

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of WICHITA FALLS

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VOTER for November 2011

Dr. MIKE PREDA to brief us on the Election, November 8th on the TEN CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Wednesday, November 2nd, at Luby's Cafeteria

Go thru lunch line prior to the 12 noon, call to order

The Election November 8th will face us all with ten Proposed Amendments to the Texas Constitution, that were authorized by the Legislature. **Dr. Preda**, is not only our President, but he is a long-time political science professor at Midwestern State University. As League President he helps to oversee our Voter Services, which includes the publication and distribution of Voters Guides. This background puts him in a position to help us understand what might otherwise seem relatively complex.

Mike Preda, Ph.D., has taught at MSU since 1976, coming from McMurry University, in Abilene. He earned his Ph.D, at the University of Oklahoma, his M.A. at East Texas State University, and his B.A. at Wayne State University (Michigan). He has taught over 20 different university level courses. He is married to Chriss, and they have two sons.

Mike points out that constitutional amendments are placed on the ballot by a 2/3rds vote of the Legislature, and that since it was adopted in 1876, voters have approved over 460 amendments, and defeated over 170. These proposals affect not only the State, but also local governments, colleges, counties, and other political districts. Thus, they often affect us personally. Yet, they usually seem so distant to the average citizen, that voter turnout is slim. So, your vote will have a greater impact, and should be based on as much understanding, as possible. Mike will try to provide that understanding.

To vote with knowledge, read your Voters Guide, come to the meeting, and bring a friend or associate.

MEMBERSHIP DUES are \$55 (or \$75 for a couple). Our League year began July 1st, so if you have not

yet renewed your dues, now is the time.

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE NEEDED to make sure we are able to fulfill our mission of providing service

to voters. Our coffers are running low, and we have three election cycles coming up in 2012 (March

Primary, May City/School, & November Presidential). We do not charge for Voters Guides.

LOOKING AHEAD TO DECEMBER PROGRAM

For December 7th, our speaker will be County Clerk **Lori Bohannon**. This year she has a daunting task, because both Redistricting and Voter I.D. laws are under attack. There are two Federal Court cases pending on the redistricting law passed by the Legislature. And pre-clearance of our Voter I.D. law has not yet been issued by the U.S. Department of Justice. Lori will try to fill us in on the new I.D. requirements, and hopefully by that time, what has been okayed by the USDOJ.

These are hot issues, so be sure to come and learn as much as possible about the new requirements.

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VOTERS GUIDES for the CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ELECTION

We began distribution of Voters Guides on October 13th. They were taken to the Libraries in Wichita Falls, Burkburnett, Electra & Iowa Park. In addition to the Courthouse, City Hall, Luby's Cafeteria, MLK Center, First National Bank, American National Bank, Times Record News, KFDX TV3 & KAUZ TV 6.

On the internet the Guides are available from LWV-Texas by going to www.lwvtexas.org, and scrolling down to the English or Spanish version. If reading online is a problem, they may be printed. The letter-sized printouts are easy to read.

Remember, you can take the Voters Guide into the voting booth with you.

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HAVE YOU LOOKED AT OUR WEB PAGE?

Each Local League like ours is assigned a web page on the LWV-Texas web site. Ours may be accessed by going to www.lwvtexas.org/local/wichitafalls. It lists our contact information & officers. Also provided are links to our Membership brochure, Program of action & study, recent Monthly Voters, our last local Voters Guide. It also provides links to Voter information, and to the Wichita Falls city web site, and Wichita County web site.

Go the site & browse around. You will find a significant amount of useful information about your State, County, & local City governments.

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OUR RECENT CONSENSUS MEETING (October 22nd)

We considered two League studies at the meeting. The LWVUS study, dealt with the Federal role in public education. The LWV-Texas study, dealt with whether Water should be treated as a Commodity or a Resource.

What are League studies? The League never speaks on an issue without first studying it. At the Statewide or National Convention, we debate and try to authorize an issue to be studied. If approved, the State/National board appoints a study committee which spends at least a year wrestling with the issue. Such committee then issues its report (such as a statewide *Facts & Issues*), which is made available to all members. Then the State/National Board prepares a series of questions, which are submitted to each Local League for a consensus response.

What are consensus meetings? They are the next step in either the State League or National League deciding what our "position" will be on a current issue. And it is only when a position is established, that the League may speak or lobby on it. Since the League is a grassroots organization, such positions must be approved by the membership. At the consensus

meeting, League members assemble, review the study materials issued by the study committee, consider the questions posed by the Board, and arrive at a consensus on as many of the questions, as possible. Then they report their consensus to the State or National Board.

Adoption of a position. After receiving consensus results from each Local League, the State/National Board reviews the results, and drafts a proposed League Position on the issue. Such proposed position is then presented at the next Membership Convention for consideration, debate, and vote. If a position is approved by the convention, only then may the League follow that position in its dealing with governmental committees, departments, and legislative bodies.

Although such process seems tedious, the League never takes a position on a political issue without study, consensus, and final membership approval. The League does not act on the "whim of the moment."

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See you next Wednesday at Luby's Feel Free to forward this VOTER to your friends & associates.

Feedback to LaryLambert@prodigy.net, or by phone or fax to 767-0129.