

The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016

In this issue:

President's Letter

Mark Your Calendars

Investigating 501(c)(3) Status

ColoradoCare Information Sessions

Help Wanted: VRDs

Perspectiva 2016: Candidate Forums

Membership Team Report

League Members in Action

Update on Boulder Living Wage

State Ballot Initiative 101

Immigration Sub-Team Calls on Expert

Letter to the Editor: Campaign Finance

Letter to the Editor: Applause for Living Wage

For Your Bookshelf: Dark Money

LWVUS MIP Report

Bulletin Board



BREAKING NEWS

The Board of Directors is calling a Special Members Meeting at our Fall Kick-Off on 24 September. The Board will be asking members to vote on by-laws changes in order to apply to the IRS to become a 501(c)3. The Board of Directors passed a motion to form our own 501(c)(3) at the 28 July meeting. This is with the full consent and encouragement of LWVUS and LWVCO. As with all by-laws changes, they may be amended with a 2/3 majority vote of members present. Questions will be answered at the meeting. See Louisa Young's article in this Voter. Don't miss the vote!

Greetings

It has **not** been a quiet summer for LWVBC! League Leaders have been busy planning with our members and the community. We're organizing a year where we can all learn and socialize – important aspects of League membership. Be sure to join us at every opportunity! More information will soon be coming your way.



Ruth Stemler, President, LWVBC

Diana Haskell, Jeannette Hillery, Susan Saunders, and I attended the LWVUS national convention in Washington D.C. 16-19 June. LWVUS is striving to change to ensure that our beloved organization remains relevant and helps make our democracy work! We came home determined to focus on having impact in Boulder County. Thanks to everyone who attended our tea on July 14th at the Louisville Library to hear about what we learned! It was a lively discussion.

I'm excited that Rionda Osman and the Communications Team have started using Meetup to invite the community to our events. We continue to use social media to promote younger, more diverse engagement. You can help by joining Meetup and telling your family and friends about it.

Our advocacy work continues. The Campaign Finance Reform, Health, Immigration, Schools and Social Policy Teams have been diligent over

the summer. We met with the editors/reporters of our county newspapers to be sure they know about our work. And we plan to stay in touch! We just did a spot on KGNU radio on Money in Politics! Thanks again, Rionda.

Voter Services has been making an impact in the community this summer. They don't just register people to vote. They recruit new members, inform individuals about our events, and let the community know that we are out there as an important resource. Can you volunteer a few hours in this busy election year to assist?

Have a good summer ! Ruth

The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016

In Memory – Vince Bates

Vince Bates passed away in July of this year. He was a member of the league since 2002 and his retirement to Boulder. He will be missed by those of our members who knew him, especially neighbors in his apartment building and a friend who shared his passion for playing bridge. Vince recalled a tour of World War I battlefields in France and birding in the Antarctic wilderness as some of the highlights of his life. He lived most of his years in Chicago, where he enjoyed deep dish pizza and the view from his 16th floor windows above Lake Michigan and Wrigley Field.

League of Women Voters of Boulder County
Box 21274, Boulder CO 80308
www.lwvbc.org

Membership: 185 as of May 2016

President: Ruth J. Stemler
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Membership: Liz Black
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Boulder County Voter
10 issues per year
Editor: Rionda Osman
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Mark Your Calendars

1 August 2016 – 2:30-4:00 pm:

ColoradoCare (Amendment 69) Information Session

Frasier Meadows Retirement Community, 350 Ponca Pl, Boulder. Guest speaker will be **Dr. David Bright**. Q&A follows.

6 August 2016 – 9:00-10:30am

League of Women Voters in Broomfield

Presbyterian Church of Broomfield, 350 Main St, Broomfield

13 August 2016 – 10:30am to noon:

ColoradoCare (Amendment 69) Information Session

Longmont Public Library, 409 4th St, Longmont. Guest speaker will be **Mr. Stephen Winters**. Q&A follows.

22 August 2016 – 7-8:30pm:

ColoradoCare (Amendment 69) Information Session

Alfalfa's, 785 E. S Blder Rd, Louisville. Guest speaker will be **Ms. Diane Dunn**. Q&A follows.

8 September 2016 – 6:00-7:30 pm:

ColoradoCare (Amendment 69) Information Session

Elevations Credit Union, 2960 Diagonal Hiway Boulder.

17 September 2016

League Day

Holiday Inn Denver. LWVCO will provide details.

