



The Real Story on Election Day = You

by Mary G. Wilson

President, League of Women Voters of the United States

This has been a year of election “firsts.” From spending unprecedented sums of money on their campaigns to smashing through gender and racial barriers and inspiring record turnout in scores of primary states, the 2008 presidential candidates in both parties have already made history.

With the barrage of media attention, the prolonged primary calendar, and the intense attention given to every step (and misstep) of each candidate, it is easy to think that November 4th—Election Day—will simply represent the culmination of a months-long contest. But as that day closes in, it is critical to remember that this election isn’t really about them. **It is about you.**

This is *the* year to get registered to vote and ask your friends to do the same. Not because of what has already transpired; but because of what the outcome could mean for your life and the lives of those who follow you.

This presidential election is not just for your parents and grandparents—or even worse, the pundits on TV-- to worry about; it will affect *you* and everybody in your life. From our economic security and place in the world, to the strength of our education and health care systems, our next president will make decisions that will have a profound impact on your future. **The stakes are too high for you and your friends to let others decide for you.** Do your part by visiting VOTE411.org to get registered. Follow through by voting on Election Day, then stand proud knowing you’ve taken the first step toward improving your community and your world for the better.

How can you make your vote count as much as possible? Be informed and involved before, during, and after the election. Find out who is running for office—not just for president, but for Congress, your state legislature, and even your local government. Learn about the issues affecting our nation and your local community, and find out where the candidates stand on those issues. Listen to their speeches, attend debates, and rallies; ask questions of the candidates.

After the election, let the successful candidates know how you feel about the issues you care about, and monitor what they do on those issues. Voting lets a candidate know that you care during the election season; staying in touch with the winner of the election lets that person know that your interest runs deeper than Election Day.

How do you begin doing all this? For all your election needs, the League is proud to offer www.VOTE411.org, an online resource that provides everything you need to get registered, get informed, and get ready to vote in November. With everything from voter registration deadlines to a nationwide polling place locator, absentee ballot information, and specific information on

state and local elections, www.VOTE411.org is one of the most important sites you can tell your loved ones about this fall.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. It is committed to educating the public about candidates and issues before them. With more than 850 state and local Leagues in all 50 states, the League is *the* organization where hands-on work leads to civic improvement. Visit the League's website, www.LWV.org, to get involved with your local League today.

About Mary G. Wilson

Mary G. Wilson is the 17th president of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and chair of the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF). A longtime resident of New Mexico, Ms. Wilson has been a League member since 1986. League president since 2006, Wilson has focused her efforts on election reform, voter education, and public policy work on behalf of the nearly 150,000 League members and supporters nationwide. During the 2006 election cycle, she traveled to more than eight key battleground states to encourage voter protection and participation, and plans to do so again throughout the 2008 election season.

During her 20 years of service with the League of Women Voters, Ms. Wilson has held leadership positions at the national, state and local levels. In 2004, she was elected to a two-year term on the LWVUS and LWVEF Boards. From 1999-2001, Ms. Wilson was president of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico. She has also served in various capacities on local and state League Boards – state action, voter service and study committees.

Professionally, Ms. Wilson is an attorney with 30 years of experience in diverse fields of practice including estate planning, litigation, regulatory compliance, commercialization and privatization, corporate and environmental law, and employment law. As in-house counsel for two large private companies (EG&G Mound Applied Technologies, Inc., and Ecology & Environment, Inc.) and two federal agencies (U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), she has provided legal and policy advice to top level management as well as directed both in-house legal staff and outside counsel.

Ms. Wilson is admitted to the Bars of the States of New Mexico and Colorado, the United States District Courts for the Districts of New Mexico and Colorado, and the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. She is a member of the National Association of Women Lawyers and the American Bar Association. She received her J.D. degree from the University of Denver in 1975.

In 1988, Ms. Wilson was recognized with the “Woman of the Year” award from the U. S. Department of Energy, Albuquerque. The Albuquerque YWCA honored her with its “Women on the Move” award in 1987.