

October 2012

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the way
since 1915*

The Bulletin

Woman's City Club of Greater Cincinnati



A PUBLIC TOWN HALL DEBATE ON ISSUE 4 EXTENDING CINCINNATI CITY COUNCIL'S TERMS TO FOUR YEARS

Monday, October 15, 2012 7:00–9:00 pm

WCC, in conjunction with other Cincinnati civic organizations, is presenting a town hall debate on extending Cincinnati's City Council terms from two to four years – Issue 4 on this November's ballot. The event will take place Monday, October 15, 2012, 7:00-9:00 pm at Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church Geier Room, 103 Wm. Howard Taft Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45219.



Dan Hurley, Director, Leadership Cincinnati, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, will moderate the debate. The panel consists of a Council member and community supporter for and against the issue.

Laure Quinlivan, Cincinnati City Council member and **Rev. Damon Lynch, Jr.**, pastor, New Jerusalem Baptist Church will present arguments for extending Council terms.

PG Sittenfeld, Cincinnati City Council member, and **Matt Davis**, Vice

President, Government Affairs, Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce or his designate will present arguments against the proposal.

In August Cincinnati City Council voted to place on the November ballot a proposal to extend Council terms from two to four years, with candidates running for concurrent terms. Among the arguments of proponents of four-year terms is the increased opportunity of council members to concentrate on and resolve complex civic issues, taking a longer view. Opponents argue that doubling the term will reduce citizens' ability to hold Council accountable and "throw the rascals out" if a majority disapproves of Council members' performance.

Come, bring friends, and listen to the pros and cons of this important proposal that endeavors to improve local government. Then weigh in with comments and questions during

the ample audience participation time. Contact **Ian Nickey** at inickey@votersfirstOhio.com for more information.

Light refreshments will be available. Park behind the church, and enter at the side entrance.

Co-sponsored by Woman's City Club, AIR, Inc, the Cincinnati Association, Citizens for Civic Renewal, and the League of Women Voters, organizations which educate citizens of issues of civic importance and promote civic engagement.

Please note: Prior to Council's voting to put the current proposal on the ballot, the WCC Board of Trustees voted to endorse four year terms for Cincinnati City Council. The board preferred staggered terms, but concluded that four year concurrent terms are a good step toward strengthening Council's effectiveness.

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WOMAN'S CITY CLUB ENDORSES ISSUE 42 – CPS RENEWAL LEVY

The WCC board of trustees has voted to recommend the membership vote to support Cincinnati Public Schools' renewal levy, issue 42 on the November 6 ballot. We encourage the membership to vote "yes" and, if possible, help pass the levy through volunteer work and campaign contributions (see below).

Prior to the vote, WCC members had an opportunity to respond to a poll on whether WCC should endorse the levy. It contained with information from CPS documents, levy campaign staff, and information compiled by Burt Roehr and the Education Committee of the League of Women Voters to help with their decision.

Rationale for supporting the renewal levy.

The funds generated by the levy, \$51.5 million a year represent a renewal of current operating revenue and as such would not raise taxes. Continuing to collect the funds is essential because CPS revenue is declining. **State funding was cut \$18 million** in school year 2011-12, and will

decline by \$44 million by 2014-15. Decisions by the county commissioners and Duke Energy will potentially cost CPS an **additional \$8 million**. Starting next year, the State is requiring CPS to reserve **\$10 million** for building maintenance. CPS has already eliminated 1300 jobs in the last 10 years, 200 just in the past year, together with freezing of salaries. The budget is balanced. 17 schools have been closed in response to decreasing enrollment.

**For Our Schools
Renew 42
It Won't Raise Taxes!**

CPS works with a disproportionate number of students whose economic status and special needs require **additional resources and adequate funding**. 69.7% of the students are economically disadvantaged; 21% have disabilities; 3.7% are limited English proficient. To compare per student spending of Hamilton County school districts, you may

visit stateimpact.npr.org/ohio/2012/01/17/see-how-much-each-ohio-school-district-spends-per-student/.

