



**League of Women Voters Whitewater Area**  
**[www.lwvwhitewater.org](http://www.lwvwhitewater.org)**

## **Candidate Questionnaire**

**Don Vruwink**

**Wisconsin State Assembly District 43**

**November 6, 2018 Election**

Answers were submitted **by 5 PM on Friday, October 12, 2018**, to LWV Whitewater Area. Responses from both campaigns were posted at the same time on the LWV Whitewater Area website ([www.lwvwhitewater.org](http://www.lwvwhitewater.org)) by the end of the day Monday, October 15, 2018. There were no space limitations on responses.

### **What can be done to make voting districts as fair as possible?**

*The number one thing is to enact the redistricting reform bill that I co-authored in the last legislative session. Currently, the party in power gets to re-draw the boundaries of legislative and Congressional districts. This means the elected officials pick their voters rather than voters picking their elected officials.*

*My bill, Assembly Bill 44, would give the duties of re-drawing legislative and Congressional districts into the hands of a non-partisan agency. Computers can do redistricting in a way that removes politics from the process. The algorithms pay attention to a few key factors. Among these are keeping districts as compact and contiguous as possible, and respecting existing political boundaries such as municipalities and school districts.*

### **Is there anything you can see that can shift attention back to judicial qualifications rather than political views?**

*While Wisconsin Supreme Court candidates are supposed to be non-partisan, it is clear that groups with partisan agendas bankroll these campaigns. We saw the fierce political partisanship in the confirmation of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh. Justice is supposed to rise above political interests. When candidates do not have control over their campaigns, the special interests win. I favor increased measures to require more open, transparent, complete reporting of funds contributed to all election campaigns, including Wisconsin Supreme Court Justices.*

### **Do you think that educational policies around the state are serving the students in the long run? And what steps should be taken to curb gun violence?**

*As a teacher of 43 years and a school board member, I have seen educational policies and school safety policies evolve. As a substitute teacher, I continue to keep connected with students, teachers, administrators, and the challenges facing schools. Everyone I talk to is concerned about school safety, from bullying to firearms. I support universal background checks, a 48-hour waiting period, and magazine capacity limits on automatic firearms. I also will continue to push for adequate counseling and mental health services for students. As I said during Assembly floor debate, we need to look out for the emotional safety of our students as well as their physical safety. Teachers can't do it all. They need enough support staff to assist troubled students.*

**What can the state do to encourage public transportation without making it seem like an exclusively partisan issue?**

*Public transportation is only a partisan issue when legislators make it a partisan issue. Nobody views our streets and highways as Republican or Democratic. Neither should public transportation be viewed that way. Millennials are more inclined to take buses, trains and shared ride vehicles than single-passenger vehicles. Likewise, people on the lower end of the income spectrum are more likely to rely on public transportation to get to jobs. Investments in buses, commuter rail, and bike paths not only help get people to their jobs, the investments will also reduce wear-and-tear on our roads and reduce air pollution.*

**What will you do to reach across the aisle and work in bipartisan fashion to do what's best for all of your constituents + and not just the ones with whom you agree?**

*I have been reaching across the aisle since Day 1 in the Legislature. I talk with my Republican colleagues on a regular basis. I have friends and family who are Republican, Democratic, and independent. In my second term, I will continue to build bridges with my Republican colleagues to work toward middle ground so that we can do what is in the best interest of the people of Wisconsin and not the political parties.*

**What impacts do you think the FoxConn plant water diversion will have on the Great Lakes Compact? Do you think the diversion of this vast amount of water from the Great Lakes to a corporation violates the compact?**

*The Great Lakes Compact was negotiated over many years by states and Canadian provinces that border the Great Lakes. The states and provinces understand what a tremendous asset this large body of fresh water is. There are water wars going on elsewhere in the nation and the world. The compact is designed to prevent water wars here. The Great Lakes Compact is designed to make sure that the water remains safe and available to everyone.*

*Midwest Environmental Advocates, a coalition of citizen groups, has commenced a challenge to FoxConn's plan to withdraw 7 million gallons of water per day from Lake Michigan in violation of the Great Lakes compact. The legal challenge asserts that most of the water won't be going to residential customers or public use but rather for private gain, which is a violation of the compact. A hearing will be scheduled for the challenge to this water diversion plan. I want to make sure that everything that FoxConn does, from water diversion to air emissions to land use, does not harm our precious natural resources.*

**What kinds of policies, if any, will you pursue to promote social and racial justice in our communities?**

*Social and racial injustice reach all aspects of society, including discrimination in jobs, employment, housing, voting, and criminal justice. I have always held a deep and profound sense of justice and fairness. I will continue to support policies that prevent/reduce discrimination based on a person's income, gender, age, disability, and sexual orientation. I continue to support measures that make sure that minorities and the less-privileged among us are treated as fairly as those who have the privileges they were born with.*

**Please explain why you do or do not think it is important to reduce the role of money in politics.**

*It is absolutely important to reduce the role of money in politics. The influence of large third-party spending throws off the normal balance of democracy. Special interest money buys misleading attack ads that confuse voters and turn off many of them from voting. Because legislative leaders control the purse strings of large campaign contributions, candidates and incumbents may feel beholden to their leaders and so they march in lock-step instead of listening to their constituents.*