



# VOTER

## Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County

### How To Reach Us

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### March 2009

Volume 59  
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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.*

## General Meeting Saturday, March 7

**Atonement Lutheran Church – 9948 Metcalf**

8:30 a.m. – Socializing

9 - 11 a.m. – Program

11 a.m. - noon – LWV JoCo Board Meeting

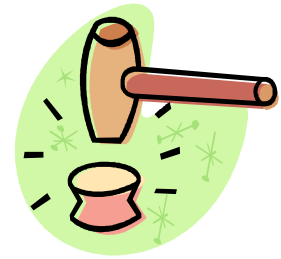
**“The American Dream Deferred: Poverty in Johnson County”**

***Speaker: Paul Johnson***

Paul Johnson is a legislative consultant for LWVKS and writes the Legislative E report. For over 25 years, he has been an advocate regarding poverty programs. He will inform us on the impact of the Kansas Legislature’s recent budget cuts.

*We look forward to seeing you*

One feature that attracts many to League is our in-depth study of issues. League's history and policy is to undertake intensive study of an issue, discuss it in small groups, and through consensus arrive upon a position. We have position statements of issues on a national, state and local (Johnson County) basis.



## ***President's Message***

On February 14, the League celebrated its 89<sup>th</sup> birthday. We have seen increased numbers of citizens participating in choosing government officials and in public discussions about policy issues. The League continues to be active in educating the public, presenting programs on issues important in making our democracy work. It encourages citizens to become involved in government and to contact their representatives at the local, state and national level to be certain they remain accountable to their constituents.

National League president, Mary Wilson, states, "For nearly nine decades, the League has worked to ensure our democracy is transparent, effective, and truly representative. Those challenges are as real today as they were for our suffragist foremothers who struggled for their right to vote so many years ago." She continues, "We take seriously our legacy of providing trustworthy and balanced resources to citizens and lawmakers."

The League has worked to promote equal voting rights, winning passage of the National Voter Registration Act and is working to enact the Help America Vote Act. The League is also involved at the state and local level. Right now we encourage members to follow the hearing on the Equal Rights Amendment in the U. S. Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee on February 24. Anyone who can attend is encouraged to do so to show support.

I know those who attended our February meeting were pleased with the speaker, Eileen Horn, Director, Outreach and Education for the Climate and Energy Project of the Salina-based Land Institute. She spoke on Climate Change, a subject that will affect our future.

Locally, the League is continuing its poverty study. I hope you will all attend the March meeting to learn more about the problems that exist right in our midst. We are fortunate that our League legislative representative, Paul Johnson, will be the speaker on March 7. He will give us an update on the work of the Kansas Legislature in making reductions to the 2009 budget. These reductions will impact the poverty situation in our community. The topic for Let's Talk Issues in March is also Poverty in Johnson County. Both of these programs will further our knowledge and help us develop a comprehensive local position on poverty.

*Barbara Stillman*

## Candidate Forums

Mike Waugh, with Johnson County Community College, has asked that we assist them with upcoming televised candidate forums. He believes the reputation and integrity of League members is a huge asset. There will be five forums of two candidates for the JCCC Board of Trustees and they are asking our assistance as time keepers.

There are also five mayoral races which they are asking for our assistance as time keepers and moderators.

For those who are familiar with the tapings at JCCC in the past, the format has changed a bit. There will be only one moderator asking questions of the candidates, not a panel as in the past.

So, this is what we need volunteers for:

1. League members interested in acting as time keepers for the JCCC Board of Trustees. They are scheduled for Tuesday, March 17 on the hour beginning at 11a.m. and ending at 3 p.m.
2. League members interested in acting as time keepers and moderators for the mayoral candidates. Times will be scheduled on the evening of Tuesday, March 17 and the day/afternoon/evening on Wednesday, March 18. Since there will only be one moderator and they will be asking the questions, we want to make sure that the questions asked are relevant to the mayoral race in that forum. The candidates would be from the cities of Fairway, Gardner, Merriam, Roeland Park, and DeSoto. This would be a great opportunity for a League member who lives in one of these cities to ask some great questions.
3. League members to submit great questions for either the JCCC Board of Trustee Forums or the Mayoral Forums. You may email them to me at [herbivore@kc.rr.com](mailto:herbivore@kc.rr.com).