24 September 2016 – 10:30 am

Fall Kick-Off

Louisville Library, 951 Spruce St, Louisville

8 November 2016:

GENERAL ELECTION

Last day to Vote is November 8

Voter Service & Polling Centers open October 24



The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016

Investigating 501(c)(3) Status for LWVBC



From Louisa Young

Delegates came back from the National Convention with news that Leagues across the country are attaining 501(c)(3) status from the IRS. Dues and donations to such organizations are tax deductible!! Many local Leagues and even some entire state Leagues have done this, and they have set a precedent and given clear instructions on how to do it. The Boulder County League is preparing to jump on the bandwagon, although we might be the first in Colorado.

Why? What's the advantage? Will it change the way we can do things?

Dues and donations will be tax-deductible.

First, as said above, dues and donations will be deductible on members' and contributors' personal income tax returns. Until now, we have used the Colorado League Education Fund to shelter contributions and make them tax deductible to the donors. However, there is a process required to get money out of the Ed Fund.

Raising money will be a more streamlined process.

Having 501(c)(3) status will make it much easier to raise money for the League. At the present time, in order to receive money from the state league's Ed Fund, before we conduct a project we have to complete a form, write up a description, and request reimbursement. This process has always worked, but it is a burden. Last Spring, Mary Wilson, former national President, spoke about Immigration for a fund-raising event. People paid admission through the Colorado Ed Fund. Money is now in that account waiting for us to design a project, write a description, do the project, and request reimbursement. If we were a 501(c)(3) organization, the money would be in our general fund, available for a project or for general use without the additional process.

We have had some success getting grants this past year. The vast majority of grant-makers only give grants to qualifying 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. We must apply for these grants through the Colorado Ed Fund, Boulder County account. This process requires specialized budget and financial information and complicated explanations. One goal for the coming years is to apply for more grants. Having 501(c)(3) status will make that process much easier.

What about restrictions on lobbying?

One prohibition for 501(c)(3) organizations is lobbying above a minimal amount. Prohibited lobbying means contacting lawmakers regarding specific legislation. An important part of our mission is to influence public opinion and government action –swaying public opinion and encouraging constituents to contact their lawmakers. That's not lobbying by the IRS's definition. Recently, there has been an option for 501(c)(3) organizations to have their lobbying efforts measured by the amount of money they spend contacting lawmakers about specific legislation with a permitted ceiling of 20%. We would take that option. Our work on the local level is entirely done by volunteers, so our expenditure at the local League level is zero.

What about our PMP, you may ask? Doesn't that constitute lobbying expenditures at the higher level League? Other local Leagues have tested this, and it is established that a PMP pays for services provided by the higher level League. In other words, our PMP pays for things higher level Leagues do directly for LWVBC. It is true that both the Colorado and national Leagues have paid lobbyists who perform services that are limited for a 501(c)(3) organization. Those expenses do not comprise more than 20% of the respective League's budget. Even if it mattered, the attribution of our PMPs into the higher level Leagues' budgets clearly could not comprise 20% of the Boulder County League's budget.



The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016

ColoradoCare (Amendment 69) Information Sessions

Plan to attend one or more of our Information Sessions on ColoradoCare, Amendment 69 on the November 8th general election ballot:

Monday afternoon, 1 August 2016, 2:30pm to 4pm,
at Frasier Meadows Retirement Community, 350 Ponca Pl, Boulder. Guest speaker will be Dr. David Bright. Q&A follows.

Saturday morning, 13 August, 2016, 10:30am to noon,
at the Longmont Public Library, 409 4th St., Longmont. Guest speaker will be Mr. Stephen Winters. Q&A follows.

Monday evening, 22 August 2016, 7pm to 8:30pm,
at Alfalfa's in Louisville, at 785 E. So. Boulder Rd. Guest speaker will be Ms. Diane Dunn. Q&A follows.

Thursday evening, 8 September 2016 – 6:00-7:30 pm,
at Elevations Credit Union, 2960 Diagonal Hiway Boulder

Amendment 69 is a voter-initiated proposal to establish ColoradoCare, a resident-owned, non-governmental health care financing system designed to ensure quality, comprehensive, accessible, lifetime health care for every Colorado resident.

