



VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County

How To Reach Us

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Since 1920, the League of Women Voters has been a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Thursday, August 18

League Preview Party

6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Matt Ross Community Center
8101 Marty, Overland Park, KS

EVERYONE IS ENCOURAGED TO BRING A GUEST

This party is a summer gathering of the FULL membership. New and prospective members are also invited. We'll have treats, as well as the opportunity to hear plans and volunteer opportunities for the upcoming year.

We look forward to seeing you!



National Education Study



To prepare for Consensus Meetings, study pages 3, 4, and 5.



President's Message

It's hot, it's summer vacation time, and we're not meeting. But, the League keeps on doing it's job! This month, I was able to witness how our League and volunteers really work -- year round.

First, we have position statements in place that help us define our priorities. Based on those, we have observers throughout our community watching the actions of our elected bodies. When concern arose this month about an upcoming vote, our observer notified me asking for a membership alert. Members responded immediately by contacting their area representative and attending the voting meeting. One of our members also testified at the hearing. All of this happened within a week.

Right now, my point is not the specific issue of that vote. It is the fact that we have a system to respond no matter which position we need to support. **It's just one example, but one more reason to be proud that you are a member of the League of Women Voters.**

Moving forward, we can predict that as hot as this summer has been, our political climate will likely grow even hotter as we move closer to the 2012 elections. It is important that we have the capacity to encourage and support voting in Johnson County! Our big question is "Will we have enough League members to do a good job?" As I saw this month, we have good systems in place. But we need League members to make them effective.

You have a chance to help get ready for the months ahead. **On August 18, you are ALL invited to come to the Matt Ross Community Center in Overland Park from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. for the League Preview Party.** It will be a relaxed way for you to chat and enjoy a few treats with League friends -- and make new ones. It will also be a chance to learn more about all of our League programs and opportunities. And, best of all, it will be a time for you to invite others to learn more, too. Neighbors, co-workers, friends -- ask them to come with you. **Let's party and welcome new members at the same time!**

As this month has shown, we have a mission that is important and we have programs that work. Members are our key to being out in the community, providing voter education, tracking legislation, holding forums, and all the many other elements of supporting free elections. **Help us grow and move forward toward 2012!**

Harriet Duff

Membership

We hope your summer is going well. Hopefully, you've already read our reminder letter about membership renewal for the 2011-12 year. Memberships are now due. In order to meet our goal of distributing our Membership Directory at our first meeting in September, please renew your memberships as soon as possible. We want to be sure you are included in our Membership Directory. If you have any questions about memberships, please contact us.

LWVJC Membership Co-Chairs

Susan Horst
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What does the League do?

- We **educate citizens** about issues, legislation and candidates.
- We **encourage individual participation** in the political process.
- We **inform** through in-depth, objective study.
- We **monitor** local, state and national government bodies and activities.
- We **register voters**.
- We **sponsor candidate debates** and **public issue forums**.



Coming Your Way! Consensus Meetings on the National Education Study

Public education is a top issue for Johnson Countians. That's why LWVJC is participating in consensus for LWVUS' study, "The Role of the Federal Government in pre-K through 12 Education." LWVUS has put five papers on its website, as well as 15 consensus questions to be addressed by 11/30/2011.

For your convenience, our streamlined consensus process lets members:

- Select which meeting times fit your schedule
- Review five VOTER summaries (Two summaries are printed in this issue)
- Link to many related LWVUS documents
- Share comments via LWVJoCo@yahoo.com

Our process doesn't cram all 15 consensus questions into one loooong meeting. Instead, we'll discuss Q 1-9 separately from Q 10-15. And each will have a repeat session.

All consensus meetings will be in the Central Resource Library's Carmack Room.

<u>Questions 1-9</u>	<u>Questions 10-15</u>
Topics: History, Common Core Standards 10/4, Tuesday, 7-9 p.m.	Topics: Equity and Funding 10/26, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m.
(repeat) 10/24, Monday, 7-9 p.m.	(repeat) 10/27, Thursday, 7-9 p.m.

Each consensus meeting will start with a brief presentation, then turn to discussion of the appropriate consensus questions. A discussion leader, presenter, timekeeper and recorder will keep things on track.

At the November 5 general meeting, the Education Committee will report on the consensus meetings. Many thanks to committee members Candy Birch, Millie Hogins, Anne Malin, Jill Quigley, Tana Schroeder and Polly Swafford. And special appreciation to Harriet Duff and Janis McMillen who helped design this streamlined process.

