



LWV/LACounty

An Interleague Organization

VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

An Interleague Organization — Beach Cities • Claremont Area • East San Gabriel Valley • Glendale-Burbank • Long Beach Area
Los Angeles • Palos Verdes Peninsula-San Pedro • Pasadena Area • Santa Monica • Torrance Area • Whittier

Editor: Mary Ellen Barnes Website: <http://lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org> Email: LWVLACounty@msn.com September 2012

LWV / LACounty Board of Directors 2012 - 2013

Executive Board
Nancy Mahr
President

Lola Ungar
Vice President

Margo Reeg
Second Vice President

Kay White
Secretary

Dorothy Stewart
Treasurer

Directors

Joan Arias
Raquel Beltran
Betsey Coffman
Linda Herman
Vi Iungerich
Rebecca Johnson
Phyllis O'Connor
Marie Palmeri
Sally Seven
Jack Sullivan
Georganne Thomsen

Calendar 2012 - 2013

Sat. Sept 29	Ballot Briefing - Hollenbeck Palms
Wed. Oct. 3	County Board Meeting 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Wed. Nov. 7	County Board Meeting 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Wed. Dec. 5	Holiday Lunch and Board Meeting 10:00 AM at the home of Sally Seven
Wed, Jan 2	County Board Meeting 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Sat, Jan 26	Winter League Day
Wed, Feb 6	County Board Meeting 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Wed, March 6	County Board Meeting 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Sat, March 30	County Convention

In this issue...

President's Message.....	page 2
Foster Care Legislative Update.....	page 3
Popover's Report - LA County Public Health.....	page 4
Sentencing Reform in California	page 5,6
Beach Cities, PVP & Torrance Area Leagues Annual Kick-Off Meeting Flyer with Michael Hiltzik, Speaker.....	page 7

From the President's Desk...

It's hard to believe that summer is gone and we are poised to begin an active year ahead. And first on the agenda are the coming election and all the associated League events.

We are fortunate to live in a state that promotes voting access. Registrars across California work to make voting easy while maintaining the integrity of the process. The efforts of our League to register voters and provide election information is welcomed and lauded. Many California Leagues have planned special registration events for National Voter Registration Day on September 25.

On Saturday, September 29, the LWV/LACounty is holding a meeting to review the 11 California ballot measures and the 2 LA County measures as a training session for local League speakers. We will also hold an action workshop on those propositions on which LWVC has taken a position. I hope that at least one representative from each County League will attend.

The National Party Conventions kick off a season of campaigning and political ads. The veracity of many of these ads – especially third-party ads – is often questionable. The County League, with the support of our member Leagues, is participating in the national “Stand By Your Ad” campaign, organized by flackcheck.org. We will be contacting local media asking that they only publish or air third-party ads that they have verified as factual. To check on the truth of ads for yourself, go to flackcheck.org or factcheck.org or politifact.com.

Election time is high season for the League. But the election is not our only focus. Health care reform in California and support for the revised redistricting process are also on our agendas. And the state Initiative & Referendum study is underway. We all have a busy year ahead!

Nancy Mahr

BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS WORKS TO SEE THAT FOSTER YOUTH HAVE A BETTER LIFE

by Harriet Chase, Legislative Consultant – Foster Care

With more than 424,000 children and older youth in the nation's foster care system, the number of children who exit the system without finding a permanent family has increased over the years by nearly 29,500. The experiences of youth transitioning out of the foster care system place them at a higher risk for unemployment, poor educational outcomes, health issues, early parenthood, long-term dependency on public assistance, increased rates of incarceration, and homelessness.

Founded in 2011, the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth created by co-chairs Reps. Karen Bass (D-Calif.), Tom Marino (R-Penn.), Jim McDermott (D-Wash.) and Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.) is working to protect and *promote* the welfare of children in foster care and those who have "aged out" of the system. The Caucus provides a forum for Members of Congress to discuss the challenges facing foster youth and works together to develop policy recommendations for child welfare.

Some important actions & legislation initiated by the Caucus:

National Listening Tour -- In an effort to address many of the ongoing issues foster youth face the co-chairs launched a national listening tour in Los Angeles. They met with foster youth agencies and with foster youth at several events to better understand the current state of foster care and to identify potential federal policy modifications to improve the outcomes for children in the system. Caucus members will travel to four other cities for similar listening tour stops.

"Shadow Day on Capitol Hill" – This involved Congress hosting current and emancipated foster youth from across the nation in Washington in an effort to help them understand the inner workings of the House of Representatives, learn about the legislative initiatives related to foster care, and share their stories with policy makers.

H. Resolution 5871 the A Plus Act of 2012 – Would grant child welfare agencies direct access to school records for youth in care to improve their educational experiences and outcomes.