- It uses an option of the Affordable Care Act that allows Colorado to obtain waivers to create its own health care program
- 100% of residents will be covered, leading Colorado to be the first state in the U.S. to achieve quality, comprehensive, accessible, lifetime health care for all.
- It provides comprehensive coverage for all residents of Colorado
- It uses a member-owned cooperative business model, for example, the Rural Electric Association
- It will provide primary coverage for all except those that have coverage under federal health care programs - Medicare and Veteran Administration Health. These individuals will use CC as secondary coverage
- Health benefits include primary, mental health, and specialty care, including dental
- Patients can choose their primary care providers.
- It is projected to cost less than the current system

[LWV is urging a 'yes' vote on 69.](#)

[Read ColoradoCare: How Would It Work, by Ivan J. Miller, PhD.](#)

United We Stand Festival (UWSF) and Open Presidential Debate

4:00 pm, Tuesday, 25 October 2016

Presidential debate at Macky Auditorium sponsored by Free and Equal Elections Foundation

The event will be co-hosted with Student Voices Count. Candidates are invited from the Democratic, Republican, and Third Parties, as well as Independent candidates on the ballot in enough states to be electable in 2016, or who received 1% in the national poll. This is especially relevant this election cycle, when there seems to be a growing opposition to establishment politics. For more information, contact [Free and Equal](#).

The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016



Help Wanted: Voter Registration Drives

From Jeanine Pow

Voter Services had excellent results from the two voter registration drives (VRDs) that we conducted in June which also increased our visibility in Longmont.

Longmont Farmer's Market, Saturday, 4 June: We registered 10 new voters, helped with 5 address changes, answered questions from 29 folks, handed out 17 voter registration information (blue) cards and talked with 7 folks re membership in LWVBC. Volunteers who made that event possible were: Susan Saunders, Jeanine Pow (set-up only), Patricia Long, Deborah Smith and Ruth Stemler.

Colorado Latino Festival in Longmont on Sunday, 26 June: We registered 12 new voters and handed out mail-in registration forms to several citizens. The team handed out over 30 voter registration information (blue) cards, several brochures and engaged in conversations with many folks who stopped by our table. We also pumped up (ugh) and passed out 144 balloons which allowed us to engage with numerous families walking by. Volunteers who made that event possible were: Elizabeth Crowe, Jeanine Pow, Susan Saunders, Pat Long, Peggy Leech, and Ruth Stemler. Thanks to the dedicated VRD Team members making those two events a resounding success. Stay tuned for additional VRD volunteer opportunities in the next couple of months.

We have several VRDs on the schedule and others planned. We need volunteers. Please contact [Jeanine Pow](#) if you can help.

20 August 2016, 8:00 am-1:00 pm

Voter Registration Drive

Longmont Farmer's Market, Boulder County Fairgrounds, Longmont

23 August 2016, 1:00 pm-4:00 pm

Voter Registration Drive

Salud Family Medical Center, 220 E Rogers Rd, Longmont

3 September 2016, 8:00 am-2:00 pm

Voter Registration Drive

Boulder Farmers Market, 1900 13th St, Boulder

10 September 2016, 10:00 am-2:00 pm

Voter Registration Drive

Sabro Y Saludable, YMCA, 950 Lashley St, Longmont

10 September 2016, 2:00 pm- 6:00 pm

Voter Registration Drive

Superior Chili Fest, Superior Community Park, 1350 Coalton Road, Superior

11 September 2016, 11:00 am-6:00 pm

Voter Registration Drive

Boulder Pridefest, Boulder Central Park, 1900 13th St, Boulder

Save the Date: 27 September

We are planning on conducting VRDs at various high schools in Boulder County on National Voter Registration Day, Thursday, 27 September 2016. We will definitely need several volunteers for those events once we have lined up the specific high schools. If you would be available to volunteer on that date, probably between 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., please save the date on your calendar and contact [Jeanine Pow](#).



The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016

Perspectiva 2016

The Latino Task Force of Boulder County and the League of Women Voters Boulder County are co-hosting Perspectiva 2016, a series of three candidate forums throughout Boulder County. The forums will take place in Boulder, Lafayette and Longmont and will address policy issues of particular interest to the Latino community.

"Perspectiva 2016 gives candidates the opportunity to meet their Latino constituents" says Manuela Sifuentes, Executive Director of the Latino Task Force, "and provide a space for our community to ask them questions on issues that affect us, such as affordable housing, educational opportunities, access to health care and yes, also immigration." Ruth Stemler, President of the League of Women Voters Boulder County added, "We are pleased to be collaborating with the Latino Task Force on this important voter education initiative."

