



LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
VOTERS OF TULSA

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 5

# METRO TULSA VOTER

MAY 2011

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## Discuss Terms of Office for City Councilors at May Unit Meetings

In 1989 the City of Tulsa changed its form of government from electing at-large commissioners to electing a mayor and city council. Under that city charter the nine district councilors served two-year terms.

In 2009, the City Council proposed a change to the city charter, passed by voters, which lengthened the terms of city councilors from two years to three-year terms beginning with the 2011 elections, and set in place a rotating schedule of district elections every year. The nine council seats were divided into three groups for purposes of transitioning to the new system. In the 2011 election, terms of office would be different for each group. Beginning in 2012, three council seats are up for election each year. Districts are grouped as follows:

- Districts 1, 4 and 7 – Elected


Councilors serve one year until a 2012 election for three-year terms.

- Districts 2, 5 and 8 – Elected Councilors serve two years until a 2013 election for three-year terms.

- Districts 3, 6, and 9 – Elected Councilors serve three year terms ending in 2014.

three-year staggered terms back to two-year terms and for the elections of city councilors to coincide with the Federal/State election schedule (November of even numbered years). This petition has been validated by the City Clerk and will appear on the November 2011 ballot unless it is successfully challenged or the election date is set sooner (as has been requested by Save Our Tulsa).

To complicate things further, on Easter weekend the City Council released a draft proposal for their own changes to the City Charter including, among other things, that their terms of office be as follows revert back to the original two-year terms.

We need to talk! Attend a unit meeting in May. 



One of the petitions circulated Fall 2010 by Save Our Tulsa called for changing the term of office for City Councilors from

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Monday, May 2 is the Tulsa League's annual meeting. Join us at 5:30p at Fellowship Congregational Church, 2900 S. Harvard Ave.**
- **Community Conversations on Project Schoolhouse Gave Hundreds of Tulsans the Chance to Be Heard**

## It's State Convention Time! Please Represent Us In Norman.

Attending the 2011 LWVOK Convention is a great way to meet other members from around the state and participate at a statewide level.

Delegates are invited to arrive in Norman Friday, May 20, for an optional social evening beginning at 4:30 p.m. Convention registration opens 8:30 a.m., Saturday, May 21, and the business meeting will be called to order at 9 a.m.

Business includes electing statewide officers and directors, approval of the 2011-12 budget


and a vote for the upcoming program of study.

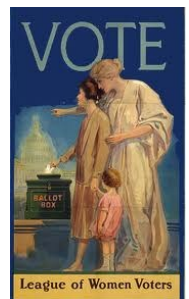
Karen Melcher will present findings from a two-year study of Instant Runoff Voting, a possible cost-saving alternative to Oklahoma's current run-off elections.

The U.S. League's national board liaison for our region, Elaine Wiant, will attend and share thoughts about the direction of the U.S. League of Women Voters.

All Tulsa League members are

welcome. We can send eight voting delegates and still have some slots open. We encourage anyone who wants to attend to please come along. The more Tulsa representatives we have, the better.

The cost to attend is \$25. Please contact the office if you would like to go. 





**COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON PROJECT SCHOOLHOUSE A SUCCESS**

Local, state and national positions on education all emphasize the importance of quality public education for all children. It is that goal that led us to organize a series of League-facilitated public forums to discuss the Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) Project Schoolhouse proposals that would close and/or consolidate a number of Tulsa schools.

TPS is facing a serious financial crisis which requires an additional \$3.5 million cut in their budget this year. TPS also recognizes the inequities in educational opportunities and wants to make sure that every school is offering the same opportunities for children no matter what part of the city a student resides.


Our goal was to provide parents, teachers and citizens an opportunity to respond to the Project Schoolhouse recommendations as well as to allow the public to add their own ideas, suggestions and comments in relation to the funding crisis facing the school district.



Community Conversations were held across the city. We responded to anyone willing to host a forum in their

school or community facility. And, we received many compliments on the League's format, reporting system and professionalism when we conducted the meetings.

