



# THE SACRAMENTO VOTER

## Co-Presidents' Message



Happy New Year! Though the election season is now behind us, there is one more City Council Special Election to be held in the spring to fill the vacancy left by Kevin McCarty who was elected to the State Assembly. This, no doubt, will result in candidate forums in which the League will be involved. Please contact our Voter Service Director, Holly Smith, if you are interested in helping out at a candidate forum. Holly's telephone number is (415) 377-4697 and her e-mail is [hollysmith77@gmail.com](mailto:hollysmith77@gmail.com). The new year will bring many opportunities to keep our members and our community educated on a number of issues, to include money in politics, homelessness, ethics, transparency reform, and climate change. In addition to celebrating our 75 years as a local league, the board is busy planning our work for the coming months and we encourage all members to become involved. Here is a brief overview of some of our projects and programs:

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January 20, 2015: In conjunction with Common Cause, the LWVSC will be hosting the showing of "Pay 2 Play, a film about money in politics. The showing will be held at the Central Library on Tuesday, January 20, from 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. and is free and open to the public. Please invite your friends (and potential LWV members). Contact Louise Einspahr at (916) 395-2145 or [ewilli7021@aol.com](mailto:ewilli7021@aol.com) pg. 4 for more information.

February 28, 2015: A community forum on Homelessness will be held at the Wellspring Women's Center in Oak Park. The LWVSC Committee on homelessness in Sacramento (ComHom) has been working on this issue for several months and this culminating forum will be of interest to all members. For further information, contact Alice at (916) 863-7741 or [aliceginosar@yahoo.com](mailto:aliceginosar@yahoo.com).

75<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the League of Women Voters of Sacramento County (date TBA) Do you like to plan birthday parties and celebrate the LWV? Contact Nancy Compton at (916) 600-1992 or [ncompton43@att.net](mailto:ncompton43@att.net) to join the planning committee.

Are you interested in planning a series of Ethics and Transparency forums in the spring? Or can you help get the word out in city neighborhoods?

Perhaps you are interested in joining League members on legislative visits this spring to our state representatives. Take advantage of being so close to the state capitol which allows us more convenient access to our elected officials. To become involved, contact Paula Lee at (916) 400-3802 or [paula.lee@comcast.com](mailto:paula.lee@comcast.com). Cont. pg. 2

## Events

**Monday-Tuesday, January 12-13, 2015.** Unit Meetings, pg. 6

**Tuesday, January 20, 2015, 5:30 p.m. -8:00 p.m.** Film, "Pay to Play", Central Library. 828 I St. pg. 4

**Saturday, January 31, 2015, 10:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m.** Covered CA Health Insurance Enrollment. Colonial Heights Library, 4799 Stockton Blvd & 21<sup>st</sup> Ave.

**Saturday, February 7, 2015, 10:00 a.m. -2:00 p.m.** LWVSC Program Planning, Colonial Heights Library 4799 Stockton Blvd & 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. pg. 2

**Saturday, February 14, 2015, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.,** New members Morning Social at Wellsprings Center, 3414 14<sup>th</sup> Ave.

**Saturday, February 28, 2015, 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.,** Public Forum on Homelessness at Wellsprings Center, 3414 14<sup>th</sup> Ave.

2014-2015  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

League of Women Voters  
of Sacramento County

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[www.facebook.com/LWVSacramento](http://www.facebook.com/LWVSacramento)

Cont. from pg. 1

The LWVSC and LWVC program planning will begin February 7, 2015. Members will select future topics for member votes at the Annual Meeting in May and the LWVC Convention. Working on these projects provides an opportunity to learn about league program process and assist with planning the events. If you would like to help present this program contact the local program director, Barbara Hopkins, [barbhopkins2@yahoo.com](mailto:barbhopkins2@yahoo.com).

Most of the above are short-term projects, and we invite all our members to become involved in the planning and implementation of these projects by contacting the organizers listed above. We are looking forward to seeing each of you at our educational events in the upcoming months, and please feel free to contact us with your thoughts and ideas.

May 2015 be a wonderful, productive, and happy year for you and your loved ones.

