



THE VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CENTRAL YAVAPAI COUNTY

LWVCYC.org LWVCYC@gmail.com P. O. Box 11538, Prescott, AZ 86304-1538 October 2013

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The League of Women Voters of Central Yavapai County presents

Poverty & Hunger Here?

The League welcomes Ron Barnes and Harvey Grady to discuss the growing concern within our young, working families, as well as seniors, who are living below the poverty line, their food insecurity and what our communities are doing to help.

Saturday, October 5, 2013
Las Fuentes Resort Village
1035 Scott Drive, Prescott

9:00 a.m. – Coffee
9:30 – 11:30 - Meeting

The public is welcome.



Did you know that 11.6% of Yavapai County families live below poverty level?



In families headed by a single female parent, 50.1% live below the poverty line.



President's Message

There has been a very positive bit of news in our state. The fast actions of various groups across the state, including the LWV, have gotten enough signatures on petitions to bring the bill to suppress voter rights to the people. HB 2305, passed in the last moments of the past legislative session, will now be in the hands of the voters. At this writing the signatures are being verified, but there were at least a third more than needed, so the petition should stand.

We, the citizens, will now be able to decide if this bill will be overturned or if it will be used. Please remember that you will not see this on this year's ballot. It will be on the November 2014 ballot. Getting it done quickly meant that the bill is stopped from being implemented. It is now on hold until the voters speak.

A bit of news regarding this coming election is the education bond override issue. The cuts to education have been so severe the last several years that it is amazing our schools can function at all. Our general program presentation about this issue this September was so well attended and so well received regarding this problem, I hope you were able to attend. We also had many new members sign up. There was a true sense of action needed throughout the audience. Thank you to Julianna Goswick for doing a wonderful job assembling our speakers and putting the program together, and thanks to all of the helpers.

This coming meeting will give us a good look at what most of us aren't fully aware, hunger and poverty in our own community. This isn't about just the homeless. There are too many working people who are struggling to survive. Please come to this meeting on October 5th. Our speakers deserve a good turnout, and we are all in this together. You might want to bring a friend as well. I guarantee they will get a warm welcome and leave better informed.

Watch for our upcoming news bulletins and please Hold The Date: December 6th, for our special Holiday Luncheon.

Until I see you on October 5th at 9:00 am, take care.

Vicky O'Hara, President

- **11.6 % of Yavapai County families live below poverty level**
- **In families with children under 18, the number rises to 26.6% - more than one in every four children under 5 years old lives in a family in poverty – which means on any given day 25% of our children do not know if they will have a meal.**
- **In families headed by a single female parent, 50.1% live below the poverty line.**

Voter Services

Voter registration will be held the following dates:

Farmers Market – September 21

Yavapai College – September 24

Prescott College - September 24

Yavapai College – October 1

Anyone interested in helping with voter registration, please call Dale 928-237-9093

About our Presenters on October 5....

Harvey Grady is President of Cornucopia Community Advocates and Chair of the Yavapai Child Hunger Alliance, based in Sedona. Under his direction, and with a small grant from the Arizona Community Foundation, Cornucopia Community Advocates conducted the 2011-12 Yavapai Child Hunger Survey of child care providers and public schools in the county.

The survey's purpose was to determine current estimates of the prevalence of children who are going hungry, who are malnourished, overweight/obese and/or diabetic. What began as a simple count of hungry children grew into a dynamic action plan to reduce and eliminate child hunger in our county.

See more at: <http://endchildhungeraz.org/apech-blog/#sthash.qFiQGHyR.dpuf> for the in-depth report on child hunger and food resources available through Yavapai County schools, child care providers and community.

Ron Barnes is Coordinator of the Hungry Kids Project in Prescott and Prescott Valley. He is a retired educator and business owner who moved to Prescott in 1985, following a consulting career and having conducted seminars for more than two hundred business, government, health care, and educational organizations.

He has served on a number of community boards and committees. He founded the Prescott Area Leadership Program in 1990 and was recognized with the Prescott Community Visionary Award in 1997. Ron is a friend of the LWVCYC, and is the spouse of long time Leaguer, Betsy Barnes.

2013-2014 LWV Calendar

General meetings open to the public will be held on the first Saturday of the month, usually in the lower level Community Room at Las Fuentes.