Thank you in advance for your continued support with these forums. They provide such a great way for the community to receive information on these candidates. Please feel free to email or call me if you can volunteer or have questions.

Jodie Dietz

[herbivore@kc.rr.com](mailto:herbivore@kc.rr.com) or 913-814-7928

## LWV Position

The subject for the February 4 Let's Talk Issues program was transportation and the highway system. The local position question for the March 7 meeting will be on the Arterial Road System.

### STATEMENT OF POSITION:

The League of Women Voters of Johnson County supports a county-wide arterial road system. The League supports an ongoing engineering survey of major roads in Johnson County to provide an arterial road system which is flexible enough to handle the growing traffic. Such a system should include:

1. Clearly defined administrative responsibilities and adequate financing.
2. A county-assisted road system

*Past Study: 1971; Approved: 1994*

## Speaker Bureau

The Speaker Bureau enjoyed a very busy year in 2008-2009. We received an exceptional number of requests for speakers and were able to accommodate each one.

Our speakers conducted 10 programs in 2008. Autumn and the election season were especially busy: we presented three programs in September and five in October. We are continuing that momentum into 2009, with five programs booked so far.

Feedback from those who requested our programs has been consistently positive, both about the quality of the information and the talents of the speakers. Many thanks and congratulations to these very busy presenters: Sandy Ackerson, Frank Neff, Missy Taylor, Ann Arnott, Ann Sanders and Diane Kuhn. These individuals promoted League at every event and have been a wonderful 'face' for the Johnson County League of Women Voters!

*Gail Rodriguez, chair*

## Energy Solutions for Kansas

Our February meeting featured an informative program "Climate Change Hits Home: Challenges and Solutions for Kansas." The presenter was Eileen Horn, Director, Outreach and Education for the Climate and Energy Project of the Salina-based Land Institute. If you would like further information on this topic, please go to their website:

[www.climateandenergy.org](http://www.climateandenergy.org).

# League Day at the Capitol

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Join other League and AAUW members from around the state who will gather in Topeka to hear about current legislation and state budgeting, as well as meet with state legislators.

8:30 a.m. Gather at First Presbyterian Church, Willard Hall, 817 Harrison, for a continental breakfast.

9:00 a.m. Opening Remarks

9:15 a.m. April Holman, Kansas Action for Children

9:45 a.m. Alan Conroy, Legislative Research

10:15 a.m. Q & A

10:30 a.m. Q & A – Visit with speakers or visit legislators' offices in the Capitol

Noon Lunch in the church. Guest Speaker: Nancy Jackson, Climate and Energy Project, Salina Land Institute

1:00 p.m. Return to Capitol or attend LWVK Board meeting

Cost is \$25, which will include coffee, juice, and pastries in the morning and the noon lunch. Please make checks payable to the League of Women Voters of Kansas and mail with names and addresses of all who plan to attend to: LWVK, 618 S. Kansas Ave., Suite B1, Topeka, KS, 66603, by March 16.

Think about bringing a friend with you who doesn't belong to League but is interested in good government. This is a great way to introduce others to League and our work. Call Diane Kuhn, 913-631-9499, if you are interested in car pooling.

Note: Parking will not be available in the church parking lot. There is underground parking below the Capitol and on street parking to the south and west. Meter parking is across the street, but do bring a roll of quarters.

## Let's Talk Issues

Let's Talk Issues is a program presented six times a year, sponsored by the Johnson County Community College, The Kansas City Star, and Johnson County League of Women Voters. It is taped at the Community College and can be seen on the college television station and accessed through its website.

The March program will be on Poverty in Johnson County which is the topic of our present local study. Candy Birch, our co-president elect, will moderate the show. Panelists will include: Dolores Futardo, a League member and Representative from Overland Park in the Kansas Legislature; Tamra Brandes from Catholic Charities; Valorie Lynn Carson from United Community Service; and County Commissioner Ed Peterson.

Anyone interested in attending the taping is invited. Plan to arrive no later than 6:45 p.m. on March 4 at the JCCC television studio. The college provides us with a DVD of each program. On April 8, the final Let's Talk Issues program for the season, members of the Kansas Legislature will discuss what happened during the recent legislative session.