The forums, which will be in English with simultaneous interpretation for any audience member that requests it, will be moderated by leaders in the Latino community. Each forum will host candidates from different contests who will have the opportunity to give an opening and closing statement, each one minute long. The moderator will start off the forum with a question for each candidate and will then open the mic for questions from the audience. All candidates will have the opportunity to answer all questions directed at that particular contest.

Note that candidates for different districts will appear in the different forums, so attend the forum nearest you.

Candidate Forums from a Latino Perspective in Boulder County

Saturday, 17 September, 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Sister Carmen Community Center, Lafayette

Colorado Legislature, Senate District 18

Colorado Legislature, House Districts 10, 12, 13, 33

Saturday, 1 October, 2:00 - 4:00 PM

YWCA of Boulder County, Boulder

U.S. Congress, Senator for Colorado

U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Colorado Districts 2, 4

Saturday, 8 October, 2:00 - 4:00 PM

Barrio E' Centro, Longmont

Colorado Legislature, Senate District 17

Colorado Legislature, House District 11

Boulder County Commissioner District 1, 2

Colorado District Attorney, District 20



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF BOULDER COUNTY**

Report from the Membership Team

From Liz Black

Comparing year over year, a net growth of 10 understates the activities of the membership team. Out of 41 additions to our roster, in 21 cases we know they were encouraged to join by current members. Five from Broomfield joined because they felt the LWV's reputation would help their group obtain a broader response from the public than they'd been able to achieve on their own. The 15 others initiated contact with us, and we have to give credit to our Communications Team which has made our organization more visible on traditional and social media and to those who organized the events and activities which provided the content offered to the media. The drops, like the additions, represented a mix of circumstances. Three household members did not renew when the primary member did, one person transferred to a

continued

The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016

Report from the Membership Team (continued)

league elsewhere, six members died, and 16 other individuals let their memberships lapse. Of the 16, there are only two who had ever attended an event or gotten involved in some way since joining. Not quite half had joined in the last couple of years and less than one third had been members for more than 9 years.

What is the take away from this analysis? First, word of mouth is one of the best recruitment tools. All of us can practice an elevator speech that explains how valuable league membership is and invite someone to come along to a League event. See the calendar this issue for a wide selection. Second, encouraging member involvement is very important for retention, especially for those who've joined recently. Not sure what opportunities exist? Suggesting names for the LWVBC email contact list, helping with a voter registration drive, entering data so that the VOTE411 website has complete information about local elections, hosting an event to promote the league to your guests, writing a letter to the editor or posting on Facebook are a few ways to be involved. A blog by Peggy Hoffman describes a continuum of ways to volunteer, from consuming to promoting to creating to serving to governing. She notes that today's volunteers want flexibility to choose projects to help with, rather than taking on a title that comes with a fixed and rigid set of duties.

Upcoming events are designed to more fully explain how the LWV does its citizen education and advocacy work, describe recent efforts by our local league issues teams, and give attendees the chance to talk with those who share common concerns. Details:

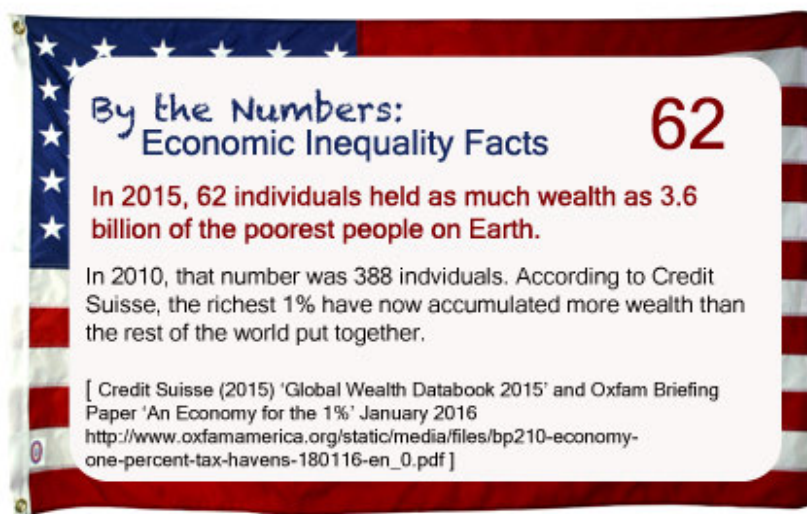
The League of Women Voter's appearance in Broomfield!!