Saturday, Oct. 5	9:30 AM	General Meeting	Hunger and Poverty
Friday, October 11	11:00 AM	Board Meeting	
Saturday, Nov. 2	9:30 AM	General Meeting	Reasonable Gun Regulations
Friday, November 8	8:00 AM	Board Meeting	
Friday, Dec. 6	TBA	Members	Holiday Luncheon
Friday, December 13	11:00AM	Board Meeting	
Saturday, Jan. 4	9:30 AM	General Meeting	ALEC/Common Cause
Friday, January 10	8:00 AM	Board Meeting	
January 29	TBA	Meet and Greet	Non-Profits and Government Officials
Saturday, Febr. 1	9:30 AM	General Meeting	Local and State Program Planning
Friday, February 7	11:00AM	Board Meeting	
Saturday, Mar. 1	9:30 AM	General Meeting	Legislative Update
Friday, March 7	8:00 AM	Board Meeting	
Saturday, Apr. 5	9:30 AM	General Meeting	Poverty and Education
Friday, April 11	11:00 AM	Board Meeting	
Saturday, May. 3	TBA	Members Only	Annual Meeting and Luncheon,

CLIPPINGS

Food stamps again a vivid symbol in poverty debate

By CONNIE CASS and MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press Sep 21, 2013

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Food stamps have figured in Americans' ideas about the poor for decades, from President Lyndon Johnson's vision of a Great Society to President Ronald Reagan's scorn for crooked "welfare queens" and President Bill Clinton's pledge to "end welfare as we know it."

Partisans tend to see what they want to see in the food stamp program: barely enough bread and milk to sustain hungry children, or chips and soda - maybe even steak and illicit beer - for cheaters and layabouts gaming the system.

Those differences were on display Thursday when the House voted **to cut almost \$4 billion a year, or 5 percent, from the roughly \$80 billion-a-year program.**

The House bill would tighten eligibility standards, allow states to impose new work requirements and permit drug testing for recipients, among other cuts to spending. **A Senate bill would cut around one-tenth of the amount of the House bill, or \$400 million a year.**

Republicans argued that work requirements target the aid to the neediest people. Democrats said the swelling rolls - more than 47 million people are now using the food stamps, or 1 in 7 Americans - show that the program is working at a time of high unemployment and great need.

A look at the history and future of food stamps:

NO MORE STAMPS

These days, people in the nation's largest food aid program pay with plastic.

These special debit cards are swiped at convenience store or supermarket checkouts to pay for groceries. The cards can't be used for alcohol or cigarettes or nonfood items such as toothpaste, paper towels or dog chow. Junk food or high-priced treats are OK.

The first food stamps were a temporary plan to help feed the hungry toward the end of the Great Depression of the 1930s. The government subsidized the cost of blue stamps that poor people used to buy food from farm surpluses.

The idea was revived in the 1960s and expanded under Johnson into a permanent program that sold food coupons to low-income people at a discount. Beginning in the 1970s, food stamps were given to the poor for free. Benefit cards began replacing paper in the 1980s, a move designed to reduce fraud and ease the embarrassment food stamp users felt at the cash register.

Food stamps aren't the government's only way to feed those in need. There are more than a dozen smaller programs, including the one for Women, Infants and Children, and free and reduced-price school lunches.

In 2008, food stamps were officially renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. Most people still know the name that's been familiar since 1939.

ONE IN EVERY 7 AMERICANS

In a nation of 314 million people, more than 47 million are eating with food stamps each month.

Who are they? Children and teenagers make up almost half, according to the Agriculture Department. About 10 percent are seniors.

The vast majority don't receive any cash welfare. Many households that shop with SNAP cards have someone who's employed but qualify for help because of low earnings.

The average food stamp allotment is \$133 a person per month. The monthly amount a family gets depends on the household's size, earnings and expenses, as well as changing food prices and other factors.

Households can qualify for help with earnings up to 30 percent higher than the federal poverty level, making the limit about \$30,000 for a family of four this year. These households are limited to no more than \$2,000 in savings, or \$3,250 if there are elderly or disabled residents.

In addition, most states allow people to qualify automatically for food stamps if they are eligible for certain other welfare programs, even if they don't meet the strict SNAP standards. Although food stamps are paid for with federal tax dollars, states administer the program and have some choices in setting requirements.

Language in Clinton's 1996 welfare overhaul required able-bodied adults who aren't raising children to work or attend job training or similar programs to qualify for food stamps after three months. But those work requirements across most of the nation have been waived for several years because of the high unemployment rate.