## Naturalization Ceremonies

Naturalization Ceremonies are held at the Federal Courthouse in KCK at 5th and State on the last Friday of each month. They begin at 1:30 p.m. and last about 45 minutes. Then we register the new citizens to vote. If anyone is interested in attending this very moving ceremony and helping with voter registration, please contact Bettie Swiontek ([booklady@kc.rr.com](mailto:booklady@kc.rr.com) or 913-362-4918).

Please mark your calendar with dates of upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies.

February 27	Chief Judge Kathryn H. Vratil
March 27	Judge Carlos Murguia
April 24	Magistrate Judge David J. Waxse

*Bettie Swiontek*

## In Memoriam

Sandra Butler, a faithful member of League of Women Voters of Johnson County, died January 23, 2009 following a long battle with cancer.

# Heartland Men's Chorus Sings of Social Justice in March Concert

*The Kansas City League has asked us to join them in attending a March 29 (4 p.m.) matinee concert by the Heartland Men's Chorus at the Folly Theater. The cost per ticket is \$15. Please let Barbara Stillman know by the March 7 meeting if you plan to attend.*

Throughout history, oppressed people have turned to song to express their struggles and their joys, their hope and their vision. This spring, Heartland Men's Chorus examines the issue of civil rights through the music of the movement in ***And Justice For All*** (March 28 and 29, 2009, at the Folly Theater).

The struggles of African-Americans, women, gays and lesbians will come to life in HMC's latest "musical documentary." Combining music, narration and multi-media, the Chorus will explore the work that's been done and the work still to do as our nation strives to provide justice and equality for all.

Audience members can expect to hear music spawned from the various civil rights movements ("We Shall Overcome"), music inspired by iconic historical events ("Elegy for Matthew") and songs that resonate on the theme of social justice ("You've Got to be Carefully Taught").

The women's suffrage movement will be commemorated with "Right to Vote" by Gwyneth Walker and "The March of the Women" by Dame Ethel Smyth. Written in 1911 and premiered by a chorus of Suffragettes at a fundraising rally at the Albert Hall in London, "The March of the Women" became the battle cry of the suffrage movement.

Its most famous performance occurred in Holloway prison in London in 1912. More than 100 suffragists, including Ethel Smyth, were arrested, tried, and sentenced to two months' imprisonment. Ethel Smyth found her time in prison an exalting experience of communal determination and sacrifice by women of all ages and classes. One day, while the prisoners were taking their outdoor exercise, she appeared at a window overlooking the prison yard, and conducted their singing of the suffrage battle anthem by waving her toothbrush.

## Primary Election - March 3, 2009 General Election - April 7, 2009

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### Election of Officials in the following cities

- Bonner Springs - Mayor - 2 Year Term, Council Member Ward 4 - 4 Year Term
- De Soto - Mayor - 4 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Edgerton - Mayor - 4 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Fairway - Mayor - 4 Year Term, Council Members Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 - 4 Year Term
- Gardner - Mayor - 4 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Lake Quivira - Mayor - 2 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Lenexa - Council Members Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 - 4 Year Term
- Merriam - Mayor - 4 Year Term, Council Members Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 - 4 Year Term
- Mission Hills - Mayor - 4 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Mission Woods - Mayor - 2 Year Term, 5 Council Members At-Large - 2 Year Term
- Olathe - 1 Council Member At-Large - 4 Year Term, Council Members Wards 3, 4 - 4 Year Term
- Overland Park - Mayor - 4 Year Term, Council Members Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- Roeland Park - Mayor - 4 Year Term, Council Members Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 - 4 Year Term
- Spring Hill - Mayor - 4 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Westwood Hills - Mayor - 2 Year Term, 5 Council Members At-Large - 2 Year Term

### Election of Board Positions for:

- USD 229 Blue Valley Board Members - Positions 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 230 Spring Hill Board Members - Positions 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 231 Gardner Edgerton Board Members - Positions 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 232 De Soto Board Members - Positions 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 233 Olathe Board Members - Positions 3, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 289 Wellsville Board Members - Positions 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 491 Eudora Board Members - 3 At-Large Positions - 4 Year Term
- USD 512 Shawnee Mission Board Members - Positions 2, 4, 6 At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Johnson County Community College Trustees - 3 At-Large Positions - 4 Year Term
- Water District #1 of Johnson County - Positions 3, 4, 5 - 4 Year Term

## April LWV Meeting

The National Popular Vote Compact is the topic for our April 4 general meeting. The National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact provides a way to choose the President of the United States by popular vote without amending the Constitution. For background information on this topic, as well as the pro and con positions, check the League website: [http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=National\\_Popular\\_Vote\\_Compact](http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=National_Popular_Vote_Compact)

*Ann Arnott*

## National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact Study

Delegates at LWVUS Convention 2008 voted to study the advisability of using the National Popular Vote (NPV) Compact among the states as a method for electing the U.S. President.