WHEN: 9:00 – 10:30 am, Saturday, 6 August 2016

WHERE: Presbyterian Church of Broomfield, 350 Main St, Broomfield CO

WHAT: The League of Women Voters encourages interested individuals in Broomfield County to explore local issues such as schools, affordable housing, and natural resources. Current League members will share how their research and activities have increased awareness and even led to policy changes. There will be ample opportunity for attendees to express their views, ask questions and begin a dialogue with those who share common concerns.

PLUS: Free childcare will be available, but reservations are necessary in advance. If you would like to reserve a childcare slot please contact Stephanie James at sflynnjames@gmail.com by Thursday, August 4, 2016.



The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016

League Members in Action



Taking Action: Update on Boulder Living Wage

From Mary Ann Wilner

Boulder City Council at their 14 June 2016 meeting made important progress in their drive to raise minimum wages for city workers and those who work for companies with city contracts.

In a study session, council members discussed the analysis requested by council in February and delivered by staff to council in early June. The staff provided cost data for keeping the wages for landscape and janitorial contract employees and city employees at \$14.02, raising it to \$15.37 (the LWVBC recommendation) or raising it to \$17.99 (the Human Relations Commission recommendation).

Though official votes are not taken in a study session, council members recommended the following to the city manager:

- ✓ Raise the wages to \$15.67 beginning in 2017 for full, part-time, and temporary city employees.
- ✓ Raise the wages to \$15.67 beginning in 2017 for those landscape and janitorial workers who are hired by private companies with city contracts. These employees will continue to work without benefits.
- ✓ Study and make decisions about seasonal workers during 2017.

We expect final votes to be taken at either the council meeting to be held on 2 August or 16 August 2016.



Taking Action: State Ballot Initiative 101 to Raise Minimum Wage to \$12 per hour by 2020

From Mary Ann Wilner

The LWVBC supports Ballot Initiative 101 which would be an amendment to the Colorado constitution increasing the statewide minimum wage to \$9.30 per hour with annual increases of \$0.90 each January 1st until it reaches \$12 per hour effective January 2020, with annual adjustments thereafter for cost-of-living increases.

A coalition of regional and state wide organizations, Colorado Families for a Fair Wage, sponsored this initiative. Their effort to secure sufficient signatures was successful with a total of 190,000 statewide signatures collected, when only 98,000 were needed to make it on the ballot.

The LWVBC board voted to support Amendment 101 and has requested the state board of LWV to support it. Their response is pending. The Social Policy Team will be working with the Voter Services Team to develop community education programs on Amendment 101 for the Fall.

Check it out !

We have a Meetup Group ! We're hoping new people will find out what we're doing. We've just gotten started, and already 45 people are interested in our group !!

**League of Women
Voters of Boulder
County Meetup**
We're 45 Members

The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016



Immigration Sub-Team Calls on Expert

From Louisa Young

Pursuant to the membership's adoption of an update on the rights of undocumented immigrants, the Social Policy Team formed a sub-team to research the issues. Liz Black, Jan Buchanan, Mickey Greenberg, Louisa Matthias and Louisa Young have met several times to divide up the topic and do the research. We find some inconsistencies between the law and the practicalities, and we developed some unanswered questions.

Mickey Greenberg's son-in-law, Hiroshi Motomura, is a nationally acclaimed expert in Immigration Law, and, to our great delight, he was willing to come speak to us at her request. Professor Motomura has written two prize-winning books, *Americans in Waiting: The Lost Story of Immigration and Citizenship in the U.S.* (Oxford, 2006), and *Immigration Outside the Law* (Oxford, 2014). We recommend these to all League members. He has published many papers and articles and he has worked on government projects. He also helped found the Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network (rmian.org) to provide much-needed legal aid to undocumented immigrants in deportation proceedings. He explained that under U.S. law deportation is not considered a criminal proceeding, so the immigrant has no right to an attorney.

Mickey graciously arranged a meeting place at Frasier Meadows where she lives. Professor Motomura addressed a room of about 30 people on Sunday afternoon, 24 July. He addressed the sub-team's questions and explained some of the political realities that cause the inconsistencies that have puzzled our sub-team members. One surprising statistic is that a high percentage of undocumented immigrants qualify for permission to stay. It is a complicated process. Very many of those who qualify do not apply. They remain in their status because they either do not know they qualify for a status that would permit them to stay or cannot afford to pay an attorney to help them through the difficult process. It was a wide-ranging discussion, and we left feeling very fortunate to have access to such a well-spoken, experienced and highly regarded expert. LWVBC can look forward to learning the fruits of the labor of the sub-team in November.

