

MINUTES
Impact of Economic Inequality on the Chequamegon Bay Region STUDY GROUP
November 18, 2014
Northern Great Lakes Visitors Center

November 18th marked the first meeting of the committee working on the **LWV/ABC two year Study on Economic Inequality**. This is a LWV organized group of regional community partners who share an interest in the study question. *"What are the specific ways in which the Chequamegon Bay region is impacted by economic inequality and what can we do about it?"*

This 18 month Study will engage citizens in a focused investigation on 5 areas of our lives impacted by economic inequality:

- Employment and Business
- Public education
- Health
- Government Services
- Property taxes

The Study Group agreed to break into five subcommittees around each of these areas. The task of each subcommittee is to collect the data over the time period 1983-2013 to identify historical economic trends. Collecting personal stories as well as statistical data will weigh into the investigation. These subcommittees will explore the philosophical underpinnings/policy decisions that have molded these historical trends. An outcome of the study will be to identify policies that have impacted these arenas of life in the North and propose alternative policies where needed. Finally the group decided that they would give special consideration to the demographics of the region and special needs populations such as children/families living in poverty and the elderly.

Subcommittees will meet monthly and then report back to a meeting of the group as a whole every other month. Efforts will be made to engage the broader community in the discussion with the goal of developing an informed citizenry based on envisioning and recommending ways to increase economic **EQUALITY** in the region.

There are two assignments for the December 17th meeting. First, each member is asked to read one of 5 recent books written by economists/journalists of our times. (Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality*; Reich, *Beyond Outrage*; Nadar, *Unstoppable*; Johnston, *Divided*; Smith, *Who Stole the American Dream*). There will be a book discussion aimed at helping to establish a common perspective. Second, group members are encouraged to begin to identify key questions each subcommittee will need to investigate which can be shared at the next meeting.