



The Bulletin

Where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

October 2016

Dates to Remember

- * Board Meeting, NUMC, Oct 13th, 6 p.m.
- * Lunch with LWV, Oct 21st, Scottish Rite Cathedral, Noon
- * Education Consensus Meeting, NUMC, Oct 25th, 7 p.m.
- * IPS Mock Election, Nov 7th
- * **ELECTION DAY, November 8th**
- * Board Meeting, NUMC, Nov 10th, 6 p.m.

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We're almost to Election Day!

Leaguers,

What can I say? We have done it again—survived another season of Candidate Forums. I feel extremely lucky to have been able to take part in all four of this year's forums and getting out and about all over our beautiful city.

LWV of Indianapolis has also been working diligently registering voters all around Marion County. We celebrated National Voter Registration Day with the University of Indianapolis—and had success! We've also attended Hob Nob, Transit Forums, worked in high schools...you name it? We've probably been there!

But the work isn't done. We've got a very important Education Consensus Meeting coming up, a Mock Election with IPS on November 7th, and, of course, Election Day on Tuesday November 8th.

I don't know about you, but I think I'm ready for November 9th!

All my best,

Rhea

President League of Women Voters of Indianapolis

Education Consensus Meeting!

Who? All LWV-Indianapolis members

When? Tuesday October 25th at 7 p.m.

Where? North United Methodist Church

Why? To review the 2015-2017 LWV Education Study and provide consensus.

The study is enclosed in this month's Bulletin for your convenience.

Please bring this Bulletin with you to the Education Meeting

Lunch with LWV and IPS Mock Election

Lunch with LWV is held on the third Friday of the month at the Scottish Rite Cathedral's Truman Room. The programs start at noon. We have two great speakers coming up for October and November:

Addison Pollock, Coordinator of the Indiana Citizens' Alliance for Transit (ICAT), will present on Friday October 21st. His topic will be the Mass Transit Referendum that will be on the ballot this Election Day.

Jon Schwantes will discuss the 2016 Election results on Friday, November 18th. In January of 1981, a series of short field reports from Jon began an examination of the issues and agendas before the State Legislature. Thirty five years later, Indiana's decision makers are still appearing on *Indiana Lawmakers*. Journalist Jon Schwantes guides the discussion between Republicans, Democrats, Libertarians, the governor, state senators, state house members, lobbyists, and pundits. Jon also regularly appears on WFYI's *Indiana Week in Review*.

We are excited about these two programs—and certainly hope that you bring a friend or two to join us!

In additional news: IPS will be holding a Mock Election on **Monday November 7th**. They are seeking volunteers to help at fifteen schools with checking registered voters and monitoring the voting process.

If you are available on the Monday the 7th, and would like to help? Please contact Mary Boggs at 317-845-4238 or by e-mailing her at marybboggs@yahoo.com. We would need an answer no later than the 17th of October.

In Memoriam

Long-time faithful League member, **Marian Small**, died in Greenwood on 11 August 2016. In earlier times, she served on both the local and state LWV Boards. We extend our sincere condolences to her family and friends. She will certainly be missed.

Volunteer THANKS!

A big THANK YOU to all our many dedicated volunteers who have made our work possible:

Mary Boggs

Amy Miller

Karen Kay Leonard

Harriet Wilkins

Laura Albright

Sarah Halter

Rhea Cain

Lenora Maze

Erin Kelley



Cost, Effects, and Uses of Standardized Tests in Indiana Public Schools

What do you remember about taking standardized tests in school? When many Leaguers were students, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills might have been the only standardized test they encountered. Some also experienced either the SAT or ACT test in late high school. However, the practice of standardized testing has overtaken today's public schools. Many pupils spend a great deal of the academic year experiencing rearranged schedules in order to accommodate standardized tests in their own or other classrooms. Some districts report that from the start of April until the end of school, almost no day passes without giving some standardized test. Computer labs therefore are closed to other uses and Information Technology staff are run ragged by the varied demands of loading programs, solving problems, and having no time for their own routine work. In classrooms, the resulting test scores may be useful for modifying instruction, especially early- to mid-term. Or the results may be used to evaluate the student's performance (individually, or in comparison to others), the teachers, or the schools themselves. When the results affect grade retention, college entry, teacher evaluations, or "school grades," the experience is called **high-stakes testing**.