H. Resolution 659 Recognizing May as "National Foster Care Month" -- to provide an opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments of the child welfare workforce, foster parents, advocacy community, and mentors and the positive impact they have on children's lives.

H. Resolution 2830 Human Trafficking --Amends part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to better enable State child welfare agencies to prevent human trafficking of children and serve the needs of children who are victims of human trafficking, and for other purposes.

For more information visit the Caucus Website: <http://fosteryouthcaucus-karenbass.house.gov/>

County Summer League Day - LA County and Public Health - July 28, 2012**By Pat Colby, LWV PVP**

On July 28, 2012 the County League of Women Voters sponsored its annual “Popovers in Pasadena” at the Pasadena Women’s Club and featured guest speaker Wendy Schwartz, Director of Board Relations, Department of Health Services, who addressed the question, “How does L.A. County meet the public’s health needs?”

Ms. Schwartz identified the scope of the county’s mandate. The county runs four hospitals* and contracts with 61 health clinics; has 20,000 employees, an annual budget of \$3.05 billion and sees 800,000 unique patients every year. Outpatient visits number 3 million per year, 12,000 of which are children under the age of 17—a group that includes approximately 2,400 youth in juvenile hall, many with poorer health than their non-juvenile hall peers. The county additionally serves a substantial number of the undocumented.

Health surveys conducted by the county in partnership with the UCLA Public Health Research Center use a formula which combines mortality (years of life lost) and morbidity (years living with a disability such as chronic illnesses, drug and alcohol dependence, violence and unintentional injuries) to produce a clearer picture of health issues in the county. The county also operates five medical hub centers for children entering the foster care system which includes, among other services, forensic exams in the case of abuse or neglect.

The Affordable Patient Health Care Act (ACA) has profoundly impacted the county. 900,000 L.A. County inhabitants will qualify for Medical (Medicaid) expansion and 750,000 (those above the poverty line) for health care exchanges. “Medical homes” are being established to provide ambulatory care to the chronically ill (hypertension, depression, high cholesterol, diabetes etc.) so that patients see the same doctors and nurse practitioners and receive medications and other services from the same place, just one example of expanding forms of “integrated” care to increase efficiency and less duplication in the medical system.

Finally, the county is implementing a much needed information technology system at a cost of \$280 million so records can be maintained and shared at highest efficiency. Among the on-going questions under the ACA are these:

- How do we balance the patient mix visiting medical facilities and how do we provide a quality safety net for those who are uninsured?
- How will doctors and nurses be reimbursed for services?
- How are funds for the expansion of Medicaid refused by some states redistributed to states that are implementing the expansion?
- Will the focus on Medical Homes and other integrated systems redirect those who use the Emergency Room as their primary care system?
- How do we educate our citizenry to adopt healthy life styles in order to avoid certain preventable diseases?

*LAC + USC Healthcare Network
Harbor UCLA Medical Center
ValleyCare Olive View—UCLA Medical Center
Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

SENTENCING REFORM IN CALIFORNIA
A forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters, Los Angeles
By Rosalind Tyson, LWVLA Sentencing Reform Committee



**Judge Wesley, Sheriff Baca, Laurel Gord (Friends Committee), Hanna Dershowitz (ACLU-SC),
Kaile Shilling (Violence Prevention Coalition, Professor Laurie Levenson, Deputy Chief Reaver Bingham**

On Saturday, August 18, 2012, the LWVLA with the support of many other organizations sponsored a forum on Sentencing Reform at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. Panelists included Superior Court Judge David Wesley, Sheriff Leroy Baca, Loyola Law School Professor Laurie Levenson, and representatives from the Probation Department, the ACLU, the Violence Prevention Coalition, and the Friends Committee on Legislation. Panelists addressed strategies to reverse extremely high state and local incarceration rates, 67.5% recidivism rates, overcrowding, and the accompanying burdensome costs to California taxpayers.

Over 100 forum attendees heard moderator Judge Wesley outline 160 years of sentencing in California. The 1850 “Act to Regulate Crimes” left sentencing to the discretion of judges within a defined range, but made no provision for parole or probation. In fact, though they were to sentence inmates to prison for punishment, there was no prison in California at the time. The prisoners were held on a ship in the San Francisco Bay. San Quentin, the state’s first prison, was overcrowded from the beginning; in 1891 the state’s first parole law was enacted as a way to relieve overcrowding, releasing prisoners without real supervision. Indeterminate sentencing (e.g. “3 to 15”) was introduced in 1917 and continued until 1976 when the “Determinate Sentencing Act” set up a “presumptive term” mid-range, but “enhancements” added on time to sentences and exacerbated overcrowding. The 1994 “Three Strikes” laws doubled the sentence for a second defined offense and for a third offense required “25 to life” with no parole, no probation and reduced credit for good behavior. Over the years, prison population in California rose to a peak of over 170,000 in 2007; prisons were at double their capacity despite a boom in prison-building.

