



# LWV/LACounty

An Interleague Organization

# VOTER

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

An Interleague Organization — Antelope Valley • 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

[www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org)

[LWVLACounty@msn.com](mailto:LWVLACounty@msn.com)

August / September 2014

### Calendar 2014

Sat., Sept 27	Fall League Day 9:30 - Noon Ballot Measure Training, Advocacy Workshop	Hollenbeck Park
Wed., Oct 8	Board Meeting 9:30 - 1:30	Location TBA
Wed., Nov 5	Board Meeting 9:30 - 1:30	Location TBA
Wed., Dec 3	Board Meeting 9:30 - 1:30	Board Holiday Luncheon
Sat., Jan 31	Winter League Day 10:30 - 2:00	Location TBA
Sat., Mar 28	County Convention	Location TBA

### *Inside this issue...*

President's Message	— — — — —	Page 2
Child Safety Report to BOS	— — — — —	Page 3
Natural Resources	— — — — —	Page 4
Voting Rights - A League Priority	— — — — —	Page 5
Important Announcements	— — — — —	Page 6
Ballot Measures Training Flyer	— — — — —	Page 7

**From Our President’s Desk...**

Summer League Day in Pasadena was terrific. 70 people participated in the day – thanks for coming. Evaluation forms reflected high ratings. People liked their workshops, thought lunch was tasty – including the traditional popovers, of course - and enjoyed our speaker. Thanks to our excellent workshop presenters: Marna Cornell, Fatima Malik, and Efrain Escobedo and Phil T from the Registrar Recorder/County Clerk’s Office. We tried a drop-in session for presidents and treasurers with Dorothy Stewart, Tom Carson, and me. Not too many dropped in, but we had some good discussions among our few attendees.

Of course, thanks to Professor Jessica Levinson for an informative presentation. She traced the developments of money in politics, including the Citizens United decision. She noted that there are tools that can be used to control the influence of money: donation limits, expense limits, public finance, and disclosure. She stated that dark money is key to current election influence.

Now our Leagues are planning for the coming election. There are some exciting races ahead. The County League will once again work with LWVLA to offer an election guide which will include the ballot measurers – including the County measure – and state and county offices. Once again, I want to invite anyone who is interested in working on the County level to consider taking a position either on the County League Board or off-board. Or perhaps you might like to recommend someone for us to contact. The County Board needs help tracking issues and welcomes new participants. Contact me if you are interested or want more information – see contact information below.

*Nancy*

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310-377-0735

**League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County Board of Directors, 2014 -2016**

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Phyllis O’Connor

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Jack Sullivan

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## Final Commission Report to Board of Supervisors on Child Safety

by Vi lungerich

Many members of League have been interested in the report from the “Blue Ribbon Commission” appointed by the Board of Supervisors to review the county’s child protection policies and to make recommendations for a “feasible plan of action to expeditiously implement needed reforms”. This commission came about due to concern about the death of children who were either in the care of the county or were in situations that the county had investigated yet had failed to protect a child.

The commission was established on June 25, 2013 and the final report was submitted April 18, 2014. For those wishing to see the members of the commission, or more detailed information about the commission’s findings, material can be found at [www.blueribboncommissionla.com](http://www.blueribboncommissionla.com). The commission’s investigation was wide ranging and included 15 public hearings where many government agencies and other organizations concerned with the welfare of children provided testimony, interviews with more than 300 stakeholders across all program areas related to child safety, a review of previous recommendations, a series of focus groups with those most impacted by county policies including children and youths, an in-depth review of the literature of researchers and policies of other governments as well as a review of the 25 most recent cases of child fatalities caused by child abuse or neglect.

The commission identified a wide variety of county departments concerned or playing a role in the safety of children. They included DCFS (the Department of Children and Family Services), the police, the courts, the DA’s office, the Department of Health, the Department of Mental Health, Public Health, as well as the Sheriff and his department. The findings of the commission stressed that all of these entities each tended to work alone with little communication between them and that the funding affecting child welfare was complicated

and murky—the commission themselves having no way to find full validated information. The most basic recommendation the commission made was to form one central entity with county-wide authority to coordinate and have responsibility for the well-being of children in the county. They further recommended that this entity have a zero based budget process to prevent failed policies from continuing and to help integrate departments funding the same work separately.