### The National Popular Vote Compact Proposal

The National Popular Vote Compact proposal offers a method of achieving the result of election of the President by popular vote without amending the Constitution to eliminate the Electoral College. Instead, this method uses the mechanism of the Electoral College to ensure that the candidate who receives the most popular votes is elected President of the United States.

Under the proposed legislation to enact the National Popular Vote Compact, all of the state's electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The bill would take effect only when enacted, in identical form, by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes—that is, enough electoral votes to elect a President (270 of 538)

## League of Women Voters

Founded by those who led the struggle for women's rights to vote, the League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization. It has worked since 1920 to improve our systems of government and influence public policies through citizen education and advocacy. The league's enduring vitality and resonance derive from its success as a grassroots organization, working at the national, state and local levels

### What does the League do?

- Registers millions to vote
- Defends voting rights
- Monitors government activities
- Teaches citizens about rights and responsibilities
- Sponsors candidate and issue forums
- Informs through in-depth analyses
- Takes action by lobbying on issues you care about

### The League is:

- Nonpartisan: We neither support nor oppose political parties or candidates. We do encourage individual members to participate actively in the party of their choice.
- Educational: League's purpose is to inform citizens about government and to provide service to voters.
- Objective: Our nonpartisan philosophy encourages the examination of all sides of an issue.
- Involved: League makes a difference in our cities, townships, counties, school districts, state and nation
- Action Oriented: LWV mobilizes people to vote and make their opinions known in the complex decisions that affect us all.