Best wishes, Nancy and Paula

Welcome New Members

Anna Antos

Katherine Woolley

Congratulations

Liliana Martinez is starting a new job with Community Link Capitol Region as their Program Coordinator in addition to her LWVSC job as secretary.

APAPA (Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs )

C. Troka, B. Hopkins, Ms Russian Sacramento, Santa, N. Compton,

C. Bonsignore (left to right)



## Why I Joined the League

I retired in 2003, after working for 26 years and deferring many household chores and projects. It took me ten years to realize that I needed to do something productive outside of home and family. What to do?

As a child, I was taught never to discuss politics or religion, but, at least with respect to politics, I found that prohibition extremely agitating. I was interested in politics and wanted to learn how to engage with others without offense. The League of Women Voters is a natural fit! We are, literally, political but not partisan. I still find it a challenge to discuss politics in public, but I know I can learn from League members who are doing so every day. By Suzi Bakker

## Agroecology

Agriculture that can feed the world and be planet friendly

While most in developed countries still believe that corporate agriculture is needed to feed the world, science and the United Nations are discovering that conventional agribusiness uses practices which consume huge amounts of water and petroleum based energy on monocultural crops that are ruining the soil. The "Green Revolution" is proving to be unsustainable. So what will be next? The answer, some say, is agroecology or regenerative organic agriculture, terms used to describe old fashioned farming with up to date techniques and assistance. Why is this a better answer? Small farms practicing agroecology produce more food, protect soil and water, and have lower carbon dioxide emissions than large corporate farms. It also allows farmers to grow crops best suited to their climate, markets, and other local concerns. The food is healthier because it is grown organically, whenever possible, and it is fresher as it is closer to the consumer. When farmed correctly, such farms can actually sequester carbon dioxide, and lastly, these small farms put more local people to work. What must be done to make this change?

Alter present treaties and laws that favor large agribusiness, biofuel companies, and land speculators.

Make land available to small farmers around the world.

Enable women to become land owners.

Make loans and crop insurance available to all small farmers.

Develop educational materials and consultants to aid the farmers.

Provide the infrastructure so farmers can get their crops to market and store the surplus.

## Mitigating Climate Change by Farming

The United Nations and independent agricultural scientists are now saying that the best way to feed the world AND mitigate climate change is to encourage farms that are smaller, sustainable, and organic when possible. However, other groups believe that large scale farming with genetically modified crops hold the answer to staving off world hunger. Following are examples of two entities which exemplify the latter view.

The World Bank, which governs important aspects of the global economy and international development, is being flooded with complaints from farmers, NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), and consumer groups around the world because of the Bank's policies affecting agriculture. Complainants have coined the term, "Moral Bankruptcy" to describe the Bank's stance. The World Bank's practices overwhelmingly favor corporate domination of agriculture and corporate acquisition of land and resources that have negative effects on the poorer people in the developing nations. Many of our own trade agreements reflect this corporate favoritism.

Here at home, the USDA has just approved the Enlist Weed Control System which will allow Monsanto to develop new strains of corn and soy beans that can withstand massive doses of glyphosate (Roundup) and 2,4D (part of Agent Orange) which will be sprayed on entire fields instead of just the weeds. Monsanto, Pioneer, Dow, and Syngenta are presently engineering new plants to withstand multiple types of herbicides, and they too will most likely be approved. The fact that the wide use of Roundup has resulted in super weeds around the world is not deterring these companies from trying to come up with new herbicides and pesticides to which weeds and insects can become immune. Meanwhile the large farmers are spraying ever larger amounts of these chemicals on their crops, people, birds, and beneficial insects are getting sick and dying. It is also having an effect on the world's dwindling potable water supplies.

By Elaine Lee

### References:

Stephen Leahy, "Inter Press Service Report: "Small Farmers Loss of Land Increases World Hunger."

Mark Karlin, Editor of Buzzflash: "International Small Farmers Movement Calls Free Trade a Threat to Food Security."

Jon Queally, Interview with Dr. Kristine Nichols and Mark Smallwood of the Rodale Institute: "The Solution Is The Soil: How Organic Farming Can Feed the World and Save the Planet."