***** MEMBER TIP: Don't delay! Calendar your two October meetings – Q 1-9 and Q 10-15 -- today!**

Education Study Committee, Ellen Miller



"The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education: Common Core Standards"

The Common Core Standards Initiative (CCSI, 2010) stated: "We need standards to ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Common standards will help ensure that students are receiving a high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state. Common standards will provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states that will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students."

U.S. public education has traditionally been a local responsibility, despite the fact that curriculum is often determined by national textbook publishers that defer to the demands of the largest states. Even the No Child Left Behind Act allows each state to set its own standards for meeting Adequate Yearly Progress.

After collaborating with educators and experts and considering over 10,000 public comments, the CCSI issued its final report on June 2, 2010. 40 states are now aligning them to their own state standards.

The Fordham Institute has reported that the Common Core standards received high marks when compared to state standards across the country and suggested that Common Core Standards represent an opportunity for creating consistency and raising standards in all states.

Assessments

The United States does not have a consistent set of academic assessments for grades K-12. Norm-referenced standardized tests, like the ACT, are designed to rank students rather than determine how well students have mastered curricular objectives.

Two coalitions (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium) together represent 44 states and the District of Columbia. They won a U.S. Department of Education competition for \$330 million dollars to design "comprehensive assessment systems" aligned to the Common Core and designed to measure whether students are on track for college and career success. Implementation might be possible by the 2014-2015 school year.

Why not national standards or assessments?

The three most common arguments **against** adopting the Common Core Standards for K-12 center are:

- 1) the cost and difficulty of changing the existing curriculum and assessments. In order to have a positive impact, the Common Core standards must be translated into action in classrooms, assessed appropriately via new standardized criterion-referenced tests, and reflected in published results from accountability systems;
- 2) the sovereignty of states in issues related to education and local control; and
- 3) the individual state standards might be more rigorous (Common Core states are permitted to add 15 percent in content.)

Another concern is the potential to use scores from the student assessments as a major component of teacher evaluations and merit pay plans. The idea has popular appeal. However, ten of the nation's premier educational researchers have cautioned against relying on student test scores as a major indicator for evaluating teachers, citing such variables as parent education levels, poverty, potential for pitting teacher against fellow teachers. There are also technical problems associated with using scores from standardized student assessments in value-added statistical models.

Does the United States need a national curriculum?

In March 2011, the Albert Shanker Institute issued a call for common curriculum guidelines but voiced the concern that common assessments are being developed from the common standards with no curriculum in between. In May 2011, another group published an article with a different view: "Closing the Door on Innovation: Why One National Curriculum is Bad for America," which also refers to the 1965 ESEA's prohibition against a federal curriculum.

Please share your comments at LWVJoCo@yahoo.com. Watch for more summaries in the next VOTER.

Education Study Committee, Candy Birch



“Role of the Federal Government in Public Education:

Where Are We Now and the Impact upon Early Childhood Education”

Realizing that poverty is the key issue that differentiates children coming to our schools in kindergarten, Head Start began to provide free access to early education in 1965. (FYI: Head Start benefits only the poorest children and serves only half of those who are eligible.)

Other programs like Even Start and Early Head Start (which provide training for families), Title I, No Child Left Behind, Early Reading First, Child Care Development Fund, and Special Education grants have been added to serve poor and low income children.

Today, one in five children in the U.S. lives in poverty. Various studies have cited “the importance and impact of quality early childhood education for all children” because the achievement gap begins as early as 18 months as illustrated by the fact that 60 percent of low income children and 33 percent of middle income children entering kindergarten do not know the alphabet.

Several studies enumerate many social and economic benefits of high quality prekindergarten and kindergarten for all:

- Alleviates grade repetition, dropouts and special education placements reducing the need for retentions and remediation
- Reduces poverty, raises earnings and increases tax revenues in the long run
- Assists in preventing the achievement gap
- Reduces special education needs
- Increases the likelihood of healthier lifestyles
- Lowers the crime rate and overall social costs.

“Every dollar invested in early childhood education returns ten cents on the dollar annually for the life of the child, a 10 percent per year return on investments.” However, some legislators maintain that funding early childhood education is too expensive, and some private pre-school educators are concerned about the impact on their business.

