1) abolish the Electoral College. 2) Abolish electors. 3) Retain each state's electoral vote, which would be divided among the candidates in the same proportion as the state's popular vote is divided. If no candidate got a majority of the electoral vote nationally, the one with the most popular votes would be elected, providing he received at least 40 per cent of the popular vote. If no one got 40 per cent, the House and Senate, sitting jointly, would choose from the top two.

THE DISTRICT PLAN: Provides that electors be chosen by districts just as members of Congress are chosen. It preserves the Electoral College but ends the present procedure of giving a state's entire electoral vote to the popular vote winner in the state. A candidate would get one electoral vote for each congressional district he carried and two for carrying the state. If no candidate got a majority of the electoral votes nationally, the House and Senate, meeting jointly, would elect the President from the top three candidates.

THE DIRECT ELECTION: Abolishes the Electoral College and permits the people to vote directly for President and vice president instead of for electors. The candidate getting the most popular votes on a nationwide basis would be elected, if he polled at least 40 per cent. If no one got 40 per cent of the vote cast, the two leaders would meet in a run-off.

In September 1969 the House of Representatives passed House Joint Resolution 681--a proposed constitutional amendment for a direct popular vote plan to elect the President. This is the first time since 1950 that a vote has been taken by the House on Electoral College reform. Overall, the amendment was approved by a roll call vote of 339 to 70. Among the Florida congressmen, 5 Democrats and the 3 Republicans voted for the amendment, and 4 Democrats voted against it.

This amendment still needs a 2/3 vote in the Senate and

ELECTORAL COLLEGE
Charlotte Blee, Chairman

Did you know that modern League history was made in Chicago in May 1968 when the national convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States adopted A Study of the Electoral College as a new national program item?

This item had not been recommended by the national board. This unprecedented adoption of a not-recommended item was and is noteworthy. The convention delegates wanted this national program item. And they got it.

And the Tallahassee League has accepted this challenging study.

In the Tallahassee League we have made the first step in our study of this item. Last year a program of information was presented at a general League meeting which described the history of the Electoral College, its role today and proposals for change. In case you missed that meeting let's summarize a bit.

The Electoral College was instituted in 1787 as the way of electing a president. The Founding Fathers devised the Electoral College as a compromise method of choosing the President. Remember that when the Constitutional Convention met to revise the weak Articles of Confederation in 1787, they decided revision wasn't enough....and they went on to write our Constitution.

The delegates to that Convention were, in the main, landed gentry, wealthy, educated. Many were familiar with the history of English law and politics and with the governmental systems of Europe.

Generally these men were conservative and cautious. They also feared the lack of knowledge, wisdom and judgment of "the common man." Remember too, that voting at that time was confined almost exclusively to male property-holders, with a religious test also occasionally required. Transportation and communications were, of course, primitive, and for most of the population, education was extremely limited.

It isn't strange, then, that one of the hardest problems these delegates had to solve was how the chief executive of the new republic was to be chosen.

There was no president under the Articles of Confederation. There was no precedent for such an officer in the governments of Europe.

Just how should he be chosen? How should he be elected? The delegates were indeed baffled. Should he be chosen by popular vote? No, they didn't trust "raw democracy." By Congress? Four times a resolution passed the Convention to allow Congress to choose the president, but each time it was defeated.

Finally, history relates when the delegates became thoroughly fatigued and impatient, they compromised on having an indirect vote for the presidency. The final wording read:

"each state shall appoint, in such manner as the legislatures thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress."

This decision of 1787 has proved to be troublesome throughout the years.

One of the major problems is that the delegates could not foresee the development of political parties, which, incidentally are not even mentioned in the Constitution.

Since the electoral college system of electing a president was instituted more than 500 unsuccessful attempts have been made to

ratified by 38 states before going into effect.

At our November 12-13 meetings, the Tallahassee League will try to reach a consensus on the following questions:

1. Is a change needed in the method of electing the president and vice president of the United States? Yes ___ No ___
2. If a change is made in the method of election, does your League prefer that the President be chosen by:
Direct election by popular vote-_____or by an election process that includes a state-related step?_____
3. If the method of election is changed, what provisions would your League prefer for:
 - (a) The vote necessary to elect?
 - (b) Contingent election?
 - (c) retaining the office of elector?
 - (d) requiring in the Constitution that electors vote for the candidate on whose slate they were elected?
 - (e) distributing the electoral votes among the various candidates?
4. If provisions for electing the President and vice president are to be altered, what changes in the method of election does your League consider most necessary?

One thing is certain, League members. There is a wealth of information available on this timely topic....read it....study it.... and come to the November meeting (it will be discussed at both the morning and evening sessions) prepared to join with the committee in a lively discussion based on these consensus questions.

When this item was proposed for adoption at the convention in Chicago it was billed as: "Mini-item of maxi-importance." After your committee went to work, we realized full well that it is not an item which is quick and easy...but is is vital and certainly one on which we should be able to move in the days and years ahead. Be at the November meeting and make your position heard....Together we can share and possibly reach a consensus. If not, let's at least give it an intelligent attempt.

Committee Members: Mrs. Myron R. Blee, chairman; Mrs. Marion F. Buford; Mrs. Sally Brooks; Mrs. Frieda Emil; Miss Flora Erambert; Mrs. Gwen Sampson.

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