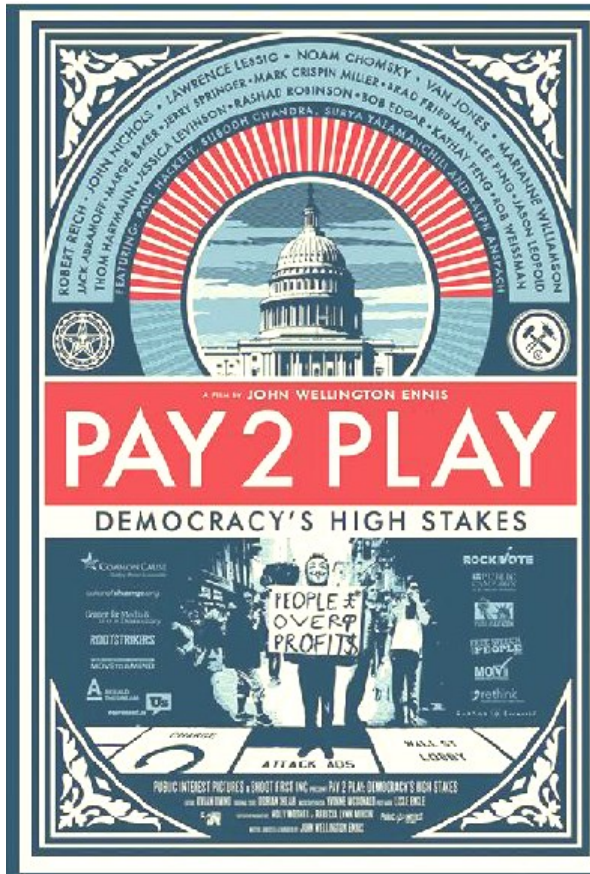
Leslee Goodman, The Moon Magazine: "The Right To Food: An Interview With Hilal Elver."

Brandon Keim, Wired: "New Generation of GM Crops Puts Agriculture in a "Crisis Situation."

Courtney White, Quivira Coalition: "Back-To-The-Future Agriculture: Farming Like the Earth Matters."

Mark Smallwood, Rodale Institute: "The Next Step for an Organic Planet Are Yours To Take."

The Oakland Institute Report: "World Bank Accused of Destroying Traditional Farming to Support Corporate Land Grabs."



"PAY 2 PLAY is the best documentary about speaking truth to power since *The Big Lebowski*"  
 — JOHN NICHOLS (*The Nation*, *MSNBC*)

A FILM BY JOHN WELLINGTON ENNIS  
**PAY 2 PLAY**  
 DEMOCRACY'S HIGH STAKES

THE FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE STARTS NOW!

ROBERT REICH • LAWRENCE LESSIG • THOM HARTMANN  
 NOAM CHOMSKY • JOHN NICHOLS • MARIANNE WILLIAMSON  
 VAN JONES • JACK ABRAMOFF • JERRY SPRINGER  
 MARGE BAKER • MARK CRISPIN MILLER • BOB EDGAR  
 RASHAD ROBINSON • ROBERT WEISSMAN • KATHAY FENG

**League of Women Voters of Sacramento County & Common Cause**  
 Invite You! Free to Public!  
**Time: 5:30pm - 8:00pm**  
**Date: Tuesday January 20, 2015**  
**Place: Central Library**  
**Address: 825 I St. Sacramento 95814**  
**Remarks: Sarah Swanbeck**  
**CA Common Cause**

JOIN US FOR A MOVIE AND CONVERSATION

Pay2Play.nationbuilder.com

f Pay2PlayMovie @Pay2PlayTV

Fellow LWVSC members, get out your new 2015 calendars and mark **January 20th** as movie night! That is when "PAY 2 PLAY" will be shown at the Central Library. It is a documentary produced by John Ennis and brought to you by our very own Sacramento County League of Women Voters and Common Cause. "PAY 2 PLAY", as John Ennis defines it, is the cycle where politicians reward their donors with even larger sums of money from the public treasury - - through contracts, jobs, tax cuts and deregulation. "PAY TO PLAY" picks up where Ennis left off in his last film, *FREE FOR ALL*, done after his investigation into election fraud in Ohio. His driving motive is to make the world better for his newborn daughter to inherit. He is determined to study the road to elected office to find a way for us to get out from under the "PAY 2 PLAY" system. The film features Robert Reich, John Nichols, Jack Abramoff, Thom Hartmann and many other notable people. Please join us for a fun and informative evening.  
 By Louise Einspahr

