



# The VOTER

March-April 2014 VOL. 61, ISSUE 2

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League of Women Voters of Washington County, AR

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CALENDAR

**March 8 (Saturday) • "IRON JAWED ANGELS" • NO CHARGE • 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM • Shiloh Museum, 118 W. Johnson Ave, Springdale**

**March 9 (Sunday) • FRAUD TARGETING SENIOR CITIZENS • 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the Community Room at St. Paul's Episcopal Church/Fayetteville • Article by Joyce Hale • Page 2**

**March 31 (Monday) • WOMEN'S HISTORY BANQUET • 5:30 p.m. at the Guesthouse Inn (Formerly The Clarion Inn), 1255 S. Shiloh Drive**

**April 16 (Wednesday) • THE MENTALLY ILL AND THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM, 6:00 to 7:30 at the Fayetteville Public Library • Article by Libby Wheeler • Page 3**

**May 14 (Wednesday) • LWVWC ANNUAL MEETING • 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. • Kay Goss is the featured speaker in the Witherspoon Hall of the First United Presbyterian Church, 695 E. Calvin Street, Fayetteville.**

**May 20 (Tuesday) • PREFERENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION AND NONPARTISAN ELECTION**

ARTICLES

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## FROM THE LWVWC PRESIDENT

By Mary Alice Serafini

The League of Women Voters of Washington County took the lead to begin the efforts to inform voters of the Voter I.D. Law. Thanks to an ambitious team of League members who studied the law, invited Election Coordinator Jennifer Price to speak, and created informative materials, we have a wealth of knowledge that we can share with members of our community. League members should continue to monitor the impact of this law on voters. We want every vote to count and every registered voter to vote, so knowledge of this law is a high priority for all of us. In March and April, we will address two important issues, which will also launch members and the public into action. On Sunday, March 9, there will be an important program on fraud and senior citizens. The presentation is geared to all ages and all families. In April, we will learn how we can promote a safer and more humane system to deal with individuals in mental health crisis. Be sure to invite your friends as these programs positively impact our community and create better informed voters.

## PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

By Mary Alice Serafini

Your annual dues are \$40 for an individual membership, \$60 for a family membership and \$20 for a student. Checks should be made payable to LWVWC and mailed to LWVWC, P.O. Box 4, Fayetteville, AR 72702. We thank those members who have already renewed and look forward to working together to educate voters and others about meaningful and important public policy.

# FRAUD TARGETING SENIOR CITIZENS

## LWVWC Panel Discussion with Q&A

SUNDAY, MARCH 9, 2:30-4:30 PM

St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Parish Hall, Fayetteville



**The Problem** According to some studies, seniors lose up to \$3 billion annually to fraud, but in most instances loss incurred by victims goes unreported. Although seniors with assets are much sought after, seniors with nothing more than their social security checks are vulnerable, as well. What is it about seniors that make them such popular targets with scam artists and unscrupulous individuals?

It all can start so innocently: a simple entry into a sweepstakes contest, a phone call offering a vacation opportunity, or a bogus emergency call from a stranded friend or grandchild needing money. Seniors, especially those who live alone and without children in the area, are available to talk on the phone more than most people. Many are home during the day, with abundant free time, and no one around to talk to about the calls they are receiving. Worries about shrinking nest eggs or looming medical expenses can make them more susceptible to lottery and investment scams promising easy money and quick returns. Telemarketing callers may instill fear or in some way play on the emotions of their victims to part them from their money.

And then there are requests for money that comes in the mail. They may range from solicitations for charitable donations to sweepstakes entries to work-at-home offers. How you react in these situations may mark you as an easy target for further scams and fraud. People who respond to these items with a check and personal information are often placed on "sucker lists" which are then sold to even more unscrupulous characters that target them for even bigger scams.

Seniors do not have to have dementia to be scammed, but the situation is more dire if they do. Financial judgment may be one of their first skills to be lost, before other symptoms of cognitive decline are even detectable. Scam artists seem to know this. Fearing loss of independence, many targeted seniors don't report being scammed and don't discuss their situations with anyone.

**The Goal** The best way to combat this type of crime is for people to talk about it. Individuals are often embarrassed and reluctant to take action, but feel more empowered when learning how common the problem has become. A small roundtable discussion with a group of friends is valuable to share ways to avoid victimization and learn what others are experiencing.

The LWVWC is hosting the Sunday, March 9<sup>th</sup> Panel Discussion to address the growing problem of fraud that targets senior citizens. It is the hope of the League members that, by providing educational materials and contacts, we can increase awareness and reporting of fraud and attempted fraud.