People who are living in the United States illegally aren't eligible for food stamps. Most adults who immigrate legally aren't eligible during their first five years in the country.

RISING LIKE YEAST

The cost to taxpayers more than doubled over just four years, from \$38 billion in 2008 to \$78 billion last year.

Liberals see a program responding to rising need at a time of economic turmoil. Conservatives see out-of-control spending, and many Republicans blame President Barack Obama. While seeking the GOP presidential nomination in 2012, Newt Gingrich labeled Obama the "food stamp president."

Some of the growth can be attributed to Obama's food stamp policies, but Congress' budget analysts blame most of it on the economy.

The big factors:

- -The SNAP program is an entitlement, meaning everyone who is eligible can get aid, no matter the cost to taxpayers.
- -Millions of jobs were lost in the recession that hit in 2007. Unemployment is still high, and many people who have jobs are working fewer hours or for lower pay than before, meaning more people are eligible.
- -Obama's 2009 economic stimulus temporarily increased benefit amounts; that boost is set to expire on Nov. 1. Time limits for jobless adults without dependents are still being waived in most of the country.
- -Food stamp eligibility requirements were loosened by Congress in 2002 and 2008, before Obama became president.
- -Fluctuating food prices have driven up monthly benefit amounts, which are based on a low-cost diet.

FEWER TO FEED?

The number of people using food stamps appears to be leveling off this year, and long-term budget projections suggest the number will begin to fall as the economy improves.

Why is it taking so long? Although the jobless rate has dropped from its 2009 peak, it remains high, leaving a historically large number of people eligible for food stamps. Since the recession began, a bigger portion of people who are eligible have signed up for food stamps than in the past.

Many people who enrolled during the worst days of the recession still qualify for SNAP cards, even if they are doing a little better now. For example, they may have gone from being laid off to working a low-paying or part-time job.

The Congressional Budget Office predicts in about a decade the number of people using food stamps will drop to 34 million, or about 1 in every 10 people.

FOOD AND FRAUD

Abuse was a worry from the start. The 1939 food stamp program was launched in May and by that October a retailer had been caught violating the rules.

There's been progress along the way, especially after the nationwide adoption of SNAP cards, which are harder to sell for cash than paper coupons were. The government says such "trafficking" in food stamps has fallen significantly over the past two decades, from about 4 cents on the dollar in 1993 to a penny per dollar in 2008.

But many lawmakers say fraud is still costing taxpayers too much. Some people lie about their income, apply for benefits in multiple states or fail to quit the program when their earnings go up. Recipients must tell their state agency within 10 days if their income goes over the limit.

Some stores illegally accept food stamps to pay for other merchandise, even beer or electronics, or give out cash at a cut rate in exchange for phony food purchases, which are then reimbursed by the government.

FOOD AND FARMS

In Congress, it's a marriage of convenience.

Food stamp policy has been packaged in the same bill with farm subsidies and other agricultural programs since the 1970s. It was a canny way of assuring that urban lawmakers who wanted the poverty program would vote for farm spending. That worked until this year, when conservatives balked at the skyrocketing cost of food stamps.

In June, a farm bill that included food stamps was defeated in the Republican-led House because fiscal conservatives felt it didn't cut the program deeply enough.

In response, GOP leaders split the food and farm programs in two. The House passed the farm version in July and the food stamp version on Thursday. Both passed with narrow votes.

The House and Senate versions must be reconciled before the five-year farm bill can become law, and that won't be an easy task.

Food stamps remain in the farm bill passed by the Senate. That bill made only a half-percent cut to food stamps and the Democratic-led Senate will be reluctant to cut more deeply or to evict the poverty program from its home in the farm bill. Obama supported the cuts in the Senate bill, but has opposed any changes beyond that. The White House threatened to veto the House food stamp bill.

WHAT NOW?

The current farm and food law expires at the end of the month.

If the two sides can't agree by then, a likely scenario, Congress could vote to extend the law as it is, at the expense of many planned updates to agricultural policy. There won't be much urgency to do that until the end of the year, when some dairy supports expire and milk prices could rise.

Other farm supports won't expire until next year, but farmers have been frustrated with the drawn-out debate that has now lasted two years, saying they need more government certainty as they manage their farm operations.

SNAP benefits would still be available for now. While farm bills set food stamp policy, the money is paid out through annual appropriations bills that so far have left benefits intact.

