



March 17, 2010 Spotlight On . . . Statehouse Day

By Scott Britton

Does your local League need a shot in the arm? Spring is just around the corner, and Statehouse Day is upon us. If you haven't yet registered for the April 14 event, hurry – the deadline is April 6!

Statehouse Day is a great reminder, not just of the importance of statewide advocacy, but of the necessity for local advocacy too. Local advocacy can be that shot in the arm that your members and your community need. The Statehouse Day lineup features a workshop led by Terry Pastika, director of the Citizen Advocacy Center near Chicago, that will offer tips and tools for successful local advocacy. Last year, for example, the three Leagues in Cuyahoga County fundamentally changed their county government structure by spearheading a local ballot measure, improving transparency and cleaning up corruption in the process. The Marion League worked with its local chamber of commerce to merge the county and city health departments, creating new efficiencies and saving taxpayer dollars. Other Leagues, like those in Darke and Ross counties, have used the League's impACT pass-through grants to host town hall meetings focused on local accountability.

Local League advocacy can be as simple as the president contacting elected officials *using League stationery* each time the state or national League issues an action alert. Local League advocacy can be joining a local coalition to improve public policy in your area. Local League advocacy can be observing local government meetings . . . studying local ballot issues and taking a public position for or against . . . submitting letters to the editor or op/ed pieces to your newspaper on critical policy issues. Local League advocacy is a great way to reenergize veteran members and attract new members. Join us at Statehouse Day to share your story of local League advocacy, to learn about what your sister Leagues are doing, and to engage our workshop presenters in a discussion about pressing statewide policy issues.

But wait . . . there's more! Want to know more about education finance? John Stanford from the Governor's Office will be on hand. Have questions about health care reform and its likely effects on Ohio? Doug Anderson from the Ohio Department of Insurance will be there. Want to learn about the League's efforts on judicial election reform or the historic election lawsuit settlement? We've got you covered!

Visit the Statehouse Day/Council section of the state website (<http://lwvohio.org/site.cfm/Get-Involved/Statehouse-Day-Council.cfm>) to download the registration form, or use the form in the

most recent *Ohio Voter* newsletter. And because we are also using Statehouse Day to celebrate the League's 90th anniversary, we are inviting legislators to join us for birthday cake and coffee at the end of the day. Come give *them* a shot in the arm! And remember, because Statehouse Day is where we see the League's proud tradition of citizen education and grassroots advocacy at its best, it's the perfect occasion to ask a friend to join the League and come with you to Columbus.