**Grand Jury Applications Due February 2, 2015**

The Sacramento County Grand Jury is seeking new applicants for a one year term. According to the *Sacramento Bee*, 11/30/14,B1, this community service is "short on financial rewards but an important method of guaranteeing oversight on public bodies". Important community decisions in the past have been investigated by grand juries, such as Child Protective Services actions, challenges facing the Delta town of Isleton and helping to uncover corruption inside Sacramento's library system. Anne Rudin, writes: "I found serving on the Grand Jury interesting and a worthwhile community service. During the year I served on the Grand Jury I saw many similarities of purpose to what the League of Women Voters does: both are watchdog organizations, both study city and county governmental agencies and programs, identify problems and offer recommendations for change." Past president Carol Moon-Goldberg urges members to apply.

The Grand Jury is composed of 19 members who work to ensure that the institutions of government are responsive and fair to the citizens of this county. Historically, the Grand Jury has discovered waste inefficiency and impropriety in local governmental entities. Their investigations have resulted in changes to governmental entities and have directly impacted both public safety and the safety of children in our community. Interested citizens can apply by mail- send a letter of intent to: Sacramento County Grand Jury, 720 Ninth St. Rm. 611, Sacramento, CA 95814 or [www.sacgrandjury.org](http://www.sacgrandjury.org) or telephone 874-7578—say that you are a member of the LWVSC. By A. Rudin & A. Ginosar

## Privatization of Public Education, K-12: An Overview

By Florence Field, and Sidna Rachid. Privatization Study Group LWVUS (excerpts from the League of Women Voters, Colorado )

**Background:** What happens to our schools is not an abstract issue with most people; it strikes us personally. Almost all of us are familiar with public schools; and as parents, we are concerned about and seek quality education for our children. Since the early 1980s, educators, parents and political leaders alike began to question the adequacy of our educational system in a changing world. The publication in 1983 of the federal report, *Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, opened a national discussion about the need for change; the Report challenges the status quo by stating, "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people." In response to this challenge, and in the conservative environment of the '80s, solutions were offered which were based on the belief that if free market principles were applied to schools, i.e., if parents were given a choice and schools competed with each other for students - then "good schools" would grow and "bad schools" would be forced to close. Moreover, liberals, who were concerned about the educational achievement gap between inner-city children and others, supported the idea of choice as a way for poor students to attend better schools. ...

**Charter Schools:** Charter schools began to emerge in the early 1990s and now number 4,900 in 40 states and District of Columbia, serving 1.6 million students. On their website, the Colorado Department of Education explains that "Charter schools are means of expanding choices in Colorado public schools. The charter provides an avenue for educators, citizens, businesses, communities and parents to direct their innovative efforts. Charter schools offer teachers a chance to be part of designing and working in a semi-autonomous, creative school under defined philosophical approaches." Charter schools are privately run schools funded by taxpayers. It is important to note that charter schools can be managed either by for-profit or non-profit organizations. Per-pupil state aid is transferred from the school district where the pupil resides to the charter school (the school district thus "loses" those funds for use in their regular public schools). Each state determines who is legally entitled to apply for and operate charter schools and provides agencies with legal authority to issue charters (contracts). ...It was assumed by many of the backers of charter schools that, unfettered by regulations about running the school and about who they could hire, the charter schools would do a better job educating their students. But, charter schools have had mixed results when compared with regular public schools. In 2009, the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University published the first broad-based and widely accepted report comparing performance between 70% of charter school students in the United States and comparable public school students. The findings were not exactly a success story for charter schools: 17% of charter school students performed well above their peers in public schools; 37% performed much worse; and 46% were about the same. In other words, 83% of charter school students either did much worse or at best, not much better. Because of these results, many longtime supporters of charter schools, like Diane Ravitch, began to ask the question: Do the results of charter schools justify taking funds away from regular public schools?

