

LWVIL Issues Briefing January 28, 2012

Gun Violence Prevention Barbara Marsh, Issue Specialist

To update, the LWVIL continues to be a coalition partner with the Illinois Campaign for Prevention of Gun Violence. We are not an official member of the Brady Campaign but do participate in various projects as does ICPGV. Since I became a member of Brady, I do receive their information as does ICPGV. It's possible that the Brady Campaign will attempt to reinstate the federal Assault Weapon Ban that was allowed to sunset several years ago.

In spring of 2011, both ICPGV and LWVIL fought to defeat a new Concealed Carry Weapons bill (HB148) that would further extend gun owner's "rights". At present, individuals are allowed to carry guns on their own land, in their abodes or in their fixed places of business; carrying firearms is permitted for hunting and target shooting. HB 148 would grant permission for individuals to carry concealed loaded guns in public places such as on public transportation, college and university campuses and city or suburban neighborhoods. There are provisions prohibiting mentally ill persons from carrying concealed weapons (e.g., Virginia Tech, Tucson) but there are large gaps in state and federal mental health records according to the Illinois State Police. (The Tucson shooter has been found mentally unfit to stand trial.) LWVIL set out several Time for Action (TFAs) on HB148 and conducted local League in-district lobbying of targeted legislators. ICPGV has lobbied extensively against passage: Governor Quinn stated that he would veto the bill if it came to his desk. Finally, on May 12, 2011, the bill failed 65-52 (71 votes were needed to pass). Three Republicans and one legislator south of I-80 were in opposition.

Other bills LWVIL favored in the Spring Session were HB 5480 (universal background checks for all gun transactions) and HB 5751 (ban of military-style weapons and

ammunition). Both bills or similar common sense gun laws will probably be brought up at the next session.

LWVIL received website information from the Brady Campaign via ICPGV concerning “Too Many Victims National Candlelight Vigils” to commemorate the first anniversary of the Tucson shooting. Brady and ICPGV asked people to participate in the vigils which were scheduled through the day on Sunday, January 8, 2012 at various sites and times. LWVIL informed all League members in proximity to the sites and encouraged them to attend to honor all gun violence victims.