

Saturday, September 16, 2006

The League of Women Voters (LWV) joins educational and civic groups in encouraging citizens across the country to learn about and reflect on the significance of Constitution Day. The holiday falls each year on Sept. 17, the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution.

LWV of Lawrence co-president Karen Siracusa stated, "We are committed to safeguarding our democracy and making our community strong. We are working in Lawrence Township to educate citizens about their rights and responsibilities -- and encouraging them to exercise those responsibilities by voting on Nov. 7."

In 2004, Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., ensured passage of a new provision of federal law that required all publicly funded educational institutions to provide educational programming on the provisions of the U.S. Constitution. Research has shown that few Americans are knowledgeable about this keystone document of American democracy.

Leagues at all levels undertake a wide range of activities to ensure that the U.S. governmental system works as envisioned in the Constitution. In recent years, the League has focused particularly on issues related to the separation of powers. Many Leagues have undertaken civic education efforts on the importance of an independent judiciary. In addition, at the League's national convention in June 2006, state and local League delegates called on Congress to revitalize its important role in overseeing the activities of the executive branch.

On this anniversary of the U.S. Constitution, the League again urges Congress to play its oversight role as an equally vital branch of government.

For a listing of Constitution Day activities and events in the area or to learn more about the history of this important day, visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

-- ADELE VEXLER and KAREN SIRACUSA, Lawrence

The writers are co-presidents, Lawrence League of Women Voters (609-882-5376).