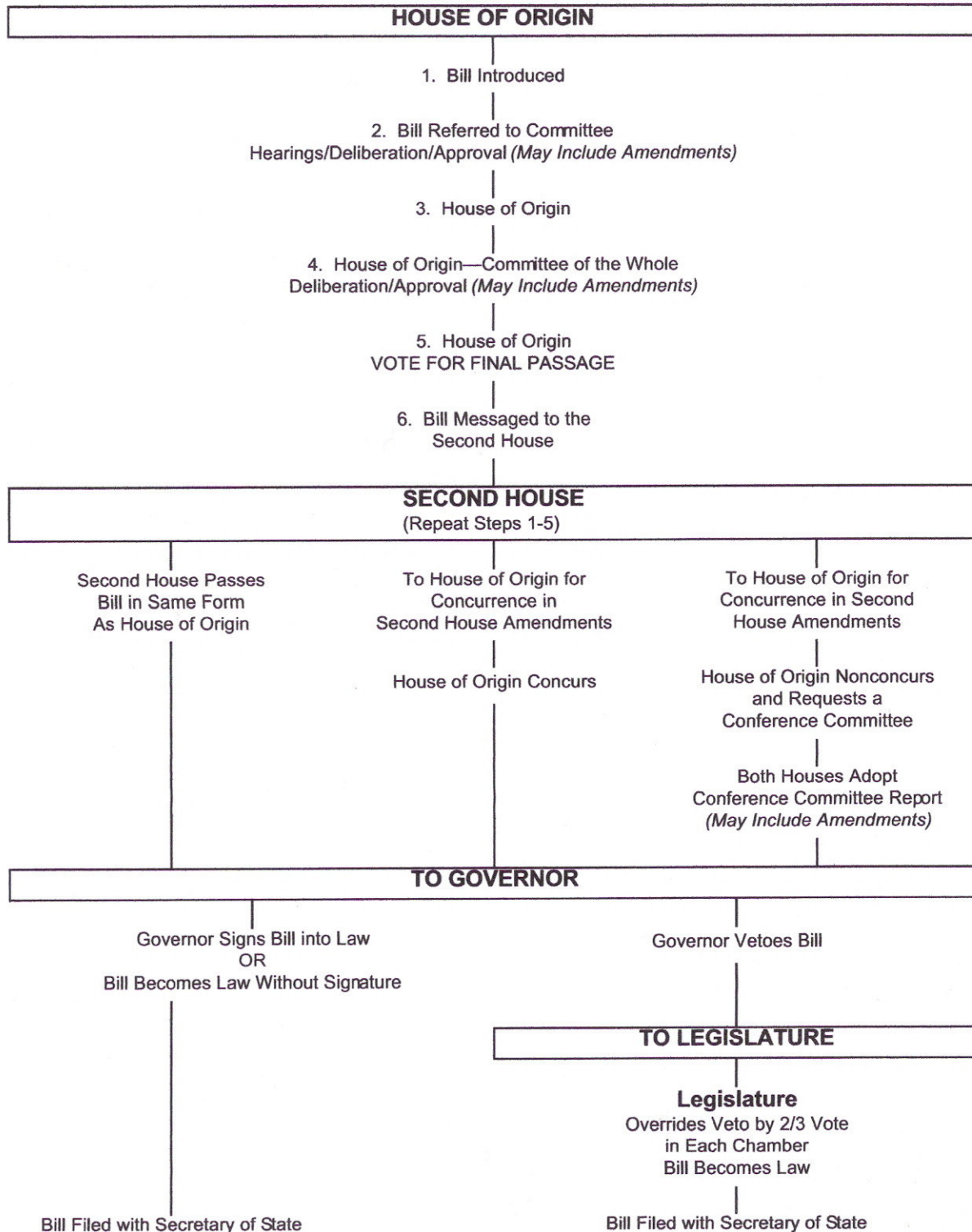
## Kansas Legislature

Our Kansas senators and representatives are currently in session in Topeka. To learn which legislators represent your area, check [www.jocoelection.org](http://www.jocoelection.org), then click Voter Lookup to find your districts. Next, click "Elected Official Directory" to learn the names of your legislators and use the link to contact them. For another way to contact your legislators, go to [www.kslegislature.org](http://www.kslegislature.org)

The following chart illustrates how a bill becomes a law in Kansas.

## HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW

The Kansas Legislature consists of Two Houses—The House of Representatives (125 members) and the Senate (40 members). A bill may be introduced in either house. The main steps in the process of a bill becoming a law are shown below.



## OBSERVER CORP REPORTS

*Learn about your community and help League prepare for action*

Observer Corp is vital for keeping our membership informed on local issues. Observers are needed for:

- Blue Valley School Board: Meetings held on the 2nd Monday at 7 p.m. at the Blue Valley District Administration Office, 151st & Metcalf
- Olathe School Board: Meetings held on the 1st Thursday, 5:30 p.m. at 14160 Black Bob
- Johnson County Airport Commission meets the fourth Wednesday at 9 a.m. at 1 New Century Parkway, New Century, Kansas (near Gardner)
- Johnson County Water Board meets the second Tuesday at 7 p.m. at 10747 Renner Blvd, Lenexa  
To volunteer as an observer, please contact Marian Wade (362-7587 or [fwade@kc.rr.com](mailto:fwade@kc.rr.com)).

Thanks to Betty Wyckoff, who has served five years as an observer of the Overland Park Planning Commission. She had done a terrific job, we wish her well in any upcoming endeavors and will miss her reports. If anyone is interested in observing the Overland Park Planning Commission, they meet every 2nd and 4th Monday afternoon from 1:30 p.m. until all of the agenda is done

### **Johnson County Library Board of Directors**

January 21 meeting:

- Jim Lutz and Kristen Hensen will represent the Board on a study to select a Monticello site for a new library.
- County Commissioner Ed Eilert ends his term as liaison to the Library Board. He reported that county level departments have been asked to look at possible budget decreases and some salaries will be adjusted in the next six months. A search firm is seeking a new county manager.
- County Librarian Donna Lauffer reported that the library provides a variety of resources for people in the job-search process. A Birger Sandzen exhibit from Lindsborg is displayed at Central Resource Library during February.
- Leawood Pioneer Library is undergoing renovations, which include removal of a low ceiling, emphasis on light through color, improved acoustics, and carpeting with patterns varying by area.
- David Hansen reported on the outreach expansion in the Early Literacy Work program to make reading fun for everyone. A new program “6 x 6” will be launched in the fall.
- The Board approved a \$159,000 from Wilcott Construction Company for vestibule modifications at the Central Resource Library.