Census: No sign of economic rebound for many

By HOPE YEN Sep 19, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Even as the economy shows signs of improvement and poverty levels off, new U.S. census data suggests the gains are halting and uneven. Depending on education, race, income and even marriage, not all segments of the population are seeing an economic turnaround.

Poverty is on the rise in single-mother families. More people are falling into the lowest-income group. And after earlier signs of increased mobility, fewer people are moving as homeownership declined for a fifth straight year.

"We're in a selective recovery," said William H. Frey, a Brookings Institution demographer who analyzed the numbers.

The annual U.S. survey of socioeconomic indicators covers all of last year, representing the third year of a postrecession rebound.

The figures, released Thursday, also show a slightly faster pace of growth in the foreign-born population, which increased to 40.8 million, or 13 percent of the U.S. Last year's immigration increase of 440,000 people was a reversal of a 2011 dip in the influx, when many Mexicans already in the U.S. opted to return home.

Many of the newer immigrants are now higher-skilled workers from Asian countries such as China and India. The number of immigrants in the U.S. with less than a high school diploma, who make up the bulk of the total foreign-born population, fell slightly in 2012 to 10.8 million. Immigrants with bachelor's degrees or higher rose by more than 4 percent to 9.8 million.

In all, 21 states saw declines last year in their Hispanic foreign-born population, led by New Mexico, Illinois and Georgia.

The number of Americans in poverty remained largely unchanged at a record 46.5 million. Single-mother families in poverty increased for the fourth straight year to 4.1 million, or 41.5 percent, coinciding with longer-term trends of declining marriage and out-of-wedlock births. Many of these mothers are low income with low education. The share of married-couple families in poverty remained unchanged at 2.1 million, or 8.7 percent.

By race or ethnicity, a growing proportion of poor children are Hispanic, a record 37 percent of

the total. Whites make up 30 percent, blacks 26 percent.

Nearly 2.2 million children were poor in California last year, the most of any state, but the child poverty rate was highest in Mississippi, where more than 1 in 3 children was poor. Nationwide, child poverty stood at 21.8 percent, unchanged from the previous year.

"Stubbornly high child poverty rates in the wake of the Great Recession suggest we have not yet turned the corner three years after its official end," said Marybeth Mattingly, director of research on vulnerable families at the University of New Hampshire's Carsey Institute.

The numbers also reflect widening economic inequality, an issue President Barack Obama has pledged would be a top priority of his administration to address. Upward mobility in the U.S. has been hurt by a tight job market and the longer-term disappearance of midskill jobs due to globalization and automation.

The new census data shows that lower-income households are a steadily increasing share of the population, while middle- to higher-income groups shrank or were flat.

In 2012, households earning less than \$24,999 made up 24.4 percent of total households, up from 21.7 percent four years earlier. The share of households earning \$50,000 to \$99,999 slipped from 31.2 percent to 29.9 percent. Top-income households making more than \$200,000 dipped less, from 5 percent to 4.6 percent over that period.

The still-weak economy also meant fewer household moves in 2012.

After showing signs of increased migration in 2011, fewer Americans were on the move, many because of few job opportunities or the inability to buy a home.

U.S. migration fell by 0.2 percent in 2012 after edging up the previous year. While the number of longer-distance moves remained steady at 2.3 percent, moves within a county edged lower to 9 percent, particularly among young adults 18-34.

Demographers say that suggests eroding career opportunities and a diminished ability to buy a home. Young adults typically make long-distance moves to seek a new career, while those who make local moves often do so when buying a home.

Homeownership declined for the fifth year in the row to 63.9 percent.

"Many Americans continue to think that a rising tide lifts all boats," said Sheldon Danziger, a University of Michigan economist. "But the bad news is that given the way economic growth trickles down now, the number of poor and disadvantaged will remain high unless we do more to help those in need."

With poverty remaining high, food stamp use continued to climb. Roughly 15.8 million, or 13.6 percent of U.S. households, received food stamps, the highest level on record. Just over half of these households, or 52 percent, were below poverty and 44 percent had one or more people with a disability.

By state, Oregon led the nation in food stamp use at 20.1 percent, or 1 in 5, due in part to generous state provisions that expand food stamp eligibility to families. Oregon was followed by more rural or more economically hard-hit states, including Mississippi, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan and Tennessee. Wyoming had the fewest households on food stamps, at 7 percent.

