

LWVIL 2014 Issues Briefing
Gun Violence Prevention Report, Barb Marsh, Issue Specialist

After many years of fighting to maintain opposition to the concealed carry of handguns in Illinois, the pro-gun advocates were eventually successful and Illinois is now the 50th state to allow concealed carry. A great deal of time was spent during the spring legislative session on the concealed carry weapons (CCW) law and its many facets such as where specifically concealed handguns would be allowed and who would be permitted to carry them.

Once the 7th Circuit Court struck down Illinois' law declaring it to be unconstitutional because of the Supreme Court's 2nd Amendment ruling, the outcome was inevitable. The original lawsuit was filed by The Gun Lobby, a group comprised of the NRA and gun manufacturers.

After the CCW (Concealed Carry Weapons) law passed, Gov. Quinn filed an amendatory veto which contained many common sense gun laws, but his veto was overridden by the state legislature.

During and after the Spring Session, several Times for Action (TFAs) were sent to the LWVIL membership. Many consisted of references to bills urging members to notify their senators/representatives to support or oppose various gun bills depending upon the content. LWVIL members were also informed by TFAs on many events (rallies, vigils, etc.) organized by our coalition, the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence (ICHV). The largest event was the Advocacy Day in April when several League members (from Evanston, Glenview & LaGrange joined approximately 1,000 other members of ICHV in Springfield. Gov. Quinn, other public officials and victims' families and friends participated; coalition members then visited their respective legislators.

Several memorial events and remembrances were held December 14 to mark the anniversary of the Newtown tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School. The programs varied in forms and formats; most recognized ALL victims of gun violence at various locales across the state; the events were sponsored by many diverse groups (e.g. ICHV- Chicago and Springfield-Moms Demand Action, OFA events at Barrington and Chicago Westside, Sikh Religious Society of Chicago and Southminister Presbyterian Church). LWVIL emailed a notice to all local League leaders who passed on the information to their members.

Although LWVIL and our coalition partners were extremely disappointed CCW is now the law in Illinois, progress was made when the Ill. Legislature passed and Gov. Quinn signed some common sense gun laws.

HB 1189: Requires universal background checks on all gun sales.

Mandates the reporting to law enforcement of lost or stolen firearms.

Since CCW is now the law in Illinois, ICHV is focusing on an Education Program. Currently the coalition's goal is to develop an informational handbook available to all residents of Illinois concerning CCW and how they will be affected across the state. There will be hard copies as well as an online version.

As to future legislative priorities in the Spring Session, they may be the prohibition of guns in places of worship, places that serve any amount of alcohol and perhaps dealer licensing.