Key events include:

- 1988 – Even Start – includes family literacy programs
- 1995 – Early Head Start – supports mothers and infants/toddlers
- 1965 – Title I of ESEA – local districts apply for state funding reimbursed by federal funds
- 2001 – No Child Left Behind – funds pre-school programs
- 2002 -- Early Reading First – NCLB goals included
- 2002 – Special Education preschool grants ages 3 – 5
- 2007 – Special Education grants for infants and toddlers
- 1990 – Child Care Development Fund – provides child care to low-income families attend training and education

Please share your comments at LWVJoCo@yahoo.com. And watch for more summaries in the next VOTER.

Education Study Committee, Candy Birch

NOTE: LWVUS Education Study Committee members have researched and written background papers to help Leagues educate members and communities about the Role of the Federal Government in Public Education issues.

You will find the complete text at www.lwv.org. Go to "For Members" and from the pull down menu, select "Projects and Programs." Under "Taskforces & Studies," click on "The Education Study: The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education." Then select: "Background Paper >> Get Informed."

LWV Education Fund

The membership drive has just begun and we have already accumulated \$640 in the Education Fund which we use to fund the \$1,000 scholarship for our annual essay contest.

Please consider a **tax-deductible donation** to the Education Fund to continue our efforts. Your donation is credited to the Johnson County League fund even though it is held at the national level. Make your check payable to **JoCo LWV Education Fund**. *This is an opportunity to help the LWV of Johnson County continue our service to the community through our forums and other special programs.* Checks can be given to Treasurer Candy Birch or mailed to League of Women Voters of Johnson County, P.O. Box 13491, Shawnee Mission, KS 66282-3491.

Candy Birch, Treasurer LWV Jo Co 2011-2012

Naturalization Ceremonies

Naturalization Ceremonies are held at the Federal Courthouse in KCK at 5th and State usually on the last Friday of every month. The ceremony begins at 1:30 p.m. and lasts about 45 minutes. We then register the new citizens to vote, which takes about an hour. If you would like to attend and participate in this moving event, please contact Virginia Johnson at (770-757-2136 or email at johnson.virginia@yahoo.com). Please mark your calendar for the upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies.

- July 29 Judge Robert D. Berger
- August 26 Chief Judge Kathryn H. Vratil
- September 30 Judge Carlos Murguia
- October 28 Judge David Waxse

Virginia Johnson

What do you want to do? We really do listen!

Every year, new positions and projects are developed by our League. To start new committees or fill the many slots each year, committee chairs scour the information you have provided on your yearly membership forms. We want to give you the opportunity to volunteer where you have the most interest. We also don't want to call 20 people just to find one person who is available or interested.

All too often, many of us have fallen into the habit of skipping the volunteering portion of the membership form. "I filled that out a couple of years ago and nothing has changed." But our lives do change. "Did I really say I wanted to do that?" And all the while, the League keeps developing new opportunities. "I could have done that. Why didn't someone call?"

So even if you think our information about you is still current and doesn't need repeating, **please check your volunteer preferences when you turn in your membership renewal form this year and every year!**

Harriet Duff

Touching Base with the Johnson County 2020 Vision Plan

After more than 18-months of study, review, and community input, the county's 2020 Vision Plan is nearing completion. At League's September 10 meeting, we will have an opportunity to hear what is proposed for the plan. It will be one of the last forums for community reaction, before the plan is officially released in the late fall.

Presenters will be Harriet Duff, Karen Wulfkuhle, and Chief Ellen Hanson. Harriet is the League's representative on the 2020 Visioning Committee. Ms. Wulfkuhle is the Executive Director of Johnson County United Community Services and represents social service needs. Chief Hanson is the Chief of Police for the city of Lenexa and represents public safety. All three presenters are on the coordinating sub-committee that is directly writing the plan.

Ann Sanders

Need to contact us? Send messages to: LWVJoCo@yahoo.com

Member Spotlight: Candy Birch

Candy Birch's interest in journalism started when she was editor for her high school's yearbook. She says, "As a journalist, I've always been interested in the politics of education."

She graduated from Baker University in 1973 with a B.A. in English. Her high school journalism teacher helped her get her first job at Olathe (now Olathe North) High School as an English teacher and sponsor of the yearbook.

Candy was born on Guam but moved to Olathe at age seven and has lived there for most of her life. She and her husband Marty have two children, Lindsay and Trevor, both now married.

While teaching at Olathe North, Candy enrolled in a journalism program at Kansas University intending to go into advertising. However, she grew to love teaching and switched her major. She received her MA in Curriculum and Instruction in 1981. She later earned her certification in School Leadership from Baker University in 1993.