Without our efforts there would have been fewer opportunities to engage the citizens and parents of Tulsa Public School children to allow them input into the final decision-making process of Project Schoolhouse. The League held more public meetings than did the school district. We also posted our forum schedule and notes from our meetings on our website to ensure maximum public access.

Thank you Nancy McDonald for encouraging us to get involved and thank you everyone who made it a success. 

**VOTER ID LAWSUIT:**

**WAITING FOR THE OKLAHOMA SUPREME COURT**

The scheduled hearing before a referee of the Oklahoma Supreme Court was held as scheduled on April 19. Little was resolved. It is now a matter of waiting for the Oklahoma Supreme Court to determine if it wants to take up this issue and strike down the newly enacted law requiring all voters show either a photo identification or their voter registration card before being allowed to cast their votes.


The state argues that the case should be dismissed because the court does not have jurisdiction due to improper venue of the original action, lack of standing

and that no one has yet been harmed by the new law or denied the right of suffrage. The court by its own rule does not render speculative decisions based on harm that might result or on hypothetical facts. The state argues that assuming original jurisdiction in this controversy would be outside of the Court's own long held tradition. The state said very little about the constitutionality of state legislature submitting questions to the people for consideration other than to assert such procedure was constitutional.

Both sides in the case have provided arguments sufficient for the

court to make a ruling. It is now up to the collective wisdom of the justices to determine if the new



Voter ID law abridges the right to suffrage guaranteed by the constitution of the State of Oklahoma. 

## OKLAHOMA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: WEEK 12

FROM REPRESENTATIVE JEANNIE MCDANIEL

This week marked the third-reading deadline for bills from the Senate. In three days the House heard 82 bills, or 64% of all Senate bills heard and passed from the House. With just four weeks to go there is still much to do. The House is holding conference committee meetings—a departure from the long-held practice of simply requesting a signature at one's floor desk or in a hallway. This should allow for more thorough vetting of bills that are changed during final hours. In past sessions, it has taken weeks to find final language contained in passed legislation.



## Highlights of Enacted Bills

*Affirmative Action to the 2012 Ballot*

Senate Joint Resolution 15 is a proposed constitutional amendment that would effectively end affirmative action programs in state government, universities and colleges. Emotionally charged debate ran late and continued after many members had left for the week.

I opposed SJR15 for two reasons: we are in a period of steeply rising inequality, documented by a recent report titled "Pulling Apart"—and women are still badly under-represented in Oklahoma government. In fact, female representation in the

Oklahoma legislature is currently at 12.8%, which ranks our state as the 49<sup>th</sup> lowest in the country. South Carolina is last with 9.4%.

*Governor Signs Bill Allowing Employees to Use Guns at Work*

HB 1449 extends the right to use deadly force to business employees who have reason to fear death or great bodily harm. Previously, state law allowed individuals to use deadly force only in their homes.

*Legislation moving 2012 presidential primary to March*

HB 1614 would move Oklahoma's presidential primary from February to March. New national rules adopted by both major parties are forcing states like Oklahoma to move their primaries to March if they want to participate in the national conventions. Under the new national rules only Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Nevada can have February 2012 presidential primaries. Oklahoma's primary will be the first Tuesday in March, the earliest date allowed under the new rules.

*Rail Expansion Bill Signed into Law*

HB1686, the Eastern Flyer Passenger Rail Initiative, is intended to extend passenger rail to Tulsa. The Heartland Flyer currently carries passengers from Ft. Worth to Oklahoma City and, according to studies, small towns along the route have benefited with income up to \$18 million annually from lodging, meals, shopping and entertainment spending by passenger. New projects in development or being planned could benefit from the proposed Tulsa route; Chandler, Bristow and Sapulpa are directly in line to receive rail traffic.