Letter to the Editor: Campaign Finance



Shirley Jin's personal letter, published in Boulder 'Camera' Tues, 19 July 2016

A solution

I would like to thank Michael Bennet for his recent guest commentary on money in politics. We do, indeed, have an overwhelmingly corrupt federal legislature, and American democracy no longer exists. The massive money spent by the few extremely wealthy Americans in support or opposition to a candidate has turned our government from a democracy to an oligarchy, where wealthy elites wield most of the power.

Candidates who are not willing to accept money in return for their votes on legislation usually do not have the means to mount an effective campaign that can compete with the media blitz provided by the wealthy. This is responsible for legislation that has hurt ordinary Americans in many ways, most notably economically.

The solution is publicly financed campaigns. While there is federal legislation for publicly financed campaigns, it is extremely unlikely to be passed because it is not favored by the wealthy. However, the people can gradually gain control through grassroots efforts at the city, county and state levels. According to the Campaign Finance Institute, as of 2015, in the U.S. there are 15 cities, three counties and 13 states that have publicly financed campaigns, most with notable success. Boulder is one of the cities.

The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016



Letter to the Editor: Applause for Living Wage

Ruth Stemler's letter for LWVBC, published in Boulder 'Camera' on Wed, 20 July 2016

Applause for living wage

We applaud the Boulder City Council and the city staff for their thoughtful consideration of living wages for city employees and those emergency medical, janitorial and landscape workers employed by city contractors ("Self-sufficiency wages win support," June 15). We also appreciated that the Human Relations Commission reached out to the public to ensure that this issue received excellent public attention.

We respect that council and the HRC based their decisions not only on the fiscal data, but also on the values that Boulder seeks to promote being a city that treats all its employees and residents in an inclusive and equitable manner.

By selecting a wage (\$15.67 in 2017) based on the self-sufficiency standard, council members made tangible their beliefs that employees of the city and its contractors deserve to receive wages that create economic self-sufficiency. This benefits the local economy since individuals and families living close to the margin spend newly earned income locally. It also reduces pressure on public programs and local social-service organizations since with more income, families reduce or eliminate their reliance on these services.

The League of Women Voters of Boulder County was honored to partner with other organizations in the Self-Sufficiency 2016 Coalition to bring the self-sufficiency wage the attention it deserved. We welcome others (men, too!) to join our nonpartisan efforts to support a healthy, working democracy, lwvbc.org.



For Your Bookshelf

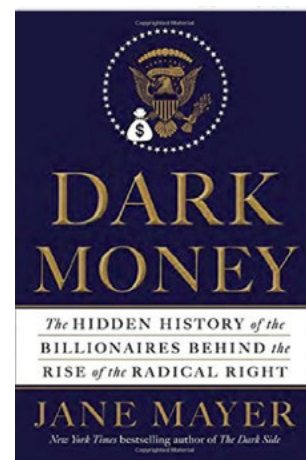
Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires behind the Rise of the Radical Right

Author: Jane Mayer, Published: 2016

From Celeste Landry: A Personal Connection and What I Learned from the Book

In the early 1990s I applied for an internship with the George C. Marshall Institute, a nonprofit 501(c)(3). Its tagline is Science for Better Public Policy. Before my interview I read some of the institute's literature – in particular, a paper about climate change. As I recall, the author was arguing that there wasn't real evidence of global warming, but I found a math error which, when corrected, would have substantially diluted the scientist's argument. I dutifully told the organization. They thanked me but stated that they weren't going to publish a correction and didn't even promise to tell the author. During the interview they asked me about my political leanings and explained that their politics tended to the political right. They offered me the internship, but I turned it down, not feeling that my pro bono proofreading work was appreciated.

The George C. Marshall Institute is an example of a nonprofit think tank funded by generous, often anonymous donors with the end goal of influencing lawmakers and public opinion. Americans for Prosperity (AFP), a "social welfare organization," similarly does not have to disclose its donors. In the same vein as Grover "drown government in a bathtub" Norquist's famous anti-tax pledge, AFP strongly encourages lawmakers to sign its "No Climate Tax" pledge. It turns out that AFP's biggest donors include billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch, majority owners of Koch Industries, one of the nation's biggest emitters of greenhouse gases.