**Politics of Privatization:** Since the 1980s, the belief that government can't do anything as well as the private sector has been growing in the United States, encouraged by groups which espouse this philosophy. They have come up with a very powerful strategy: to work through state legislators to achieve their goals, whether by (among other issues) privatizing public education, passing anti-union legislation or working for voter suppression.

**Elisabeth MacNamara**, president of LWVUS, has written strongly and pointedly about one of these organizations, American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC); her interest was ALEC's role in voter suppression regulation (see December *League Lines*). But ALEC and like-minded organizations, which are well funded (Koch brothers) and supported by major corporate figures, work with businesses in persuading state legislators either to suppress legislation unfriendly to their interests or pass ones that are more friendly (and profitable).

**In conclusion:** We might ask what role, if any, for-profit enterprise should play in the privatization of public schools. Are the goals of for-profit Educational Management Organizations (EMOs) compatible with those of public education? Should tax dollars intended for public school education be permitted to generate private profit? The push for privatizing public education began with the *Nation at Risk* report in 1983. The charge that the public education system was failing was born out of the fact that American students' test scores had fallen from the number one spot when compared to those of students in other industrialized nations. It has been twenty-eight years and the public education system in the United States has changed into a movement towards choice (charter schools) and testing (accountability). During this period, our students have fallen even further behind in international comparisons, and, even more stunning, the costs per student have increased significantly. From 1989-1990 through 2007-2008 the total expenditures per student have increased 39% in constant dollars. The grand experiment in privatizing public education seems to have largely failed in both producing results and using tax dollars more efficiently.

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**January Unit Meetings**

The privatization of Public Education is the subject of our January Unit Meetings. Discussion materials will focus upon corporate and other interests aimed at taking over public education for profit through outsourcing services, charter schools, and transferring public funds to privately run schools, etc. Members will also discuss the LWVC Positions on Privatization and Education, and the results of two League studies – one dealing with the privatization of public education K-12 and the other with subcontracting public education.

So members can see what they are dealing with locally, I've included an overview of Sacramento County's K-12 public and private schools. I've attempted to give sufficient information to assist members in their advocacy on behalf of public education, i.e., letters to school Board Members, their representatives, etc.

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Mid-City</b>	<b>Monday Jan. 12, 6:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Tom Swift 453-8707</b>	<b>5308 Shepard Ave. Sacramento 95819</b>
<b>Morning Suburban</b>	<b>Tuesday Jan. 13, 9:15 a.m.</b>	<b>Anne Berner Helen Shryock 944-1042 &amp; 944-2274</b>	<b>2426 Garfield Ave. Carmichael 95608</b>
<b>Greenhaven Land Park</b>	<b>Tuesday Jan. 13, 10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Mary Hopkins 422-6958</b>	<b>45 Sunlit Circle Sacramento 95831</b>
<b>Elk Grove</b>	<b>Tuesday Jan.13, 1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Bill &amp; Elaine Lee 688-5360</b>	<b>8622 Shasta Lily Drive Elk Grove 95624</b>

[Contact Bill Lee](mailto:units@lwvsacramento.org), Unit coordinator, 916-688-5360, [units@lwvsacramento.org](mailto:units@lwvsacramento.org) OR [oogie2lee@comcast.net](mailto:oogie2lee@comcast.net) if you are unable to attend the Unit meetings but would like to receive emails of the Unit discussion materials,

**Schools Data**

The following information is furnished to give a view of Sacramento County K-12 Schools: There are 381 Public Schools in Sacramento County served by 16 school districts. These schools serve about 239,740 students. Sixty five percent are minority, and the student ratio is 24:1.

Sacramento County is also served by 154 Private Schools with about 18,800 students. Minority enrollment is 37%. Fifty percent of the schools are religiously affiliated. The student teacher ratio is 12:1.

The average private school tuition in California is \$9,775 per year for elementary and \$15,766 for high school. Acceptance rate is 85%.