**Funding Crisis**

Oklahoma Department of Human Services officials are bracing for expected budget cuts by looking at reducing staffing levels and changing the eligibility for child care subsidies, according to a commission meeting report. Director Howard Hendrick said the agency is anticipating about a \$39 million shortfall, based on the current state budget negotiations. With possible changes in eligibility rules for child care subsidies, fewer people would be able to qualify. The subsidy helps low-income families afford child care, and parents must be working or going to school.

*Unintended Consequences*

A senior nutrition bill was amended to prohibit independent contractors from distributing federal funds for a program that feeds mothers, babies and small children. This move was an attack on Planned Parenthood of Arkansas and Eastern Oklahoma, which is among the nine independent contractors that administer the federal Women, Infants and Children (WIC) feeding program. The bill, however, also will prohibit Margaret Hudson and Morton Health Services in Tulsa from participating in the WIC program, along with six Oklahoma City independent contractors. The bill now returns to the Senate for final consideration.

**Birther Bill**

SB91, passed by the House, requires future U.S. Presidential candidates to provide a copy of their photo identification and their birth certificate to the Oklahoma State Election Board as evidence of their eligibility to run for office. 

**MEET THE NEW BOARD!***Officers***President**

**Heather Hope Hernandez (2011 - 2013)**—marketing communications professional with extensive experience in journalism and politics

**Vice President Gloria Caldwell**

**(2010 - 2012)**—long-time League activist with extensive leadership experience across several organizations

**Treasurer Kathleen Kastelic**

**(2010 - 2012)**—finance and accounting professional with extensive board and foundation leadership experience

**Secretary Jenny Lizama**

**(2011 - 2013)**—finance and accounting professional working toward her Certified Public Accountant license

*Directors*

**Jean Jones (2011 - 2013)**—community activist with years of board experience

**Mary Jane Lindaman (2011 - 2013)**—health insurance specialist with foundation management experience

**Sharron Pettiford (2010 - 2012)**—political and community activist

**Lisa Frankenberger Simpson (2010 - 2012)**—civil engineer committed to community involvement

**Julie Skye (2011 - 2013)**—investment advisor with broad community service experience

**Deborah Whittaker (2010 - 2012)**—university professor and community volunteer

**Ron Wilkinson (2010 - 2012)**—attorney, business consultant and teacher

**Blanca Zavala (2011 - 2013)**—elections and advocacy activist 

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF TULSA**

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**MAY 2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**Mon., May 2, 5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.**

Tulsa League Annual Meeting –  
Fellowship Congregational Church,  
2900 S. Harvard Ave.

**Tue., May 3, 12 p.m. – 1 p.m.**

Local Study Meeting –  
League Office

**Sun., May 8, 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

Executive Committee meeting –  
League Office

**Wed., May 11, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.**

Voter Registration at Naturalization  
Ceremony –  
Gilcrease Museum,  
1400 N. Gilcrease Museum Rd.

**Mon., May 16, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.**

Tulsa League Board Meeting –  
League Office

**Tue., May 17, 12 p.m. – 1 p.m.**

Midtown Unit meeting –  
League Office Conference Room  
(Brown bag lunch at 11:30 am)

**Fri., May 20, 4 p.m. – 8 p.m.**

Oklahoma League Convention  
Social Event –  
Holiday Inn,  
1000 N. Interstate Dr., Norman

**DEADLINE** *Tulsa Metro Voter*

Send articles to [newsletter@lwvtulsa.org](mailto:newsletter@lwvtulsa.org).

**Sat., May 21, 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

Oklahoma League Convention –  
Holiday Inn,  
1000 N. Interstate Dr., Norman

**Mon., May 23, 12 p.m. – 1 p.m.**

North Unit meeting –  
North Pointe Business Center,  
205 E. Pine St., # 501

**Tue., May 24, 7 a.m. – 8 a.m.**

Downtown Unit meeting –  
Blue Dome Diner,  
311 E. 2nd St.

**6:45p – 7:45p**

South Unit meeting –  
Kaiser Library,  
5202 S. Hudson Ave.