At the same time, CPS' student proficiency scores earned CPS an "effective" rating by the state, and drop out rates had improved markedly. It should be said that a new state formula for determining district dropout rates may increase above the current rate of 20%.

Volunteer opportunities.

Please go to the campaign's website, justarenual.com/volunteer/, for information on ways to help the campaign. The page allows people to register and indicate what type of activity you have interest in (office work, canvassing, displaying a yard sign, etc.). Click on the dates in the calendar to find when different activities are occurring. The campaign office phone number is (513) 266-7810.

You can make a contribution by going to www.justarenual.com/ and clicking on "Contribute."



WCC BOARD ENDORSES STATE ISSUE 2 ~ REDISTRICTING REFORM

The WCC Board of Trustees voted to recommend that its membership vote for State Issue 2, to reform the State's way of re-drawing district lines for state and federal elections after each Census. See rationale below.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Nancy Dawley and the League of Women Voters are leading a local educational campaign about Issue 2 and have asked WCC for volunteers. Here are the opportunities:

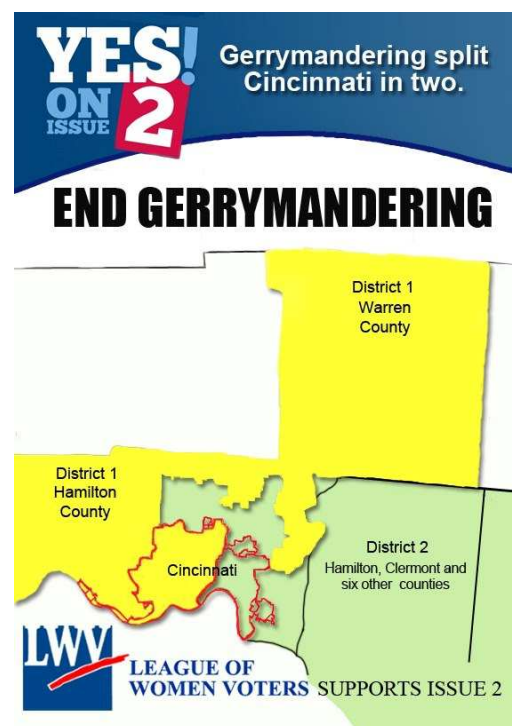
- Contact organizations (particularly neighborhood organizations) to identify a date, contact, and meeting time when a speaker could come either to present just the arguments for or both pros and cons of Issue 2. Then call the LWV local office (281-8683) with the information so they can arrange for a speaker.
- Help at these meetings by speaking or passing out information.
- Making calls to voters from home. Contact Ian A. Nickey at ian@melamedcommunications.com or 614.460.9640. You may also contact Sarah Gideonse for links to instructions.
- Pass out posters available from the League office (see attachment), 103 Wm. H. Taft Rd. 45219.

RATIONALE FOR REFORM

As the *Enquirer* states succinctly, "the current system allows the majority party at the state level to gerrymander state legislative and Congressional districts to its benefit, often creating noncompetitive districts." The process maximizes the majority party's seats and protects incumbents. The redistricting undertaken by the Republicans after the 2010 Census largely favored the Republican Party in 75% of the districts, although the state is fairly evenly divided politically. Democrats do the same when they are the majority. Even Secretary of State Jon Husted calls the current system, "blatantly partisan."

Proponents of the redistricting reform argue that a fair system would give Democrats, Republicans, and Independents the opportunity to compete on a fairer basis. More competitive districts increase accountability of incumbents, as they cannot be automatically re-elected. The proposal, if passed, would benefit Democrats in the short run, because without it they cannot change the district lines until after the next Census, assuming they are in the majority at that time. However, in the long run, it does not inherently favor any party.

In the proposed reform, citizens may apply for a seat on an independent Citizens Commission that will draw boundary lines. All politicians, lobbyists, and political insiders at state and federal levels are excluded from applying. Court of Appeals judges will select names randomly, and choose a 12- person commission with equal numbers of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, that also is balanced geographically and in respect to other factors. The goal is a Commission that reflects Ohio and is transparent and thereby more accountable. The Commission will



follow strict criteria for drawing district lines, such as compactness of a district and representation of a "community of interest."