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The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016

Commentary on Dark Money by Jane Mayer (continued)

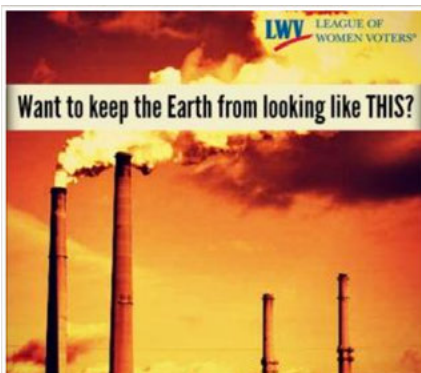
The Koch brothers are featured prominently in Jane Mayer's *Dark Money*. While their parents were still alive, the brothers were given charitable lead trusts which required the annual income from each trust to be donated to charity for 20 years. (David Koch is well known for generous donations to cancer research, New York museums and the performing arts.) After 20 years, the trust's assets were transferred to the beneficiaries tax-free. Another way to avoid paying taxes while maximizing control over charitable donations is to create a private foundation which can then give money to a whole range of recipients or spend it on independent expenditures not officially coordinated with a political campaign.

Charles Koch provided the financing for the Cato Institute (1974) and Richard Mellon Scaife, Joseph Coors and others financed the Heritage Foundation (1973), more think tanks with 501(c)(3) status. These billionaires give money to hundreds of organizations including the 501(c)(3) American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) which writes "model" legislation and works closely with state lawmakers to introduce and pass the legislation. John Olin's foundation provided early financial support of the Federalist Society, a membership organization which counts at least 3 US Supreme Court justices among its members. The most direct influence, however, may be Art Pope's funding of and involvement with redrawing district boundaries in North Carolina after the 2010 census, followed by his appointment in late 2012 as the state's chief budget director. Subsequent political turmoil (voter ID law, the bathroom bill, etc.) have put the state in the national headlines.

In the 1970s income in the United States was as equally distributed as at any time in the nation's history. When top income tax rate dropped from around 70% to 28% in the 1980s under the Reagan administration, economic inequality began to increase. The Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation had scored a big win. The billionaires expanded their funding to hundreds of universities, with stipulations such as teaching Ayn Rand in certain courses, and to organizers who recruited protestors and gave them talking points, signs and t-shirts. The money succeeded in planting seeds of doubt about climate change and giving policymakers broader support for eliminating safety and environmental regulations and suppressing wages while they quietly upheld the carried-interest tax loophole advantageous to hedge fund managers. With the Citizens United decision in 2010, opportunities continued to grow for the wealthy to use their money for electoral influence.

Starting in 2003 Charles and David Koch have invited their super-wealthy, like-minded friends and peers twice a year to fundraising retreats to discuss strategy, learn about the current political situation and hobnob with political leaders. They raise hundreds of millions of dollars for their pet 501(c)(3) "charities" while insisting upon the highest levels of secrecy. The group has in effect taken over the Republican Party, if not at the presidential level – *Dark Money* was published before Trump became the presumptive Republican nominee – then certainly at the state and congressional levels, where the group gets some credit for the "shellacking" Obama's party received in the 2010 midterm elections.

Martha Citizen may complain that money has an undue influence on elections, but money is only one side of the coin. When it's dark money, Martha Citizen doesn't even know where the money comes from and who is doing the influencing.



The fight to stop manmade contributions to climate change is not over !

Get the ["Toolkit for Climate Action"](#) to see what you can do !



The Boulder County Voter

1 August 2016

Report from the National Convention



From Study to Action Session; Convention 2016

The “From Study to Action” session at the 2016 LWVUS Convention focused on League positions that resulted from the 2014-16 Key Structures of Democracy program: Money in Politics, Amending the US Constitution, and Redistricting. Members reviewed the positions and how they can be used to advocate for clean, fair, and transparent government at all levels.

You can consult the background documents by clicking on the following links: [LWVUS position on money in politics](#) LWVUS positions on amending US Constitution (2) [Considerations Evaluating Constitutional Amendments](#) [Constitutional Conventions under Article V of the U.S. Constitution](#) Proposed concurrence statement on redistricting [Money in Politics Action in the States](#) [State campaign finance template](#) . Below is a list of comprehensive legislation to address the major loopholes created by Citizens United and other Supreme Court decisions

Money in Politics Legislation

The League of Women Voters supports comprehensive legislation to address the major loopholes created by Citizens United and other Supreme Court decisions, establish a small-donor-based public financing system for congressional as well as presidential elections, and recreate an effective enforcement agency for campaign finance laws.