When Marty's job took them to Florida, Candy got a job teaching English at Brandon High School outside of Tampa. She says, "That was a neat experience. Brandon High had 4,000 students attending double sessions. I became Assistant Department Chair for a department of 30 English teachers for the six years we were there."

After they returned to Olathe, Candy taught English and journalism at Olathe North High School for 10 years and then moved to Olathe South High School when she became Assistant Principal nine years ago. Among her duties, she edits Olathe South's monthly newsletter for parents.

Candy is active in Communities That Care (CTC) program which is an organization dedicated to helping young people at risk. Their mission is to "build safe, diverse, and healthy environments by connecting resources to protect and promote positive youth development." Working with the Regional Prevention Center, CTC seeks to educate young people about the dangers of under-age drinking and drugs and about how to get the help they need. CTC is also considering offering support for a Boys and Girls Club in Olathe, which Candy personally encourages. "Not all students can participate in after-school sports. They need a safe and meaningful place to go. The Boys and Girls Club provides a curriculum for every age group."

She finds time to enjoy her book club and has volunteered for 12 years at the Kansas City Repertory Theater. Before becoming assistant principal, she also served on the Corporation Board of Baker's Alpha Chi Omega sorority.

Candy became interested in the Johnson County League of Women Voters when Ann Sanders, then Director of Secondary Education in the Olathe School District, invited her to attend a meeting. She recalls, "The members talked about so many significant topics that I knew I could get my head around."

Consequently, she joined the League and served as Membership Chair for two years. After that, the League elected her and Gwynne Lee as Co-Presidents. "Gwynne was a great partner," Candy says. "I enjoyed working with her a lot. Also, Harriett Anderson was President-elect, so the three of us had a great working relationship." During their term, Candy submitted eight proposals from the board of directors to promote a fair and diverse judiciary. LWV JoCo received nearly \$6,000 from the national LWV to pay for booths at fall festivals, Law Day with middle school students, and a panel at a League at the Library event.

Candy is active on the Advocacy Committee which targeted three specific areas, one of which was the environment. "Through my research," Candy explains, "I learned that the Johnson County Commission was considering adoption of a long-term plan for recycling. The landfill lease expires in 2027, but it was projected to fill up before then if nothing was done. The idea was to prepare talking points and offer to be partners with various municipalities to help educate the citizenry. It was fun to learn what the county and other municipalities are doing, and it validated what our League was doing."

Presently, Candy serves on the board as Treasurer. "One of the neatest things about the League is that so many members have other associations, so what we learn emanates out and our members return with information from their other associations. Nothing is ever boring about the League. It's interesting because we can learn and even disagree." Candy is especially excited that the Board has decided to start early on the election 2012 and has set aside \$5,000 to help get people involved in the election and to vote.

Candy appreciates the League members who help get the message out to the community to attract young members with new ideas and energy to further the objectives of the League. "You don't have to be a Democrat or a Republican to learn about the issues. I look forward to the day when the LWVJC can be technologically adept, so we can podcast our events, such as our general meetings to those who cannot attend. This would be especially timely for young women in Johnson County who are often busy on Saturday mornings."



Polly Swafford

OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS

Johnson County Library Board June 15 meeting

- Results from the 2011 Johnson County Community Survey showed that the library was at the top of County services in terms of residents' satisfaction (85 percent, second only to Park & Rec's 88 percent) and ranked fourth in importance among County services (following Ambulance/Emergency Services, Park & Rec, and the Sheriff's Office).
- When the Lackman Neighborhood Library staff discovered that 40 percent of library patrons use public access computers for job-related tasks, the Job Info Bulletin Board was renamed "Career Center," expanded, and relocated to a spot near the library entrance.
- The cuts in the library budget probably will not be as severe as anticipated with the reduction currently projected to be about \$302,000.
- The state librarian has asked Johnson County to train libraries across the state in the 6 by 6 Ready to Read, Early Childhood Literacy program. The Library Foundation has awarded \$24,000 to the library to expand the program to the Corinth Library. In April, parents and children made a total of 2,529 visits (an average of 87 a day) to the 6 by 6 space at Antioch Neighborhood Library.