In 45 states and the District of Columbia, poverty rates remained steady at high levels. Mississippi, the poorest state in the nation, was one of just three states posting increases, from 22.6 percent to 24.2 percent. California and New Hampshire were the others.

In Minnesota and Texas, the percentage of people in poverty declined.

Among the 25 largest metropolitan areas, the Washington, D.C., area had the highest median household income in 2012 at \$88,233, followed by the San Francisco and Boston metro areas. The Tampa-St. Petersburg metro area had the lowest median house income at \$44,402.

The official poverty level is based on a government calculation that includes only income before tax deductions. It excludes noncash government aid such as food stamps. Counting food stamps would have boosted 4 million people, lowering the U.S. poverty rate to 13.7 percent.

Poverty stuck at 15 percent _ record 46.5 million

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The nation's poverty rate remained stuck at 15 percent last year despite America's slowly reviving economy, a discouraging lack of improvement for the record 46.5 million poor and an unwelcome benchmark for President Barack Obama's recovery plans.

More than 1 in 7 Americans were living in poverty, not statistically different from the 46.2 million of 2011 and the sixth straight year the rate had failed to improve, the Census Bureau reported Tuesday. Median income for the nation's households was \$51,017, also unchanged from the previous year after two consecutive annual declines, while the share of people without health insurance did improve but only a bit, from 15.7 percent to 15.4 percent.

"We're in the doldrums, with high poverty and inequality as the new normal for the foreseeable future," said Timothy Smeeding, an economics professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who specializes in income inequality. "The fact we've seen no real recovery in employment and wages means we've just flatlined."

Mississippi had the highest share of its residents in poverty, at 22 percent, according to rough calculations by the Census Bureau. It was followed by Louisiana, New Mexico and Arkansas. On the other end of the scale, New Hampshire had the lowest share, at 8.1 percent.

The last significant decline in the national poverty rate came in 2006, during the Bush administration and before the housing bubble burst and the recession hit. In 2011, the rate dipped to 15 percent from 15.1 percent, but census officials said that change was statistically insignificant.

For the past year, the official poverty line was an annual income of \$23,492 for a family of four.

The Census Bureau's annual report offers a snapshot of the economic well-being of U.S. households for 2012, when the unemployment rate averaged 8.1 percent after reaching an average high of 9.6 percent in 2010. Typically, the poverty rate tends to move in a similar direction as the unemployment rate, so many analysts had been expecting a modest decline in poverty.

The latest census data show that the gap between rich and poor was largely unchanged over the past year, having widened since 2007 to historic highs.

On Monday, Obama called attention to what he described as economic improvements - the nation's gross domestic product did rise by 2.8 percent last year - and said congressional Republicans would reverse recent gains if they took uncompromising stands in connection with looming budget deadlines.

Some GOP conservatives have been demanding a delay of Obama's new health care law as the price for supporting continued federal government spending. The House is also expected to consider a bill this week that would cut food stamps for the poor by an estimated \$4 billion annually - 10 times the size of cuts passed by the Democratic Senate - and allow states to put broad new work requirements in place

for recipients.

"This lack of improvement in poverty is disappointing and discouraging," said John Iceland, a former Census Bureau chief of the poverty and health statistics branch who is now a Penn State sociology professor. "This lack of progress in poverty indicates that these small improvements in the economy are not yet being equally shared by all."

Ron Haskins, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who specializes in poverty, agreed.

"Everything's on hold, but at a bad level; poverty and income did not change much in 2012," he said. "So child poverty is still too high and family income is still too low. The recession may be over, but try to tell that to these struggling families. Don't expect things to change until the American economy begins to generate more jobs."

The official poverty level is based on a government calculation that includes only income before tax deductions. It excludes capital gains or accumulated wealth, such as home ownership.

As a result, the rate takes into account the effects of some government benefits, such as unemployment compensation. It does not factor in noncash government aid such as tax credits and food stamps.

David Johnson, the chief of the Census Bureau's household economics division, estimated that unemployment benefits helped keep 1.7 million people out of poverty.

If non-cash government aid were counted in the official formula, the earned income tax credit would have lifted another 5.5 million people above the poverty threshold. Counting food stamps would have boosted 4 million people, lowering the poverty rate to 13.7 percent.