Senate

- Whitehouse -- S 229 -- The DISCLOSE Act -- abolishes “dark money” by closing disclosure loopholes opened by Citizens United. Restores transparency to U.S. elections by requiring complete disclosure of spending on big-money advertising in candidate elections, including transfers among groups
- Leahy -- S 1838 -- The Stop Super PAC--Candidate Coordination Act -- provides explicit and rigorous definitions of “coordinated” expenditures to prevent Super PACs from evading the law and circumventing contribution limits
- Udall -- S 1176 -- The Empower Act -- repairs and reinvigorates the public financing system for candidates in presidential elections
- Durbin -- S 1538 -- The Fair Elections Now Act -- creates new small-donor-based public financing system for Senate elections
- Udall -- S 2611 -- The Federal Election Administration Act -- restructures the Federal Election Commission (FEC) as a five-member commission, with a system of administrative law judges having initial jurisdiction over enforcement cases
- Bennet -- S 1480 -- The Lobbying and Campaign Finance Reform Act -- limits the ability of lobbyists to use bundled contributions to buy influence with members of Congress

House

- Van Hollen -- HR 430 -- The DISCLOSE Act -- abolishes “dark money” by closing disclosure loopholes opened by Citizens United. Restores transparency to U.S. elections by requiring complete disclosure of spending on big-money advertising in candidate elections, including transfers among groups
- Price -- HR 425 -- The Stop Super PAC--Candidate Coordination Act -- provides explicit and rigorous definitions of “coordinated” expenditures to prevent Super PACs from evading the law and circumventing contribution limits
- Price -- HR 2143 -- The Empower Act -- repairs and reinvigorates the public financing system for candidates in presidential elections as a small-donor-based system
- Price -- HR 424 -- The Empowering Citizens Act -- creates new small-donor-based public financing system for House and Senate elections, and repairs and reinvigorates presidential public financing as a small-donor-based system
- Price -- H.R. 5439 -- The Federal Election Administration Act -- restructures the Federal Election Commission (FEC) as a five-member commission, with a system of administrative law judges having initial jurisdiction over enforcement cases

LWVBC BULLETIN BOARD

August 2016

League News from Around the Country

League of Women Voters of Florida

League of Women Voters to organize solar co-ops beginning in St. Petersburg

By MITCH PERRY (St. Petersburg Blog) 14 Jul 2016

The League of Women Voters in Florida is going big on solar power this year. They're putting their political muscle behind supporting one solar constitutional amendment on the ballot next month, while opposing another such measure in November. And somewhat outside their normal lane, they're also going to organize solar co-ops to negotiate steep discounts on rooftop solar for homeowners across the state. *For more information, read the complete [story](#).*



League of Women Voters Billings

Senior High School graduate touts a better way to vote

By MIKE FERGUSON (Billings Gazette) 14 Jul 2016

With voter turnout lagging well behind that of other countries, Americans might want to try a different way of selecting their candidates, a Senior High School graduate and Fulbright Scholar told the League of Women Voters Billings on Thursday.

And while Americans might scoff at some reforms — Australians are fined about \$50 if they don't vote, and as a result 95 percent of them do vote — Peter Miller, who's been teaching at the University of Pennsylvania, said an idea called the "ranked-choice electoral system" would at least ensure that candidates earn the support of a majority of voters.

Maine voters will vote on the reform in November. For more information, read the complete [story](#).



League of Women Voters of Nashville

Bus rides bring Nashville Muslims to the polls

By HOLLY MEYER (The Tennessean) 15 July 2016

The free ride to the polls was offered by three organizations encouraging Muslims in the city to vote: [Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Rights Coalition](#), [American Muslim Advisory Council](#) and [the League of Women Voters of Nashville](#).

They've teamed up to offer rides from Nashville mosques to the polls during early voting, which ends July 30, said Eben Cathey, advocacy director at TIRRC. Many who attend mosques are foreign-born, and TIRRC has registered about 250 voters at the Nashville centers in the past four months, he said. AMAC also has held voter registration drives at mosques. *For more information, read the complete [story](#).*



August 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
September 2016						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8

LWVBC Calendar

1 August	ColoradoCare (Amendment 69), Frasier Meadows
6 August	LWVBC in Broomfield
13 August	ColoradoCare (Amendment 69), Longmont Library
22 August	ColoradoCare (Amendment 69), Alfalfa's Louisville
8 September	ColoradoCare (Amendment 69), Boulder
17 September:	LWVCO League Day, Denver
24 September	Fall Kick-Off
8 November:	GENERAL ELECTION

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