Connie Richards

Johnson County WaterOne Board July 12 meeting (www.waterone.org)

- Huge water main break analyzed. On July 1 about 5:30 a.m., a raccoon in electrical equipment caused a pressure surge that hit a 1993 54-inch transmission main. Its joints ruptured, then other pipe components. For over 2 hours, water ran at 180 pounds per square inch. About 7-8 million gallons were lost. WaterOne's replacement equipment stockpile meant new mains were installed within 26 hours.
Communications. A district-wide boil order went to the media at 8:30 a.m., followed with information to Johnson County Emergency Management, the cities, area hospitals, dialysis centers and others. A telephone hotline was set up. The break received major media attention, including suggestions to improve customer communications. WaterOne now has both Twitter and Facebook accounts. Staff will meet with the county's Emergency Management and the cities' public information officers to discuss notification issues.
Testing. Since lab tests showed no contamination, the boil order was lifted 2 hours earlier than expected on JULY 2. Soon, a national company will do comprehensive testing for any smaller leaks.

Ellen Miller

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) July 7 meeting

- Two League members were reappointed to County Boards/Commissions: Karen Wulfkuhle to the Community Corrections Advisory Board and Elaine Giessel to the Solid Waste Management Committee.
- Johnson County Health Department Director (and League member) Lougene Marsh requested approval to accept grant funding from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) for the Personal Responsibility and Education Program. Speakers from the public numbered 19 in favor of accepting the grant and four against. Several League members attended this meeting and Lee Rowe, Dolores Furtado and I each testified in favor of accepting the original grant, including both programs. After over an hour of public comment, and after removing the program for older, at-risk youth, the grant was accepted on a 4-3 vote. Commissioners Allen, Eilert, Lindstrom and Peterson voted favorably, and Commissioners Ashcraft, Hayden and Osterhaus voted against. The program targeted for older, at-risk youth was then considered separately and failed on a 3-4 vote; Commissioners Allen, Lindstrom and Peterson voting favorably, while Commissioners Ashcraft, Eilert, Hayden and Osterhaus voted against.
- Commissioners then considered accepting a grant in the amount of \$124,000 from KDHE to implement a program for Teen Pregnancy Targeted Case Management. The focus of this program is to provide counseling and instruction to pregnant teens about factors associated with a healthy pregnancy and a healthy newborn. The Commissioners voted unanimously to support this program.
- The Johnson County Health Department Director next requested Commissioners approve a \$323,575 grant from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). This "Community Transformation Grant " is focused on building capacity within minority and low income communities to develop plans for addressing smoking, diet, physical activity and other parameters leading to heart disease, obesity, and high cholesterol. The Commissioners denied acceptance of this grant with Commissioners Allen, Lindstrom and Peterson voting favorably and Commissioners Ashcraft, Eilert, Hayden, and Osterhaus voting against.

Janis McMillen

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) July 14 meeting

- The County Health Department has been awarded \$9,918 to support ongoing service delivery under its "Elder Smiles" program. The Health Department has been notified that CDC is re-focusing its HIV prevention programs to areas of the country with higher levels of at-risk populations, meaning a loss of some funding to our health department.

Janis McMillen

Olathe School Board June 2 meeting

- Outgoing board members Linda Wilhelm and Kevin Gilmore were honored, as was retiring Secretary of the Board, Betty Carpenter.
- The base state aid per pupil will be \$3780, which is a reduction of \$5.6 million from 2010-2011 (which was a reduction from prior years).
- Workers' Compensation costs are reduced from \$14,550 per 100 employees in 2007-2008 to \$5,573 per 100 employees in 2010-2011.
- The reduction in KAN-ED funds for next year will not affect Olathe directly. However, the electronic/library resources that Olathe receives through KAN-ED would cost around \$100,000 to replace if funding is eliminated in future years.
- The Culinary Arts Team was honored for its second place finish in the National ProStart Invitational Competition. The program has won first or second in the Nationals for the last five years. The value of state and national scholarships earned by the team is about \$800,000.

Connie Richards

Olathe School Board July 14 meeting

- Sworn into office were re-elected Board Members Dr. Debra Daniels and Harlan Parker and newly elected Board Members LeEtta Felter and Rick Schier.
- Harlan Parker was elected Board President for the coming year with Amy Martin serving as Vice President.
- The Board approved the publication of the proposed budget for the upcoming year. Once published, rates cannot be raised, although they can be lowered.
- The legal maximum funding for all budgets and levies for fiscal year 2012 is \$217,140,623, which is down \$1,763,382 from last year.