The slight dip in Americans without health coverage meant 48 million people were without insurance. The drop was due mostly to increases in government coverage, such as Medicaid and Medicare. The number of people covered by employer-provided health insurance remained flat.

The decline in the uninsured was modest compared to a bigger drop in 2011, which occurred due to increased coverage for young adults under the new health care law.

Because the main provisions of the Affordable Care Act don't take effect until 2014, the latest census numbers offer a baseline number of uninsured by which increased coverage and effectiveness of the law will be measured. Many conservative Republicans remain committed to repealing the law.

Starting next year, the government will offer tax credits for people without access to job-based health insurance to buy private coverage through new markets, called exchanges, in each state. Open enrollment starts Oct 1. The new health care law also expands Medicaid to cover millions more low-income people, but so far only 24 states plus Washington, D.C., have gone along with the expansion.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that by next year, the health law will reduce the number of uninsured in the U.S. by about 25 percent. By 2017, it is projected that 92 percent of eligible Americans will have health insurance, a 10 percentage point increase from today's level.

Other census findings:

- -Poverty remained largely unchanged across race and ethnic groups. Blacks had the highest rate at 27.2 percent, compared to 25.6 percent for Hispanics and 11.7 percent for Asian-Americans. Whites had a rate of 9.7 percent.
- -Child poverty stood at 21.8 percent.
- -Poverty among people 65 and older was basically unchanged at 9.1 percent, after hitting a record low of 8.9 percent in 2009.

Court: Arizona schools entitled to annual inflation adjustments

By Mary Jo Pitzl The Republic | azcentral.com Thu Sep 26, 2013 4:05 PM

Arizona schools are entitled to annual adjustments for inflation, the state Supreme Court ruled today in a unanimous decision that boosts education funding by millions of dollars but left lawmakers worried about the impact on the state's [finances](#).

The court said the inflation adjustments, approved by voters in 2000, cannot be undercut by legislative action.

[Schools](#) and their supporters cheered the ruling as a win, but cautioned the court's directive to fund inflation merely protects the status quo, and does not include any money for extra requirements the Legislature has imposed in recent years, most notably the Common Core requirements.

"For schools, it's sustenance," said Tim Ogle, executive director of the Arizona School Boards Association. "We're talking about a quarter of a billion dollars that has not been generated for our school children since 2010."

He said there is a discussion about seeking reimbursement for the three years when the Legislature did not fund inflation.

But legislative leaders criticized the ruling, saying the court ignored a portion of the voter-approved education measure that they believed gave them the authority to decide what to pay for.

House Speaker Andy Tobin, R-Paulden, said he was disappointed the court did not interpret the law but, in his view, opted to make law.

"They're more of a political body than I anticipated before I came to the Legislature," Tobin said.

Senate President Andy Biggs, R-Gilbert, said any talk of restoring the \$250 million in back payments could plunge the state back into deficits.

The court's decision settles a legal dispute that stretches back to the early days of the state's [budget](#) crisis. In 2010, lawmakers passed a budget that accounted for inflation only for school-district transportation, electing to not cover inflation costs for bigger portions of the education budget. They said they had the discretion to do so, relying on wording in Proposition 301 that said lawmakers must increase the base level of school funding or other components of the school-finance formula.

But the case before the Supreme Court revolved around the broader issue of the extent to which the Voter Protection Act prevented lawmakers from altering voter mandates, in this case, the mandate of Prop. 301 to adjust education funding for inflation.

Attorney Don Peters, who represented a coalition of school districts and education groups, called the ruling a "win for the voters" because of its support of the Voter Protection Act.

For three years running, the Legislature opted to not fund inflation adjustments, which amounted to a savings of about \$80 million a year. In June, the Legislature allocated \$82 million in a lump-sum payment to schools, but did not call it inflation funding, instead directing schools to use it as they saw fit.

The court also agreed to award attorneys' fees for the plaintiffs. The amount has not been determined.

September League Meetings hit the Front Pages in Prescott Courier and PV Tribune

Yavapai County school leaders discuss dire finances

[Patrick Whitehurst](#), The Daily Courier, 9/8/2013

PRESCOTT - School superintendents from the quad-city area spoke about school cuts during a Saturday morning meeting hosted by the League of Women Voters of Yavapai County.

The panel discussion included [Prescott Unified School District](#) Superintendent Dave Smucker, [Humboldt Unified School District](#) Superintendent Paul Stanton, [Chino Valley Unified School District](#) Superintendent Duane Howard, and Superintendent Mary Ellen Halvorson with Tri-City Preparatory Academy.

