

Tuesday Topics September 5, 2023

President Mary Lou Davis opened the meeting and reminded all to be registered voters. Vicki Buening spoke about “Purses for a Purpose,” our local league fundraiser to earn money for education and outreach. Purses can be purchased with cash or check. Lana Balka encouraged everyone to buy a duck in The Great American Duck Race, sponsored by the Sertoma Club and LWV. Our local league will receive half the funds raised; ducks can be purchased for \$5 each or \$20 for five ducks.

President Davis recognized members of the Observer Corps: Vicki Arnett, Evelyn Davis, Camille Nohe, Gretchen Glue, Elvera Johnston, Anne Tietz, Janet Cathcart, Chis Huntsman, Mary Galligan, and Carole Jordan. She then introduced Susan Quinn, LWV who spoke for herself and Robin Sweeney on “Voter Services: Serving Voters One Voter at a Time.”

Quinn reported that at the Food Truck Festival, Voter Services encouraged 831 potential voters and guided them through the process for registering to vote. They also helped people who had served felony sentences understand their voting rights and provided them with information provided by the ACLU and encouraging them to contact ACLU for further help. She also noted that Voter Services goes to area high schools and Washburn University to explain voting, voting history, and all the struggles involved.

Quinn reminded everyone that the LWV is non-partisan and does not endorse any candidates but does take a stand on issues. She explained that the League works to protect and expand voting rights, which in Kansas can be in jeopardy. In the 2013 case of Shelby v Holder, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that two provisions in the 1965 Voting Rights Act, Section 4b (a formula for determining if a location or state violated the right of vote for certain groups of people) and Section 5, were unconstitutional. Kansas took advantage of the Section 4b ruling and closed many polling places, created new voter ID laws, and required proof of citizenship. In 2021, Kansas passed a new law making it a felony to register voters if a voter believed the registering person was from the election office, which is why the LWV no longer registers voters. The LWV is suing the state to remove the law.

Quinn said the importance for everyone to vote cannot be overstated – everyone's voice must be heard. She said we come together to vote for the greater good and that as President Davis advised, we should try to reach out to neighbors and even strangers to try to connect with them. Ask if they are registered to vote and tell them why you are voting. without arguing or telling them how to vote.

Quinn reminded the audience that there are three ways to vote: mail-in ballots from home, early voting at the election office (usually a couple of weeks prior to election day), or at your voting location. You can register to vote at KSVOTES.org, and also in person or over the phone at the election office. When you vote, you must have an acceptable photo ID. See the Secretary of State's website for a list. Free photo IDs are available at the Department of Motor Vehicles. Certain groups don't need to show an ID: permanent advanced voters, members of the military, and people 65 or older. You will also need your home address and perhaps an email address. For those who do not have a home address, those sheltered at the YWCA or the Rescue Mission are allowed to use that address. The LWV will allow them to use their email address (lwvvotersservices@gmail.com).

Quinn encouraged everyone to get involved and work to increase voting. She suggested sending a post card to request more polling places to Election Commissioner Andrew Howell, your Shawnee County Commissioner (they hold the purse strings), or your Kansas legislator. She noted that the legislature is forming a special election committee and that she plans to attend their first public meeting.

Following questions from the audience, the meeting adjourned.