Guest panelists with extensive knowledge about this problem will be Jim DePriest, Deputy Arkansas Attorney General; Maria Reynolds-Dias, Arkansas State Director of AARP; and Carolyn Mahady, LWVWC member and daughter of a defrauded parent. Resource materials will be made available for individuals and leaders of senior organizations to use in further education.



### THE LWVWC & "FIGHT AGAINST FRAUD TARGETING" EVENT ON FACEBOOK

- LWVWC** • [facebook.com/LWVWC](https://www.facebook.com/LWVWC)
- EVENT** • [facebook.com/events/465407763560680/?previousaction=join&ref=22&source=1](https://www.facebook.com/events/465407763560680/?previousaction=join&ref=22&source=1)
- RESOURCES** • [lwvawc.org/fraudpreventionresources.htm](http://lwvawc.org/fraudpreventionresources.htm)

## THE MENTALLY ILL AND THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

By Libby Wheeler

“The Mentally Ill and the Judicial System” is the topic for the LWVWC’s April 16<sup>th</sup> program from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at the Fayetteville Public Library. For this panel presentation, our League is collaborating with Mental Health America in NWAR and several members of the JEMI (Judicial Equality for Mental Illness) Task Force.

Preliminary planning includes a brief introduction to the JEMI Task Force by Nancy Kahanak, an examination of the problem of jails becoming de facto mental health facilities, and the human and fiscal cost of inappropriate incarceration of the mentally ill. Associate Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice, Mindy Bradley and Sheriff Tim Helder of the WC Sheriff’s Department will detail the problem. David Williams, retired CEO of Ozark Guidance, will present possible solutions to this situation, and Arkansas Senator Uvalde Lindsey will discuss how we, as a community, can influence the Legislature to understand and address this problem. Retired UofA Social Work Professor John King will moderate the panel discussion. Continuing Education Units will be available for social workers.



## LWVWC PUBLISHES GUIDE ON ARKANSAS’ NEW VOTER IDENTIFICATION LAW

By J.P. Peters

In an effort to inform the public of Arkansas’ new voter identification law, the League of Women Voters of Washington County has developed and published an informational guide addressing the new rules and requirements that became effective January 1, 2014. The guide contains a listing of the appropriate documents or identification cards (ID) that comply with the new requirements. It also provides information on how you can get a FREE voter ID card if you don’t have any of these types of “photo identification.”

Copies of the guide are available in English and Spanish. You may call 442-5624 to request a printed copy of the guide or click on the link provided to download the guide in PDF format and to access LWVWC Arkansas Voter ID Resources: [lwvarwc.org/voteridresources.htm](http://lwvarwc.org/voteridresources.htm).

For more information on the new requirements, contact the Washington County Clerk’s Office at 479-444-1711 or [www.co.washington.ar.us](http://www.co.washington.ar.us) or the Arkansas Secretary of State’s Office at [www.sos.arkansas.gov/elections](http://www.sos.arkansas.gov/elections).

## “PRIVATE OPTION” APPROPRIATION BILL HELD UP IN ARKANSAS’ HOUSE

By Laura Kellams

The state House of Representatives is expected to vote again as early as Tuesday on whether to fund the health care coverage known as the "Private Option," which already has insured more than 105,000 people in Arkansas.

The Legislature is meeting in its even-year fiscal session, addressing mostly just the state budget. Opponents have stalled funding the health care plan for the lowest-income Arkansans -- and the entire Medicaid budget -- because of their opposition to the federal Affordable Care Act. The Private Option is a bipartisan compromise that Arkansas policy makers devised last year as a way to expand health coverage by using Medicaid dollars to purchase private insurance for adults who live at or near poverty.

The stalled appropriation bill affects not only those adults who received this new coverage but also the entire Medicaid budget, including ARKids First as well as Medicaid coverage for pregnant women, people with disabilities and nursing home care for senior citizens.

The House is two votes shy of the 75-member "supermajority" necessary to pass the appropriation bill, which already passed in the Senate. Swing votes in the House delegation from Northwest Arkansas include Rep. Les Carnine, R-Rogers, and Rep. Mary Lou Slinkard, R-Gravette. Both voted for the Private Option in 2013 and so far have not voted for it this time around.

If you would like to make your voice heard on this legislation, messages can be left for specific lawmakers at the House switchboard number at [501-682-6211](tel:501-682-6211).

# MT. KESSLER IS NOW PRESERVED FOR THE AGES

By Karen Rollet-Crocker

With special thanks to Frank Sharp

*Plus*

The Fayetteville City Council,  
Walton Family Foundation,  
Fayetteville Natural Heritage Association,  
& Chambers Bank.



[www.mtkesslergreenways.com](http://www.mtkesslergreenways.com)

Mt. Kessler will be the star in Fayetteville's crown with its spectacular recreational and educational potential. Congratulations to all who worked to make this dream a reality!

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