In this second section of our state education study, LWV work focused on learning about required testing and on inquiring of school corporation employees what they see as its benefits and drawbacks. With fifteen members (mostly retired teachers, I confess), the state study committee has talked monthly via conference call; has – along with Leaguers across Indiana – interviewed public school employees; and has worked to compile balanced information for local LWV study as we prepare to discuss the consensus questions printed elsewhere in this issue.

The LWVIN Education Committee 2015-2017 suggests no specific decision on the basis of the information provided. Its job is to provide resources from various perspectives about the issues inherent in our consensus questions. Then members of local Leagues across the state will examine and discuss the questions, reaching their own conclusions, and reporting their ideas back to the committee by next February. Once the committee evaluates those reports, it may make position recommendations to the LWVIN Board. If the Board subsequently adopts a new position, then the LWVIN stance will be publicized next spring on the www.lwvin.org web site. **LWV advocates only on issues supported by an official LWV position reached after study through either consensus or concurrence.**

On subsequent *Bulletin* pages you will find: consensus questions; a background essay about Indiana testing; an abbreviated glossary of education terms; some reading references available in print; and two charts summarizing Indiana's required tests. On our local web site, www.lwvindy.org, you can view the Indianapolis League's education positions. At the state site, www.lwvin.org, you can also access many pages of summaries from our interviews, lists of additional web sites to consult, and comments about books and articles that the committee found helpful. All the Indiana League's existing education positions are posted there, too, along with links to national positions. Please follow your own questions and interests as deep in and far out as you wish. Then join us for a discussion at 7pm on Tuesday 25 October 2016 at North UMC. The parking lot (accessed off Illinois or 39th Street is lighted and guarded, and the Indy committee will be eager to hear your views!

Some Helpful Books

- Brynjolfsson, Erik and Andrew McAfee. *The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technology*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014.
- Golarz, Raymond J. and Marion J. Golarz. *The Problem Isn't Teachers*. Bloomington, Indiana: Authorhouse, pp.137-152.
- Goldstein, Dana. *The Teacher Wars: A History of America's Most Embattled Profession*. New York: Doubleday, 2014.
- Ravitch, Diane. *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools*. New York: Knopf, 2013.
- Reynolds, Glenn Harlan. *The New School: How the Information Age will save American Education from Itself*. New York: Encounter Books, c2014.

Consensus Questions

State- or Federally-Mandated Testing

1. For what purposes should the State of Indiana require testing of children in the public schools? Which aims should be considered appropriate and which (if any) inappropriate?
 - a. To determine the individual child's progress
 - b. To compare the child's scores to scores of peers
 - c. To adjust and improve instruction
 - d. To evaluate teachers
 - e. To evaluate schools
 - f. Other (Explain.)

2. Who should be responsible for selecting required tests?
 - a. State Legislators
 - b. Staff at Indiana Department of Education (Superintendent of Public Instruction's office)
 - c. State Board of Education (the majority are political appointees)
 - d. Educators employed in public school corporations
 - e. Committees of parents and school board members
 - f. Other (Explain.)

3. How frequently should individual students be required to take such tests (e.g., every year, or at education "set points" such as 3rd grade)? Should random sampling be considered, rather than requiring every student to take the tests?

4. How much time should be subtracted from regular instruction for mandated testing? (This would include preparation, administration, make-ups, etc. For example, if 10% of the school year were approved for testing, that would be 18 days of Indiana's 180-day school year.) To account for the lost instructional time, should adjustments be made to curriculum expectations?

5. What provisions could insure that all children are tested fairly?
 - a. Timing
 - b. Learning styles
 - c. Language of origin
 - d. Special-education designations
 - e. Socio-economic status
 - f. Rural vs. urban issues
 - g. Available technology
 - h. Students' computer skills
 - i. Other? (Explain.)