People wishing additional information about Issue 2 may go to the website www.VotersFirstOhio.com.

DREAM ACT DISCUSSION OPENS EYES, HEARTS, MINDS

By Marty Harrington

WCC members and friends got quite a good sampling and overview of the local situation regarding undocumented immigrants at the WCC Monthly Discussion Meeting on September 18.

The focus of the meeting was the situation that pertains to youth who have grown up in this country after having been brought into the country as children. The marvelous, wonderful recent news for these youth is the Deferred Action policy instituted by President Obama, which removes them from the threat of deportation and allows them the right to obtain a work permit.

Marvelous as it is, Deferred Action falls way short of the Dream Act which would give these same youth a path to citizenship. It also falls short in not giving these youth the right to pay in-state tuition for college, to drive, or to feel secure in their future. Deferred Action only lasts for two years, at which point, an unfriendly administration could easily abolish it.

And so, the Dream Act is still very much in the sights of these young activist youth.

Two such youth, Jose and Heyra (pronounced “Ada”) were with us at the meeting. Meeting these teenagers is a different experience from reading or hearing about their existence on the fringe. They are not just numbers and not even just your housekeeper’s son or daughter. They are bright, talented, funny, and kind—the sort of people you would want for a neighbor, coworker, and fellow citizen. Most appealing: they are passionate for justice.

They have a questionable future.

Jose and Heyra talked about their own organization, YES, for Youth Educating Society (part of IJPC). Much of what they do as YES activists is to tell their own personal stories to all sorts of people, just as they were doing with WCC that night.



*Youth demonstrate in Frankfort, KY. Jose is top left; Heyra top middle (holding sign).
Photo by Steve Pavey.*

Someone asked the obvious question: “Don’t you worry about being so open about being undocumented?” Heyra talked about the anxiety her mother felt over this issue; but these youth are part of a national movement that has decided to come out of the shadows.

And there is some method to this seeming madness. Living in the shadows means being anonymous. Someone who is anonymous can be deported without causing much of a ripple. But when someone like these

youth, who are winning friends and allies everywhere, gets threatened—loud protests arise; and the protests can get results. This is what happened, for example, to a young man named Bernard Pastor two years ago in Cincinnati—you may have read the stories. (Google his name to refresh your memory.)

And you can only press for change by coming out of the shadows. Did you know that Obama ordered the Deferred Action policy when undocumented youth were occupying his campaign headquarters in various places around the country—including Cincinnati?

Jose and Heyra also discussed the difficulties faced by their parents and families as well as themselves. They are all too familiar with the pressures of poverty, combined with the insecurity of knowing your parents could be deported any day. What keeps them and their compatriots sane are very close, loving families with huge helpings of laughter.

Don Sherman was also at the meeting to answer questions. He is a local activist and lawyer (licensed in California) who has been helping immigrants here with immigration problems and employment problems, especially wage theft. Don retired last year as Director of the Interfaith Worker Center; he now does volunteer work for Su Casa (Catholic Social Services for Latinos). He is not licensed to practice law in Ohio, but says that the courts are not usually the best help for an undocumented person anyway. Negotiation and pressure tactics like demonstrations work better for someone who cannot wait years for a case to work its way through court.

Don was able to answer questions about some immigration legalities—e.g., there is not really an option of “waiting your turn in line” for a Mexican or Guatemalan to enter legally; the quotas are too low and the wait periods are 15 or more years.

SCREENING HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES OF ARAB AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS

By Beth Sullebarger

Woman's City Club began its new program year with a screening at CET of a segment of ARAB AMERICAN STORIES produced by Andrea Torrice, an award-winning filmmaker (and WCC member) based in Cincinnati. An audience of 60 people at the September event gained insight by watching the film and participating in the question-and-answer session that followed.