Two recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings found that overcrowding resulted in unconstitutional “cruel and unusual punishment” and have required the state to provide improved medical and mental health treatment to state prisoners, and to reduce the state prison population by 33,000 by May of 2013. The state’s response, Assembly Bill 109, the “Public Safety Realignment Act,” took effect in October, 2011 and shifts responsibility for non-violent, non-serious, non-sex offenders from the state to counties. These offenders will serve their sentences in county jail; similarly, post-release supervision responsibility for currently incarcerated “non-, non-, non-” state prisoners will shift from state to county as they are released from serving their time in state prisons.

Sentencing Reform continued from page 5

Under “realignment,” counties receive added funding from the state, which they can use in their discretion to expand county jails, improve evidence-based education and rehabilitation efforts for those in jail, and/or fund more effective post-release community-based supervision and re-entry programs. Much of the panel discussion focused on those critical choices.

Panelists also highlighted other overcrowding issues not addressed directly by realignment. For example, over 70% of county jail inmates are simply awaiting trial because they cannot raise the standard bail set by the county for the crime they are alleged to have committed. Panelists pointed out possible ways to lower this segment of county jail population such as increased use of pre-trial electronic monitoring where appropriate, or setting bail with more attention to a defendant’s ability to pay.



Panelists discussed the need for prevention, diversion, and front-end prosecutorial discretion when the District Attorney makes charging decisions, front-end sentencing reform (e.g. Senate Bill 1506 would make drug possession a misdemeanor rather than a felony), and alternative sentencing particularly for the one-third of offenders who have a diagnosed mental illness. There is also an enormous public education challenge: legislators and prosecutors face pressure from a public who have at least until recently viewed the issue simply as a “tough on crime” public safety concern.

Now, there is a very big competing concern – taxpayer cost in a tight budget environment. Our incarceration strategies need to be smart, effective and cost efficient. As Kaile Shilling Executive Director of the Violence Prevention Coalition, said: “We all have a responsibility to alleviate prison overcrowding. You can’t quarantine your way out of smallpox. Contact your state representative and let them know you support rehabilitation funding rather than new jail or prison facilities.”



LWVLA Jean Thomson, Judge David Wesley, Professor Laurie Levenson



League of Women Voters

Beach Cities, Palos Verdes Peninsula, and Torrance Area

Annual Kickoff Meeting

The Foibles of the Initiative and Referendum Process

A prelude to the LWVC Update Study



Guest Speaker

Michael Hiltzik

Business Columnist
Los Angeles Times

Mr. Hiltzik is a Pulitzer Prize and Gerald Loeb Award winning journalist who has written extensively on business and finance for the L.A. Times. Come and hear his take on California's Referendum and Initiative process.

Registration begins at 9:00 AM

Meeting will adjourn at 11:30 AM

Saturday, September 22, 2012

The Depot Restaurant

1250 Cabrillo Ave., Torrance, CA 90501

*Join us for a sumptuous brunch buffet
prepared by Chef Michael Schafer
at the restored historic Southern Pacific Railway Depot*



Make check payable to: **LWVTA** (LWV Torrance Area)
Mail to: **LWVTA Treasurer, Box 964, Torrance, CA 90508**
Phone: 310-408-1870 for information.

Number of reservations _____ @ **\$25.00 per person**

Check enclosed for \$ _____

League Name _____

Name(s) _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County in both its values and practices affirms its belief and commitment to diversity, pluralism and affirmative action.

The League of Women Voters welcomes new members, both men and women, who are citizens of voting age. Associate membership is open to all others.

SUBSCRIBE to the VOTER

Send the information below to be notified of the latest VOTER posted on our website at:
<http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org>

For a hard copy subscription send \$10 to:

LWV/LA County Treasurer,
3970 Sepulveda Blvd. # 201, Torrance, CA 90505.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

League _____

E-mail Address _____

Internet Election Resources

Smart Voter www.smartvoter.org

Statewide propositions plus local candidates & issues on your ballot, with extensive

Background materials and media links from LWV California Ed Fund

LA County Registrar-Recorder www.lavote.net

Election calendar, polling place look-up, absentee voting info, multilingual voting materials, Locations for Touchscreen early voting

Easy Voter Guide www.easyvoter.org

Concise facts on statewide propositions; Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, and English

Secretary of State www.ss.ca.gov

Official text of ballot measures

CA Legislative Analyst www.lao.ca.gov

Analysis of all ballot measures

CA Voter Foundation www.calvoter.org

Data on campaign contributions to candidates and measures

CA Budget Project www.cbp.org

Analyzes the fiscal effects of statewide ballot measures

This **VOTER** is ready for viewing on our website: www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org



Nancy Mahr, LWV/LA County President
28028 Ella Road
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275