6. What (if any) role should mandated test results have in evaluating teachers?

Common Core and ISTEP Standardized Test Background Information – Indiana Submitted by LWV-BrownCounty

Studies as early as 1983 under the Reagan administration brought attention to the lack of standards in education, the disparity in curricula, tests, and student achievement [among] schools and [among] states. Over the next couple of decades, legislative action and organizations promoted development of standardized curriculum and assessments. In 2008/9 the National Governors Association and state education commissioners from 48 states plus the District of Columbia committed to developing the Common Core standards “to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce.” (Reference Indiana State Impact Website: <http://indianapublicmedia.org/stateimpact/tag/common-core/>).

Indiana signed on to Common Core in 2010. The Common Core standards were implemented in Indiana schools over the next few years, with teachers familiarizing themselves with the standards, developing and improving appropriate lesson plans, etc., with an expectation to begin the associated test in 2014-2015. The test, PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers), was developed in 2011-2012 by a consortium of states [that had adopted] Common Core, including Indiana. It was field-tested in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

Opponents of the Common Core later [advocated] a suspension of Common Core Standards, and Indiana became the first state to withdraw from the Common Core in March 2014, intending to replace Common Core with Indian-specific standards. Indiana Standards were developed and given to schools spring/summer for implementation the 2014-2015 school year.

Concerns were raised that this did not allow sufficient time for meeting the new standards. Schools had already 3 spent years’ time and money becoming familiar with the Common Core standards, developing lesson plans, modifying text books and materials to meet Common Core. Adoption of the new Indiana-specific standards caused the process to start over, as new standards had to be reviewed and incorporated into the curriculum with only months to prepare for the new test to start in the 2014-15 school year. “*The result: students were tested on topics that were changed by the state after the beginning of the school year, giving our teachers an impossibly short time frame to change the entire curriculum and sequence of instruction.*” (Excerpt from an Open Letter from Superintendents of La Porte County. Reference <http://wsbt.com/news/local/more-controversy-for-last-years-istep>).

Results from 2014-2015 spring tests were not released until January 2016. Statewide, scores dropped (by about 20%) across the board in all subjects. In March 2016, Legislators scrapped ISTEP. Governor Pence [named] a panel of 23, with members to be [selected] by the Governor, legislative leaders, and Education Superintendent Glenda Ritz. The panel is to recommend a substitute test by December 1, 2016. Students will continue taking the existing ISTEP until spring 2017. A new test is expected to begin the 2017-2018 school year. (Reference article: <http://www.indystar.com/story/news/education/2016/03/27/indiana-scraps-istep-but-its-replacement-face-political-test/82205196/>)

Abbreviated Glossary –Education Terms

List of Indiana’s state- or federally-mandated tests:

ISTEP+, Parts 1 & 2

IREAD-3; *ECA (End-of-Course Assessments)* covering Algebra I and English 10

ISTAR (*Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting*) in grades 3-8 & 10, covering English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies

WIDA (*World-class Instructional Design & Assessments*) for English Language Learners

ACCUPLACER, Parts 1& 2

NAEP (*National Assessment of Educational Progress*) student samplings annually in grades 2, 8, & 12

Abbreviated Glossary, cont.