Part of a new, national public television series presented by Detroit Public Television, the film poignantly told the story of the four Daoud brothers, who emigrated from Jordan to New York City. After moving to Cincinnati, they established and built Gold Star Chili into a thriving chain of restaurants and supermarket offerings.

Frank Daoud, who attended the event with his wife, son and other relatives and Gold Star colleagues, professed that coming to the U.S. was a dream come true because, here, he and his brothers were able to achieve what they had hoped for, made possible through economic freedom, a supportive family network, and hard work.



WCC VP Sarah Gideons interviews filmmaker Andrea Torrice after the screening.
Photo by Dan Elkin.

WCC thanks Gold Star Chili for generously underwriting the reception that preceded the screening.

This episode will be shown on Tuesday, November 6 (Election Day), on Channel 14, Think TV, at 8:30 pm, and the entire series is broadcast in Cincinnati on Channel

14.4, Tuesdays at 8:30 pm and repeats several times each week.

Ms. Torrice is coordinating civic engagement related to the program, including house party screenings. More information is available at www.arabamericanstories.org and www.torriceproductions.com/films/arabamericans.html.



The Honorable Art Spiegel

WCC Purchases New PA System

Thanks to generous funds provided by Judge Art Spiegel, Woman's City Club is the proud owner of a complete Samsung Stereo Public Address System. We have two wired microphones, one wireless handheld mic, and two portable speakers and speaker stands.

We can now hold public meetings and townhall forums with our very own, high-quality equipment.

We have needed this PA system for a long time, and we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to Judge Art Spiegel for making this possible.

Additional thanks to Beth Sullebarger's husband David, who gave Jeanne Nightingale pointers on selecting a quality system, and helped us immensely with initial setup.

Woman's City Club of Greater Cincinnati

103 William Howard Taft Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

Phone: 513-751-0100

Fax: 513-751-0100

wcc@womanscityclub.org

www.womanscityclub.org



The mission of the Woman's City Club of Greater Cincinnati is to secure a more just and livable community for all. WCC programs educate, encourage, and equip citizens to play an active role in civic affairs. Committed to promoting diversity and inclusiveness, the organization reaches out to collaborate with other community organizations in the city and work toward shared goals. See womanscityclub.org for more information.

Calendar of WCC Events Calendar

Wednesday, Oct 10

State of the City ENVIRONMENT FORUM:

6:00-8:00 pm
Northside Tavern,
4163 Hamilton Ave

Monday, Oct 15

Four-Year Terms for Cincinnati City Council: A Debate

7:00 pm
Mt Auburn Presbyterian
Church Geier Room

Tuesday, Nov 20

WCC Monthly All- Member Meeting: Low Cost Housing & Homelessness.

7:00-8:30 pm
First Unitarian Church

Wednesday, Oct 10

COMMON GOOD: A WAY BACK TO DEMOCRACY? Dialogue on the Election

7:00-8:30 pm
First Unitarian Church

Tuesday, Oct 16

WCC Monthly All- Member Meeting: A Discussion on Four-Year Terms for Cincinnati City Council

7:00-8:30 pm
First Unitarian Church

Saturday, Dec 1

Annual Feist-Tea Fundraiser

The Barrington,
Oakley, 4855 Babson
Place, Oakley, OH 45227

Volunteer Opportunities

Be a part of WCC's history project, A CENTURY OF WOMEN. Record oral histories; search existing records; assist historian Rachel Powell. Contact Jeanne Nightingale.

KINDERGARTEN TUTORING

Join WCC's well established and effective program for language acquisition. Contact Linda Wihl.

COMMITTEE WORK
Work and authority within the club is devolving from the board to committees. Find one that interests you!



The e-Bulletin, together with the Weekly Updates and News from the Network, keeps our membership connected. The next issue will appear in October. The deadline for copy will be October 19, 2012.

Submit articles to wcc@womanscityclub.org with the subject line "WCC bulletin" (word limit 250 words.)

~ Jeanne Nightingale, Managing Editor.
~ Marty Harrington, Layout Editor.