Juliana Goswick, program vice president for the League of Women Voters of Yavapai County, moderated Saturday's discussion at Las Fuentes Resort.



Matt Hinshaw/The Daily Courier

Chino Valley Unified School District Superintendent Duane Howard discusses budget cuts at a League of Women Voters forum Saturday while fellow superintendents David Smucker, Mary Ellen Halvorson and Paul Stanton listen.

more than 50 people - many teachers and former teachers - attended the forum. The meeting began with introductions and background information on the various districts in the area.

In the Prescott Unified School District (PUSD), 109 positions have been cut, said PUSD Superintendent Dave Smucker.

"That's had a huge impact," he said. "We haven't had any money for textbooks other than money we earned from a golf tournament. It provided some books for math students last year. That's been seven years. There is no money. We're having to think differently."

Fifty-four schoolteachers left the PUSD at the end of last year, he said, adding that those positions have been filled.

"Some of that's good and some of that puts a real strain on the system, from a professional development standpoint and being able to support that new teacher so that they are ready on day one, and we all know that doesn't happen that quickly," Smucker said.

Change, he added, can also be good, though many are unfunded federal mandates, such as Race to the Top, which uses the common core curriculum.

"Arizona received Race to the Top funds and said we were going to buy in and we're going to ask all of our school districts to do that," Smucker said. "I think the Prescott Unified School District, in four

years, will probably receive \$55,000 to carry that out, so there are some issues. I think it's important to understand some of the issues we have in our school system and the support we need from our community."

Humboldt School Superintendent Paul Stanton said the loss of certain federal funds have mostly affected Title 1 students.

"That's where you spend your energy on kids who are struggling. For us in Humboldt, that's kids reading. There's a new law called Move On When Reading. This year, we're supposed to hold back children in the third grade if they can't read at mastery level, so that's hurt us," Stanton said.

At the state level, schools have been cut by approximately 21.8 percent, he said.

"If you had a \$100 budget, you're now using \$78 of it," he explained. "Arizona was tops in the country with the 21.8 percent cuts. We had to eliminate our custodial staff, our technology staff; we had to get rid of full-day kindergarten, which had a tremendous impact. We had to get rid of assistant principals, librarians - this is over the last five years. We've also had to reduce staff, which has caused our classroom sizes to increase."

Other cuts included healthcare changes, cuts at the district office, and substitute teacher pay.

Chino Valley Superintendent Duane Howard said cuts have also been made in his district over the last several years, resulting in increased class sizes. The school currently operates on a four-day school week.

"They get to do something else over those three days they have off and it usually involves making money," Howard said.

Halvorson said she took a pay cut recently due to cuts in charter schools.

"Charter schools are funded directly by the state. We don't get any local money," she said. "We don't get forest fees money, we don't get any facilities money. When a charter school wants to open, they can't go to the state facilities board and apply for money to build their schools. Charter schools have to build their money out of their average daily membership. If a charter school needs money, charter leaders will take out personal business loans. You put your heart into it and you put your wallet into it too."

Prescott Valley Tribune

[4 school supes enlighten public about dreary financial realities](#)

Sue Tone, Prescott Valley Tribune

Thursday, September 12, 2013

Perhaps they were preaching to the choir, but four school district superintendents plugged education and community involvement to a supportive audience at Saturday's League of Women Voters of Central Yavapai County meeting at Las Fuentes Resort Village in Prescott.

About 50 League members and guests moderated by Juliana Goswick, LWVCC program vice president, that touched on federal and state cutbacks in funding, measures each district has taken to ease the effects of decreased revenue; and their vision for the future.

Supt. Paul Stanton, [Humboldt Unified School District](#), said state budget cuts - 21.8 percent since 2008 - are responsible for district cuts in custodial staff, librarians, counselors, assistant principals, music

staff, supplies, full-day kindergarten, and reduced budget for substitutes. Class sizes have increased, as have Pay to Play fees and employee health care costs.

Prescott USD Supt. Dave Smucker echoed the loss of funding, which has resulted in his district losing 109 positions in the past five years. PUSD continues to offer art, music and PE classes, but for 1-2 days per week instead of every day.

He has asked teachers to step into duties that para-professionals used to perform before those positions were cut. Classes are using textbooks that now are seven years old, although a golf tournament this past year raised enough money for new math textbooks.