- **formative test** – The goal of formative assessment, including *diagnostic testing*, is to allow modification of teaching and learning activities to improve student achievement. Usually a range of formal and informal assessment procedures is conducted by classroom teachers.
- **summative test** - The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark.
- **Common Core** - The **Common Core State Standards Initiative** in the United States that details what K–12 students should know in English language arts and mathematics at the end of each grade. Sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), it seeks to establish consistent educational standards across the states as well as to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter credit-bearing courses at two- or four-year college programs or to enter the workforce.^[1] (Although Indiana was an early adopter of Common Core standards, by April 2014, it had reversed that decision in favor of creating its own state standards.)
- **Indiana Standards** - In April of 2014, the Indiana State Board of Education approved the adoption of new standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics. These new standards are the result of a process designed to identify, evaluate, synthesize, and create high-quality, rigorous standards for Indiana students. They were validated as “college and career ready” by the Indiana Education Roundtable, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the Indiana Department of Education, the Indiana State Board of Education, and the Indiana Center for Education and Career Innovation [CECI, now dissolved]. This means that students who successfully master these objectives for what they should know and be able to do in the disciplines of Math and English/Language Arts by the time they graduate from high school will be ready to go directly into the workplace or a postsecondary educational opportunity without need for remediation.
- **ISTEP+** -The purpose of the *Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus (ISTEP+)* program is to measure student achievement in the subject areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science (Grades 4 and 6), and Social Studies (Grades 5 and 7). In particular, *ISTEP+* reports student achievement levels according to the Indiana Academic Standards that were adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education. An Applied Skills open-ended Assessment (Part 1) and a Multiple-Choice and Technology-Enhanced item Assessment (Part 2), which are required components of the *ISTEP+* program, are used to measure these standards.
- **PSAT** – Originally called the “Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test,” this a standardized test administered by the College Board and cosponsored by the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (*PSAT/NMSQT* National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) in the United States. Approximately 3.5 million students take the PSAT/NMSQT each year.^[1] In 2013, 1.59 million high school sophomores and 1.55 million high school juniors took the *PSAT*.^[2] Younger students are also eligible to take the test. The scores from the *PSAT/NMSQT* are used to determine eligibility and qualification for the National Merit Scholarship Program.^[1]
- **CTE** – Career Technology Education
- **WBL** – Work-based Learning
- **AP** – Advanced Placement (courses undertaken by high-level students before high school completion)
- **IB** – International Baccalaureate (a rigorous study program including competence in at least one foreign language; designed to help students qualify for international college/university admission)
- **CP** – college preparatory
- **GQE** – Graduation-qualifying Exam
- **ESSA** – Education and Secondary School Act – The federal replacement for “No Child Left Behind” and “Race to the Top” programs, this legislation specifies how states must assess (*i.e.*, test) students, report school results, and plan for district-wide and state-wide improvement.

LWVIN Education Study 2015-2017

Assessment Background Information

Test Title Assessment	First Developed	First Administered	Mandated High-Stakes	Development*
<i>ISTEP+</i>	1987	1988	2002	Items developed by the vendor with extensive review/revisions by the IDOE and Indiana educators; Indiana owns the items.
<i>GQE</i>	2002	2004	2004	Items developed by the vendor with extensive review/revisions by the IDOE and Indiana educators; Indiana owns the items.
<i>IREAD-3</i>	2011	2012	2012	Items developed by the vendor with extensive review/revisions by the IDOE and Indiana educators; vendor owns the items.

Indiana's Required Testing 2016

Assessment	Stakes for Schools	Stakes for Students	Year Test First Administered (not necessarily high-stakes at that time)
<i>ISTEP+</i> Grades 3-8	Yes; accountability	No	1988 (<i>grade 10 was added in 1995</i>)
<i>ISTEP+</i> Grade 10 (serves as the GQE for students currently enrolled in grade 10)	Yes; accountability	Yes; graduation test	2016 (<i>test based on new standards</i>)
<i>End of Course Assessments (ECAs)</i> (serves as the GQE for students currently in grade 11 and older)	No	Yes; graduation test (<i>for students currently in grade 11 and older</i>)	2009 (<i>test replaced the previous Grade 10 ISTEP+ test</i>)
<i>IREAD-3</i>	No	Yes; must pass (<i>or receive a Good Cause Exemption in order to advance to Grade 4</i>)	2012

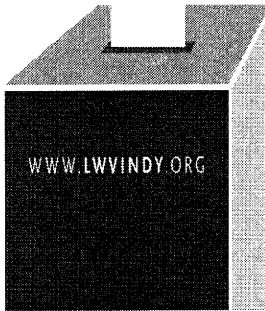
Absentee Ballot Info

We have a crucial election coming up on November 8th—and we at LWV of Indianapolis realize that not everyone is able to get to the polls on Tuesday.

Because of that, we are including an Absentee Ballot in this month’s Bulletin. Please know that you have until October 31st to get this form to your respective county clerk. You may mail t to the contacts below:



DEMOCRACY IS NOT
A SPECTATOR SPORT.