Connie Richards

Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees June 16 meeting

- Retiring Trustee Lynn Mitchelson was thanked for his 15 years of service on the JCCC Board of Trustees and, as part of that, for his participation and leadership on the Kansas Ass'n of Community College Trustees and the Johnson County Research Triangle.
- Under "Petitions and Communications" several JCCC custodial department employees spoke of their concerns regarding possible outsourcing of their department. Their concerns are two fold: Potential loss of jobs (and of longevity and benefits should they subsequently be hired by the private company); and of the lack of information regarding the stage of the deliberations and their status (i.e., might they be "fired" with minimal notice). They also gave anecdotal accounts of other similar colleges or companies that had tried outsourcing, only to return to in-house departments, finding them to be better in terms of efficiency and loyalty.
- Hospitality Management and Culinary Academy. The Foundation campaign now stands at \$3.291 million in pledges and contributions; exceeding the \$3 million goal.

Ann Arnott

Lenexa City Council June 7 meeting

- Mayor Boehm proclaimed June to be Lenexa Barbeque Month. The first Lenexa BBQ Championship was held in 1982. It is now considered the Kansas State BBQ championship.
- Due to the upcoming county wide changes in solid waste regulations in January 2012, the city of Lenexa is considering a mandated city wide hauler. Currently, there are five licensed haulers in Lenexa and the council has asked these providers for their perspective on this issue. A representative from Deffenbaugh and two other haulers spoke to the council at this meeting.
- David Knopick, Community Development Director, gave the council an update on Accela, the software tool for business processes used by the city since 12/06. This software provides automation of building permits, licensure, etc., enhances the city's database, and assists with work flow documentation. Accela representatives are currently working with the city to help advance the software's capability.
- Becky Yokum and Andy Huckaba discussed the National Broadband Plan and the FCC Notice of Inquiry with the council members. Communities may need to update ordinances to accommodate new technologies. There has been some conflict between local governments and this national plan. It was stated that industry will make their voices heard, so cities need to also.

Sheri Potter

Lenexa City Council June 21 meeting

- All items on the Consent Agenda were approved including the plan/plat for the Suburban Lawn and Garden center, Applebee's International Headquarters, and the City of Lenexa Parks and Recreation Department site.
- Resident public comments concerned changes in solid waste management and local haulers. A representative from both the Four Colonies Homeowners Association and the Oak Park Homes Association voiced concerns and suggestions. Country Hills West Homes Association sent comments to the council members. Not all residents are interested in a mandated city wide hauler. County Commissioner Michael Ashcraft was present. A retired soil scientist from Kansas State University voiced his concern about biodegradable waste.
- Assistant City Attorney/Prosecutor, Cory Kenney, reviewed several city ordinances to be amended to maintain uniformity with recent changes by the 2011 state legislature. The council voted to approve all amended ordinances. These ordinances included DUI offenses, the Standard Traffic Ordinance, harassment by electronic communication, and eavesdropping or breach of privacy issues.
- City Code Article 4-4-A-10 was approved to be amended. This ordinance reduces the membership of the Building Code Board of Appeals from 7 to 5 and changes the eligibility criteria for Board members. An architect and an engineer must sit on the board and terms of board members will be staggered to retain some experience.
- The Latino Art Fair is currently at City Hall. Response has been very positive. The local Mexican consulate requested that these artworks be moved to their offices at the end of the fair.

Sheri Potter

Wyandotte County Unified Government Commission July 14 meeting

- The Consent Agenda consisted of three Resolutions, one Grant, an Ordinance, two appointments. All were passed.
The grant was a request for the acceptance of a new grant from KDHE in the amount of \$180,000. The program is designed to educate high-risk adolescents on abstinence and contraception to prevent pregnancy and STD. The grant does not require any matching funds.
The ordinance was to levy special assessments to pay the cost of razing and removing various structures unfit for human habitation and making the premises safe and secure. The assessments would be levied against the lot or parcel of land where such structure was located.

- Standing Committee Agenda consisted of a resolution authorizing the mayor to sign an agreement accepting a Historic Preservation Fund Grant from the State Historical Preservation Office to undertake a project to survey two defined areas in the Strawberry Hill neighborhood. This required 40 percent matching funds which can be a combination of cash and in-kind services. This was passed.
- Administrator's Agenda had two items. One was a resolution establishing the procedures for reestablish the commission district boundaries following the U.S. Decennial Census as required by the United Government Charter. The other was a resolution authorizing the County Administrator to execute a Memorandum of Understanding to the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge No. 40 for January 1 to December 31, 2011. Both passed.
- Commissioners' Agenda had one item — a request from a commissioner to participate in the Leadership 2000 Class. This was approved.
- After the meeting was adjourned, the members reconvened to begin work on the 2012 budget. The County Administrator had presented the budget earlier, and this was the first budget workshop session. The final budget workshop will be held 7-28-11 at 5 p.m. with a public hearing, and the budget will be adopted at the commission meeting at 7 p.m. on 7-28. Several more budget workshop sessions will be held before 7-28.

