

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE HAMPTONS**

**CONSENSUS MEETING: NOVEMBER 10 AT 1:30 TO 4:30 AT WATERMILL COMMUNITY HOUSE**

**INTRODUCTION AND PROCESS OF CONSENSUS - CAROL MELLOR**

**RECORDERS: Naomi Epstein, Ursula Lynch**

**RESOURCE GROUP: Ann Marshall, Judi Roth, Judy Samuelson, Estelle Gellman, Barbara McClancy, Carol Mellor**

**MODERATOR: JACQUI LOFARO**

**BALLOT ACCESS STUDY CONSENSUS**

**Ballot Access Consensus**

1. Which do you prefer?
  - a. Opening New York State primaries to nonaffiliated voters
  - OR
  - b. Continued use of the current closed primary system in New York

**DISCUSSION:**

**Who can vote in primaries? New York State has closed primaries. Twenty states have open primaries. General feeling expressed about open primaries for unaffiliated voters was that persons who were not registered would vote for a weaker candidate from the parties having the primary. There was opinion expressed that an open system would bring a larger population out to vote, however there was no reason to believe this assumption was true.**

**General opinions expressed about a closed primary was that it disenfranchised people not registered in a party but did strengthen the Party System. General opinion was that if a person is not in a party they should not be able to vote in a primary election.**

**1. Consensus: in favor of the closed primary.**

2. If yes, which do you support the adoption of?
  - a. Instant Runoff Voting
  - OR
  - b. Top Two Vote Getter (TTVG) Open Primary System

## **DISCUSSION:**

Group felt neither of these would apply since the group favored a closed primary. However, they also voiced concerns stating that Instant Runoff is extremely complicated and Ranked Candidates even more so with neither offering any great advantage. It might affect voter turnout. It would be a great worry with paper ballots and would take forever to find out who won. It might be of some value in smaller cities and venues.

### **2. Consensus: neither IRV or TTGV would work for New York State Voters.**

2b. If you support Instant Runoff Voting, in which elections do you support its use?

Group did not discuss because they did not support Instant Runoff Voting.

3. Do you believe that Wilson-Pakula should be repealed?
4. Should New York State retain fusion voting?
5. If yes how should it retain it?

## **DISCUSSION:**

The group discussed the fact that Fusion Voting is Cross Endorsement and a component of this system is Wilson-Pukula. Fusion without Wilson-Pukula is where signatures must be obtained from registered voters from the party to get on the ballot. If obtained the candidate is able to run on another party's line. This enables people to vote for a candidate while not compromising their own principles or party loyalty. It also gives some clout and input to the minor parties and might be an incentive to bring out more voters. The group expressed the fact that if we did not have fusion voting the minor parties would have trouble getting on the ballot. Many minor parties are there to show that there is value in the party's agenda. Minor parties are issue oriented and are valuable for this reason. They felt this should only apply to statewide elections giving the party power on a statewide basis. It was mentioned that only 7 states in the country do this. However, the group expressed concerns of corruption because of cross endorsement. Smaller parties might sell their endorsements to the larger parties. We are used to this in New York State. Definitions were asked for and given to the group.

### **3. Consensus: Repeal Wilson-Pakula**

### **4. Consensus: support Fusion Voting.**

The group then took up the issue of Wilson-Pakula which is a subset of Fusion. People who want to be on the ballot have to get the okay from the parties to appear on the ballot. Wilson-Pakula allows party permission without the collection of signatures.

### **5. Consensus: support Fusion Voting with or without Wilson Pakula.**

## **TERM LIMITS CONSENSUS**

The feeling of members in the group seemed to be against term limits for the Senate or Assembly. They expressed concern that limiting the term length would impact on experience and affect the state legislature. In addition it was felt that there would be staff turnover which would also impact effectiveness of the legislator. The group discussed the fact that new people bring new ideas to the legislature and voter turnout might increase if someone else did run. It also might give incentives for parties to run other people.

### **1. Consensus: NO term limits**

### **5. Consensus: If term limits were adopted limits should apply in one house only.**

**6. Consensus: No term limits should apply to the Executive Branch of Government.** The group shorter terms for this group was really a lifestyle decision.

9. The group would like to see Terms for the State Assembly and Senate extended . They asked for a study to re-examine the length of terms.