Marion County Election Board
3737 E. Washington Street, Suite A
Indpls, IN 46201

Hamilton County Circuit Court Clerk
1 Hamilton County Square, Suite 106
Noblesville, IN 46060-2219

Hendricks County Voter Reg. Office
Election Supervisor
355 S. Washington Street
Danville, IN 46122

Johnson County Voter Registration
PO Box 451
Franklin, IN 46131-0451



Follow LWV Indy on Facebook and Twitter!

We are hoping to engage more of our members on Facebook. Please take a moment to Like and Follow us online. We look forward to hearing from you! This is a great tool to share news and upcoming events with potential League members.



(ABS-MAIL)

APPLICATION FOR ABSENTEE BALLOT BY MAIL ONLY IN 2016 For Election on 11 / 08 / 2016
State Form 47090 (R21 / 9-16) Indiana Election Division (IC 3-11-4-2; 3-11-4-5.1; 3-11-10-24)

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete and return application so it is received by county election board at least 8 days before election day. **DEADLINES:** For May 3, 2016 Primary Election, deadline for county to RECEIVE is APRIL 25, 2016 BY 11:59 p.m. For November 8, 2016 General Election, deadline for county to RECEIVE is OCTOBER 31, 2016 BY 11:59 p.m. CAN BE MAILED, E-MAILED, FAXED, OR HAND-DELIVERED. If you receive this completed application from a voter, you must file the completed application with the county or Indiana Election Division by noon, 10 days after receiving it or by the absentee deadline, whichever comes first. You must provide the date you received the completed application in box 5.

County of residence:

1. INFORMATION OF ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICANT

Name (Please print.) _____ Date of birth (mm/dd/yy) _____ / _____ / _____ Last Four Digits of Social Security Number (Completing this box is optional.) _____ OR I do not have a Social Security Number.

Change of Name (If you changed your name since you registered to vote, please print your FORMER NAME to authorize an update to your voter registration): _____

Registration Address (number and street) _____ City/Town, State, ZIP Code _____ Telephone Number (Optional) _____ () _____

2. ABSENTEE BALLOT MAILING ADDRESS (Please mail the absentee ballot for the election to me at this address if different from registration address.)

City/Town, State, ZIP Code _____

3. PRIMARY ELECTION ONLY

Under state law, you must request a major political party ballot to vote in a primary election. You may vote on a public question without voting a political party ballot, if a referendum (public question) is held on the same day as the primary. I apply for the ballot of the political party, a majority of whose candidates I voted for at the last general election, or whom I intend to vote for in the next general election:

DEMOCRATIC PARTY REPUBLICAN PARTY OR I do not wish to vote in either party's primary but wish to vote on a PUBLIC QUESTION ONLY

4. REASON TO VOTE ABSENTEE BALLOT BY MAIL

- I have a specific, reasonable expectation of being absent from the county on election day during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open.
- I will be confined to my residence, a health care facility, or a hospital due to illness or injury during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open.
- I will be caring for an individual confined to a private residence due to illness or injury during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open.
- I am a voter with disabilities. NOTE: If you are unable to mark the ballot or sign the ballot security envelope, you must contact the county election board to process your application.
- I am a voter at least 65 years of age.
- I will have official election duties outside of my voting precinct.
- I am scheduled to work at my regular place of employment during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open.
- I am unable to vote at the polls in person due to observance of a religious discipline or religious holiday during the entire 12 hours the polls are open.
- I am a voter eligible to vote under the "fail-safe" procedures in IC 3-10-11 or 3-10-12.
- I am a member of the military or a public safety officer.
- I am a "serious sex offender" (as defined in IC 35-42-4-14(a)).
- I am prevented from voting due to the unavailability of transportation to the polls.

Contact your county election board if you wish to vote by absentee ballot in person at the county or before a traveling board; you want your power of attorney to apply for you; or are in Attorney General Confidentiality Program.

I swear or affirm under the penalties of perjury that all information set forth on this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. Perjury is punishable by imprisonment for up to 2 1/2 years, a fine of up to \$10,000, or both.