February 18 meeting:

- Dinitra Templin, DeSoto, was introduced as a new member of the board. Douglas Wood has been appointed liaison from the JoCo Board of Commissioners.
- County Librarian Donna Lauffer reviewed the services for Hispanics that are provided via a new phone line with language assistance. A major decision was the approval of Dell PC Purchase. This year, one third of the total planned replacement of computers will be complete.
- A Gift Fund Report: Four projects were discussed. Among them were the finishing of the roof at Oak Park Library, renovation of Corinth Library, the need for replacement of vehicles, and the need for updating carpets, lighting, etc. at the Central Resource Library. Another needed project is to finish the lower level at the Shawnee Library.
- The meeting was adjourned after approval of the proposed Jo. Co. Library Capitol Improvement Plan request for 2020-2014.

*Submitted by Dorothy Blackburn*

## Recent U.S. Senate Votes

[Cloture Motion; Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Passed** (66-12, 20 Not Voting) The Senate reached the necessary sixty votes to move forward on this bill, which is a package of over 160 bills related to public lands, national parks, and water development legislation.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **NO**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **Not Voting**

[Confirmation of Hillary Rodham Clinton to be Secretary of State](#) - Vote **Confirmed** (94-2, 2 Not Voting) On January 21, the Senate voted to confirm Hillary Rodham Clinton as Secretary of State.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **YES**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **YES**

[Confirmation of Timothy Geithner to be Secretary of the Treasury](#) - Vote **Confirmed** (60-34, 4 Not Voting) The Senate confirmed Timothy Geithner to be Secretary of the Treasury.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **NO**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

[Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Passed** (66-32, 1 Not Voting) The Senate voted to reauthorize and expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **NO**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

[Confirmation of Eric H. Holder, Jr. to be Attorney General](#) - Vote **Confirmed** (75-21, 3 Not Voting) The Senate confirmed Eric Holder to be Attorney General.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **NO**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

[American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Agreed to** (60-38, 1 Not Voting)

The Senate agreed to the conference report of this stimulus bill, sending it to the President.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **NO**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

## Recent U.S. House Votes

[Paycheck Fairness Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (256-163, 14 Not Voting) The House passed this bill to allow gender-based pay discrimination victims to sue for more money and require employers to meet a higher standard to justify pay disparities.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

[Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Passed** (247-171, 15 Not Voting) The House passed this employee pay discrimination measure that would allow courts to consider each new paycheck as a new instance of discrimination.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

[American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Passed** (244-188, 1 Not Voting)

The House passed this \$819 billion bill providing for additional 2009 fiscal year appropriations.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

[Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Passed** (290-135, 8 Not Voting) The House gave final approval to this bill that reauthorizes and expands the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

[DTV Delay Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (264-158, 10 Not Voting) The House passed this bill that will delay the transition to digital television signals until June 12.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

[American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Passed** (246-183, 1 Present, 3 Not Voting) The House gave final approval to this stimulus bill.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

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

## **Upcoming Events**

<b>Friday February 27</b>	<b>Naturalization Ceremony:</b> Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5 <sup>th</sup> and State, Kansas City, Kansas; Chief Judge Kathryn H. Vratil presiding
<b>Wednesday March 4</b>	<b>Let's Talk Issues:</b> Poverty in Johnson County; Johnson County Community College, TV studio; 6:45 p.m.
<b>Saturday March 7</b>	<b>General Meeting:</b> Topic: Poverty in Johnson County; 8:30 a.m. refreshments, 9-11 a.m. program, 11 a.m. board meeting; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
<b>Thursday March 19</b>	<b>LWV Day at the Capitol,</b> First Presbyterian Church, 817 Harrison, Topeka 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
<b>Friday March 27</b>	<b>Naturalization Ceremony:</b> Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5 <sup>th</sup> and State, Kansas City, Kansas; Judge Carlos Marguia presiding
<b>Saturday April 4</b>	<b>General Meeting:</b> Topic: National Popular Vote Compact; 8:30 a.m. refreshments, 9-11 a.m. program, 11 a.m. board meeting; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
<b>Wednesday April 8</b>	<b>Let's Talk Issues:</b> Summary of the Kansas legislative session; Johnson County Community College, TV studio; 6:45 p.m.
<b>Saturday May 9</b>	<b>Annual Meeting:</b> Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS; 9 a.m.

**Deadline for the VOTER's April 2009 issue is March 10.**