Pat Yingst and Marilyn Bynum

Editor's Note: To receive the following congressional vote tally on a more-timely basis, go to www.congress.org and sign up for their weekly newsletter MegaVote.

Recent U.S. Senate Votes

[FY2012 House Budget Resolution](#) - Vote **Rejected** (40-57, 3 Not Voting) The Senate rejected a motion to proceed to consideration of the House-passed 2012 fiscal year budget resolution.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **Not Voting** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **YES**

[President's FY2012 Budget Resolution](#) - Vote **Rejected** (0-97, 3 Not Voting) The Senate rejected a motion to proceed to consideration of the president's budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **Not Voting** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **NO**

[Patriot Act Extensions](#) - Vote **Agreed to** (72-23, 5 Not Voting) The Senate passed this bill extending certain provisions of the Patriot Act until June 1, 2015. The bill, S. 990, originally reauthorized some small business programs but with the Patriot Act provisions due to expire at the end of the day, the Senate used it as the vehicle to pass the extension. The House passed the bill a few hours later, and President Obama signed it into law before the end of the day.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **Not Voting** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **YES**

[Ethanol subsidies amendment](#) - Vote **Agreed to** (73-27) During work on the Economic Development Administration bill, the Senate adopted this amendment to eliminate a tax credit refiners receive for adding ethanol to gasoline and a tariff on imported ethanol.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **NO** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **NO**

[Confirmation of Leon E. Panetta to be Secretary of Defense](#) - Vote **Confirmed** (100-0)

Current CIA Director Leon E. Panetta was confirmed to be the next Secretary of Defense. Panetta succeeds Secretary Robert Gates, who is retiring at the end of June.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **YES** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **YES**

[Presidential Appointment Efficiency and Streamlining Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Passed** (79-20, 1 Not Voting) This bill would reduce the number of executive branch appointees requiring Senate approval. Its future in the House is unclear.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **YES** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **NO**

[Confirmation of David H. Petraeus to be Director of the Central Intelligence Agency](#) - Vote **Confirmed** (94-0, 6 Not Voting) Army Gen. David H. Petraeus was confirmed to be the new CIA director. Petraeus, currently the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, is expected to begin work in September.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **YES** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **Not Voting**

Recent U.S. House Votes

[National Defense Authorization Act, FY2012](#) - Vote **Passed** (322-96, 13 Not Voting) The House passed this bill authorizing \$690.1 billion in defense spending for the upcoming fiscal year. The Senate is expected to take up its version of the bill this summer.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Patriot Act Extensions](#) - Vote **Passed** (250-153, 28 Not Voting) The House gave final approval to this bill extending certain provisions of the Patriot Act until June 1, 2015. The bill, S. 990, originally reauthorized some small business programs but with the Patriot Act provisions due to expire at the end of the day, the Senate used it as the vehicle to pass the extension. President Obama signed the bill into law before the end of the day.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Debt Limit Increase](#) - Vote **Failed** (97-318, 7 Present, 9 Not Voting) The House rejected this bill to raise the public debt limit by \$2.4 trillion. The government is expected to hit the current \$14.3 trillion debt ceiling by August 2, 2011. Negotiations between the White House and congressional leaders are ongoing.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **NO**

[Homeland Security Appropriations, FY 2012](#) - Vote **Passed** (231-188, 13 Not Voting) This bill would provide the Department of Homeland Security with \$42.3 billion in funding for the upcoming fiscal year. The total is 2.6% less than the current fiscal year. The bill includes \$1 billion in emergency spending for disaster aid. Senate appropriators have not drafted their version of the bill yet.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Use of Ground Forces in Libya](#) - Vote **Passed** (268-145, 1 Present, 18 Not Voting) The House passed this resolution stating the chamber's opposition to deploying ground forces in Libya and requiring President Obama to report the strategy for U.S. involvement in combat operations in Libya to Congress within 14 days. The resolution is non-binding.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Libya Troop Withdrawal](#) - Vote **Failed** (148-265, 19 Not Voting) The House failed to pass this resolution that would have forced the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces from Libya within 15 days.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **NO**