- Parochial schools \$6,683
- Other religiously affiliated schools \$14,214
- Non-sectarian \$9,775
- Montessori \$6,000 – 15,000
- Denominational high schools \$9,000 – 14,000
- Boarding Schools \$18,000 – 52,000

California school ratings and rankings are available online as is the 2014 Sacramento County Public Schools Directory.  
By B. Lee

Continued from pg. 5

**Articles opposing Privatization:**

“Privatization of Public Education, K-12 An Overview” by Florence Field and Sidna Racid, Study Group, LWV Colorado This is a comprehensive overview on privatization.

“What Does ‘Privatization of Public Schools’ Mean?” by Craig Gordon, [educationanddemocracy.org](http://educationanddemocracy.org)

“The Corporate Takeover of Public Education”, Diann Woodward, Pres. American Federation of School Administrators, 6/6/2013

“How to Destroy a Public-School System”, Daniel Denvir, *The Nation* 10/13/2014

**Health Care**

“Doctors tell all: And it’s far worse than you think”. In the November, 2014 issue of *The Atlantic*, pages 110-122, Meghan O’Rourke reviews seven recent books written by physicians.\* These physicians are disillusioned by several trends that they face in trying to navigate the United States health care system. Each author relates similar feelings of frustration: too busy, unable to spend enough time with patients, anger, paperwork processing forms, lab work, maintaining electronic records, dealing with staff, etc. The most prevailing complaint is lack of time; approximately eight minutes is left to work with the patient. Physicians see their power eroded by insurance companies, hospital bureaucracy and even the empowerment of patients. Patients think the medical establishment is failing them and doctors feel the same. The health system has shifted radically over the past forty years. Technology and corporatization of the system have moved it from a low-tech, localized system of care to a system of excessive costs and indifference to patients as well as caregivers. According to a Commonwealth Fund analysis, *Washington Times*, 6/16/14, Tom Howell, Jr., the United States ranks last among 11 industrialized countries in regard to health care. The World Health Organization, using 2000 figures, ranked the United States 38<sup>th</sup> among the 191 WHO countries. *Wikipedia*, 12/10/14. Dr. Sweet’s memoir takes us back to medicine as it was practiced several decades ago. To get herself in that environment she worked in a charity hospital the “last almshouse in America”, where she could practice “slow medicine” pg. 118, and see very ill, neglected patients, healing.

*\*Being mortal: Medicine and what matters in the end*, Atul Gawande; *Internal Medicine: A doctor’s stories* Terrence Holt; *Doctored: The disillusionment of an American physician*, Sandeep Jauhar; *What doctors feel: How emotions affect the practice of medicine*, Danielle Ofri; *The good doctor: A father, a son, and the evolution of medical ethics*, Barron H. Lerner; *The doctor crisis: How physicians can, and must, lead the way to better health care*, Jack Cochran & Charles Kenney; *God’s hotel: A doctor, a hospital and a pilgrimage to the heart of medicine*, Victoria Sweet.

By E. Heaser

**Homeless Count**

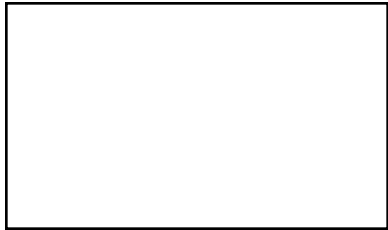
To assist in the national count of the number of homeless individuals on Wednesday, January 28, 2015, contact [alice-ginosar@yahoo.com](mailto:alice-ginosar@yahoo.com). The count in Sacramento will begin at 5:00 pm and volunteers will go out in teams. A. Ginosar

**LWVC CONVENTION**

The 2015 LWVC Convention will convene in San Diego May 15-17, 2015. One order of business for the Convention is to adopt the LWVC program for the coming two years. See [Program Planning](#) for more information. *LWVC Board UPDATES*

**Illinois Passes Voter Registration Modernization Bill**

On Wednesday [12/3/14], Illinois passed a [sweeping set of voting reforms](#) that would make the Land of Lincoln the largest state in the nation to enact legislation to replace its antiquated registration system with one more primed for the 21st century. The bill will implement electronic registration, create a permanent same-day registration system, and increase early voting options. “This is a major victory for Illinois voters,” [wrote DeNora Getachew](#). Brennan Center for Justice, 12/4/14



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Google Images 12/4/14