Signature of voter (or person designated to sign by a voter with disabilities who is unable to sign) _____ Date signed (mm/dd/yy) _____ / _____ / _____

NOTE: 5. IF YOU RECEIVED THIS COMPLETED APPLICATION FROM THE VOTER, PUT THE DATE IT WAS RECEIVED: _____, 20____.

6. INFORMATION OF INDIVIDUAL ASSISTING ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICANT

Name (Please print.) _____ Date of birth (mm/dd/yy) _____ / _____ / _____ Telephone Number (Day) _____ () _____ Telephone Number (Evening) _____ () _____

Registration Address (number and street) _____ City/Town, State, ZIP Code _____ Mailing Address (number and street) _____ City/Town, State, ZIP Code _____

I swear or affirm under penalties of perjury that I am not the employer of this voter, an officer of the voter's union, or an agent of the employer or union of this voter and have no knowledge or reason to believe that the individual submitting the application: (1) is ineligible to vote or to cast an absentee ballot; or (2) did not properly complete and sign the application.

Signature of Person Assisting Voter with Application _____ Date signed (mm/dd/yy) _____ / _____ / _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date (mm/dd/yy) _____ / _____ / _____ Precinct _____ is applicant required to provide additional documentation to the county voter registration office but has not yet done so? Yes No

Notes from National—Why the debates matter

The entire House of Representatives and dozens of US Senate and Governor's races will be decided in November, along with our next President. If you're wondering how you can choose the right candidate to receive your vote, we've got the answers!

Doing research and knowing where you stand on the issues is a great start. But to really get the most information on the candidates and their stances, you can watch the candidate debates. Attending or watching a candidate debate is one of the best ways to prepare for casting your ballot. And if you follow our advice, watching debates can be as fun as it is informative!

Here are four reasons that you should attend or watch a candidate debate:

1. These issues matter

Would you hire someone without first interviewing them? Didn't think so. Think of candidate debates as an interview that allows you to get to know your candidates better and to get a sense of where they stand on the issues that matter most to you. Studies show that attending a debate can impact your vote, and that Americans are more likely to vote when they feel informed about the candidates. Watching or at-

tending a debate is the perfect way for you to learn more before casting your vote.

2. We all have a say.

If you decide to attend a debate in person, you may have the opportunity to ask the candidates directly about the issues that you care about. Debate moderators often take questions from the audience, allowing you to ask the hard questions. If you're watching a debate from home, you may also be able to use Twitter, Facebook or other social media platforms to send in your questions to the candidates or engage in conversations with other viewers. Whether you're in the crowd or on the couch, you can have your voice heard!

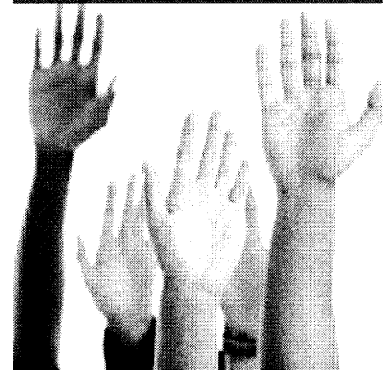
3. Democracy works best when we all get involved

Our democracy thrives when *all* of us are engaged. When you watch a debate and discuss it with the people around you, you're helping foster important dialogue about issues that affect our lives. Hosting a debate watching party is a great and fun way to get your friends, family, coworkers and community to gather together and discuss the debate. You can also follow candidates on social media to stay involved and in-the-know.

4. This election will determine our future.

The people who fill public offices will make decisions that affect you, your family and your community on issues like the economy, education, security, and health care. It's essential that we all weigh in on the process. Election Day is just around the corner; now is the time for all of us to get the information we need to cast our ballots, and watching the debates is a great way to do just that.

GET INVOLVED



League of Women Voters of
Indianapolis
3808 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, IN 46208



Election Day is November 8th!



Have you renewed?

Dues are \$50 a year for individuals, \$75 for households, and \$25 for students and AmeriCorps members. Make checks payable to the LWV of Indianapolis and send to 3808 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Kind of Member: NEW RENEWING