[Jobs and Energy Permitting Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Passed** (253-166, 12 Not Voting) This House bill would require the EPA to complete action within six months on air pollution permit applications for offshore oil and gas drilling. A companion measure has been introduced in the Senate, but its future is unclear. The administration opposes the bill.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Appropriations, FY2012](#) - Vote **Passed** (411-5, 16 Not Voting) The House passed this \$143.9 billion bill that would fund the Veterans Affairs Department and the Defense Department's construction activities for the upcoming fiscal year. The bill marks a two percent increase over the current year's level. The Senate has not yet begun work on its version of the bill.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Agriculture Appropriations, FY2012](#) - Vote **Passed** (217-203, 12 Not Voting) The House passed this bill that would provide \$125.5 billion in the upcoming fiscal year for the Agriculture Department. The bill would cut discretionary spending by thirteen percent over the current amount and increase mandatory spending by three percent. The Senate has not yet begun work on its version of the bill.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[America Invents Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (304-117, 10 Not Voting) The House passed this bill that would make changes to the patent system. The Senate passed its version of the bill in March 2011. Negotiators will likely meet this summer to work out a compromise bill. The administration has expressed support for the House bill.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Authorizing the limited use of the United States Armed Forces in support of the NATO mission in Libya](#) - Vote **Failed** (123-295, 13 Not Voting) The House rejected a resolution that would have authorized the use of U.S. military force in Libya for one year.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **NO**

[To limit the use of funds to support NATO Operation Unified Protector with respect to Libya](#) - Vote **Failed** (180-238, 13 Not Voting) The House rejected this bill that would have defunded U.S. military involvement in NATO activities in Libya. U.S. participation would have been restricted to support operations such as intelligence, surveillance, and search and rescue.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Fiscal 2012 Defense Appropriations](#) - Vote **Passed** (336-87, 8 Not Voting) The House passed this \$649.2 billion bill to fund the Defense Department in the next fiscal year. The bill marks a \$17 billion increase over the 2011 spending level. The Senate is expected to work on its version of the bill later in the summer.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Better Use of Light Bulbs Act](#) - Vote **Failed** (233-193, 1 Present, 4 Not Voting) The House rejected this bill that would have repealed energy efficiency standards that are expected to lead to a phaseout of the traditional incandescent light bulb. A two-thirds vote was necessary to pass the bill under suspension of the rules. The bill is likely to come up again under a rule or as part of another bill.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**.

[Clean Water Cooperative Federalism Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Passed** (239-184, 8 Not Voting) This House bill would limit the EPA's authority to override a state's water pollution standards in favor of stricter standards. It is unclear if the Senate will take up the bill. The White House has issued a veto threat.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Energy-Water Appropriations, FY2012](#) - Vote **Passed** (219-196, 16 Not Voting) The House passed this 2012 fiscal year spending bill that would provide \$30.6 billion to the Department of Energy, the Army Corps of Engineers and various water projects. The Senate has not written its version of the bill yet.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF JOHNSON COUNTY
9531 MEADOW LANE
LEAWOOD KS 66206**

Upcoming Events

Friday July 29	Naturalization Ceremony: Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5th and State, Kansas City, KS
Saturday August 6	LWV-JoCo Board Meeting 10 a.m.; Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, Overland Park, KS.
Thursday August 18	League Preview Party: 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.; Matt Ross Community Center, 8101 Marty, Overland Park, KS: EVERYONE IS ENCOURAGED TO BRING A GUEST
Friday August 26	Naturalization Ceremony: Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5th and State, Kansas City, KS
Saturday September 10	General Meeting: "Touching Base with the Johnson County 2020 Vision Plan;" 8:30 a.m. social time, 9 a.m. program, 11 a.m. board meeting; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
Friday September 30	Naturalization Ceremony: Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5th and State, Kansas City, KS
Saturday October 1	General Meeting: 8:30 a.m. social time, 9 a.m. program, 11 a.m. board meeting; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
Monday October 4	Consensus Meeting: "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" History, Common Core Standards; Discussion Questions 1-9; 7-9 p.m.; Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, OP, KS.
Tuesday October 24	Consensus Meeting: "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" History, Common Core Standards; Discussion Questions 1-9; 7-9 p.m.; Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, OP, KS.
Wednesday October 26	Consensus Meeting: "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" Equity and Funding; Discussion Questions 10-15; 7-9 p.m. ; Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, Overland Park, KS.
Thursday October 27	Consensus Meeting: "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" Equity and Funding; Discussion Questions 10-15; 7-9 p.m. ; Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, Overland Park, KS.

The deadline for the September VOTER is August 15.