**League of Women Voters Minneapolis Discussion Guide**

**Voters Service**

**May 2016**

**Before the meeting:**

* Attend May 3 Civic Buzz and hear what Secretary of State Simon discuss state of voting in Minnesota and what needs to be done and what his office is doing
* Read the article on Voters Service in the May VOTER
* Look at the Minneapolis vote website: <http://vote.minneapolismn.gov> Be aware of all that is there for Minneapolis voters
* Look at the Secretary of State website : <http://www.sos.state.mn.us> . Be aware of all that is there for Minnesota voters
* Look at LWV website: <http://www.vote411.org> . Be aware of all that is there for voters.
* Connect with your unit members and ask them all to do all of the above!

**At the Meeting:**

**Icebreaker:** **Ask: If you want to look up who is on your ballot, where would you go?**

After listening to their answers, if they have not named the 3 websites above, this is the time to tell them about these websites and describe differences. **Hint:** You could assign looking at one of these websites to three members ahead of time and have them describe what they found.

**GOAL:** **for the 2016 election season each unit to take on at least one project.**

**Begin the discussion with:**

**What actions should LWVMpls take for the 2016 election?**

Secretary of State Simon wants to “*challenge to the people of Minnesota to return our state back to number in voter turnout in November.”* (see map of voter turnout)

Please make notes on ideas for action discussed. Writing them on a flip chart would work well so everyone can see the ideas. The Calendar and spreadsheet attached gives a list of concrete ideas to choose from with the option of adding any that members know of and would like to do that are not on the calendar. The spreadsheet is a work in progress; as we explore these ideas some may appear to not necessarily be a good fit, information is still needed to understand the potential of many of these events and there are certainly events with potential not on this list. However, the list is a good start for discussion—or you may want to brainstorm first and then check the list to see if members have come up with similar ideas.

**Some Questions to “prime the pump:”**

* **Where should we—LWVMpls—focus our time and our talents** in this election year? What is most important?
* **What can we do to *Educate* voters** and, just what do they need to know to get to the polls and make educated choices? Is it about registration, what’s on the ballot, what the candidates stand for, or where to find all of the above? How do we facilitate getting information to voters? Shall we compile a voter guide? How many candidate forums are needed? With whom should we collaborate?
* **What can we do to Advocate for** open and easy voting? Should we work to expand early voting, pre-register 16 & 17-year-olds, modernize voter registration, and/or support restoring voting rights to those with past felony convictions? What about the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and their very real need for neighborhood parks funding?
* **What can we do to *Reform* our voting processes?** What has redistricting done to our election outcomes? Should changes be made in our campaign process?

When all ideas have been brought up, ask:

* **Where is the most need?**
* **What will you do?**
* **What can our unit do?**
* **What can LWVMpls do and how?**
* **Are you willing to be called to help for more voter service things? What?**
* **What is most important considering our smaller membership?**
* **Will you ask a nonmember to go with you when doing some of these things?**

Record all of these answers. We would like specifics. What specifically will they help with

and will they be a point person to contact members (from a list of volunteers) for one of these activities when we receive requests from the community.  We need leadership to organize our volunteers.

--moderate/time a candidate meeting

--register voters

--speak to a group about voting or voting rights and LWV

--hand out fliers and talk to people about voting at a calendar event

Turn ideas and answers to what we can do into the office by the end of May.

**Attachments:**

**Voters Service Packet from Mpls**

**Calendar of Events**

**Spreadsheet of Event Details**

**Map of voter turnout 2013:**

<http://vote.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-126700.pdf>

**Questions?**

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