"We want the best teachers we can get, and that's a challenge," Smucker said, referring to the lack of raises. "The increase in health care costs, no full-day K, larger class sizes, it puts weight on the teachers as well."

Supt. Duane Howard, Chino Valley USD, said he doesn't know if more money is the answer.

"We haven't tried that yet," he said, drawing laughter.

His district has lost 100 full- and part-time staff, and went to a four-day work week. The work schedule is hard on teachers, he said, but they like it because they can pick up a second and sometimes a third job on weekends.

"They work elsewhere so they can stay in the classroom four days a week," Howard said. Chino teachers have received an annual 1 percent raise, which means their paychecks have not decreased - or increased - for the past five years.

Students no longer have textbooks to take home; the books remain in the classroom, and students have other assignments for homework, he added.

Tri-City College Prep Supt. Mary Ellen Halvorson explained that charter school funding differs from public school.

"The (state budget) cuts have not affected the learning of students, but it has affected teachers and staff," she said. "They are overburdened; they coach for free; and every qualified administrator teaches at least one day a week. The teachers pick up some of the administrators' duties."

Halvorson said she took a \$10,000 cut in salary, which now is less than \$45,000, and the district does not spend money on advertising. Her teachers sometimes write textbooks, and are careful with the copy machines.

"We do support our classroom teachers to make teaching a pleasant experience," she said, by helping with student respect, classroom behavior, and homework.

Smucker said all districts are working together to share resources, professional development, and to split costs for services. He is concerned about what's happening at the federal and state level, and how the money is getting to local school districts.

Halvorson said she would like to see more state and federal land in Arizona declared taxable land, and hopes the state does not take away Prop. 301 money that goes to schools and teachers. She also would like to see Arizona offer more than one type of diploma, each with different requirements.

Stanton said HUSD has dedicated teachers and "we take all comers" no matter where the students are in their educational needs.

"I hope, in Arizona, a child will learn at his own pace with a highly effective teacher, using technology as a tool, and have the same experience no matter where he is in the state regardless of demographics or socioeconomic background," Stanton said, drawing applause from the audience.

Schools request bonds, overrides

Chino Valley USD requests \$9.9 million bond

Bond money can be spent only on specific items - it cannot be used for salaries.

CVUSD bond request covers five categories:

- Security and technology upgrades, \$1.4 million, for fencing, security cameras, door locks, replace outdated network equipment, Advanced Learning Lab at high school.
- Athletic and Performing Arts Facility improvements, \$2.66 million, refurbish track, new soccer field, football and softball practice fields; field house with lockers, wrestling and weight rooms, concession, restrooms; remodel west gym to performing arts facility.
- Facilities and grounds maintenance, repairs and improvements, \$2.64 million, install A/C in classrooms, two water wells, complete deferred maintenance.
- Transportation vehicles, \$2.25 million, 15 buses.
- Transportation facility, \$950,000, construct or purchase district transportation facility.

Cost to residential taxpayer is about \$40 per \$100,000 assessed value. A 1999 bond will expire this year with a final \$73 per \$100,000 payment.

Prescott USD looking for \$2.3 million override, \$28 million bond

PUSD override proposes use in four categories:

- Maintain programs at risk of cuts.
- Attract and retain quality teachers.
- Implement safety and mental health programs.
- Enhance programs and make up funding no longer provided by the state.

PUSD bond request includes six categories:

- Update technology, \$7.9 million.
- Improve safety, \$6 million.
- Energy management upgrades, \$3.6 million.
- Building maintenance and repair, \$8.2 million.
- Transportation vehicles, \$1.3 million.
- Athletic facilities, less than \$1 million.

Cost to residential taxpayer: \$32.53 per \$100,000 cash value for bond; \$33.02 for override.

Humboldt USD asks for \$2.8 million override

HUSD will use its 10 percent override money in four categories:

- Increase safety by adding resource officers and counselors.
- Restore full-day kindergarten, music, PE and early childhood programs.
- Reduce class sizes.
- Attract and retain quality teachers and support staff.

Cost to residential taxpayers is \$90 per \$100,000 assessed value.



**League of Women Voters
of Central Yavapai County
P.O. Box 11538
Prescott, AZ 86304-1538**

A nonpartisan membership organization, the League of Women Voters neither supports nor opposes political parties or candidates, but encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.