Although the commission had recommendations for most of the departments currently serving some fraction of child welfare they also stated that there was little to no effort being made to prevent child abuse or neglect. This was thought to be an important aspect of child safety that was totally neglected by the county. Also there was a lack of determination of what policies were effective. They felt a single entity should have a mission and responsibility to analyze and determine those policies which led to an increase in child safety and those which did not and to be held accountable for correcting problems.

The commission’s report identified 24 specific problems with the county’s current handling of children’s welfare ranging from the response of law enforcement being inconsistent and sometimes inadequate—to inadequate access to medical and mental health services for all children and in particular poor children.

The whole report is filled with interesting and sometimes shocking statistics (such as the sex trafficking of children in the county) and it is well worth the time to read the entire report. It now remains to be seen if the Supervisors will act on this report or shelve it as has sometimes been done in the past.

## Natural Resources Items

By Jack Sullivan LWV/LAC

**Drought:** The most recent report (8/24/14) of the U. S. Drought Monitor indicates that more than 80% of California continues to be in the extreme drought category. In the spring, there were reports that an *El Niño* might be developing in the eastern Pacific that would bring rain—and drought relief—to Southern California. Now meteorologists are suggesting that the *El Niño* might not develop as expected and the drought might continue into the future.

A number of actions have been taken by various government entities in an attempt to deal with the drought. Much effort has been expended on encouraging water conservation. However, the public has not reduced its consumption of water and, in some parts of the state, consumption has actually increased. In response, the State Water Resources Control Board approved measures that are designed to reduce water consumption. The measures include fines of up to \$500 for wasteful use of water in irrigating gardens, washing cars and cleaning property. Governor Brown signed legislation that would block fines for lawns that went brown as part of a water conservation strategy.

In addition, there has been much maneuvering in Sacramento regarding the content of a water bond. An \$11 Billion bond deferred from 2009 is currently scheduled for the November ballot. However, this bond has been deemed too full of pork (i.e., non-water related projects) to get voter support. Alternatives were proposed in the \$6 billion range but have crept up to the \$10 billion range. Governor Brown has also proposed a \$6 billion bond, which would include water quality and water supply reliability projects (including groundwater cleanup in So Cal) and money for storage projects.

Brown claims his proposal is “tunnel neutral”, that is no money would go for the twin tunnels around the Delta. Opponents of the tunnels are leery, however, claiming his proposal may not be “tunnel neutral.” They claim Brown’s

proposal would support habitat protection which could help ecological problems created by the tunnels in the first place. They would argue that the tunnels should not be built at all.

The legislators could not agree to a modified bond proposal before they went on its summer recess. Many hope they will be able to reach agreement when they return in August. The legal deadline for putting a bond on the November ballot has passed. However, the legislature can extend that deadline. It cannot wait too long as ballots and voter information must to be mailed in time to reach the voters sometime before election day. Time will tell if the legislature will get its act together.

In the meantime, the continuing drought imposes on all of us the requirement of continued focus on water conservation. In the long run, attention will have to be focused on additional measures such as groundwater cleanup, additional water recycling, and storm water capture.

For more information on the drought:

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Home/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?CA>

<http://www.watereducation.org/aquafornia>

<http://mavensnotebook.com>

**Transportation:** The *LA Times* of June 30, 2014 had a large, glossy advertising insert on regional solutions for transportation in the LA area. It does have a great deal of information and also a suggestion that there will be a “Measure R2” on the ballot soon which would raise the sales tax  $\frac{1}{2}$  a cent for transportation projects. MOVELA, which backs the proposals, imagines that the tax funds could be used to expand rail transit, modernize Metrolink, and provide operating funds for transit resources. Visit [www.movea.org](http://www.movea.org) to learn more about MOVELA’s proposals to improve public transit in the L. A. region.

*Natural Resources continued from page 4*

**Carbon Offsets:** The *LA Times* (6/30/14) had an article on the controversy regarding the way California's AB32 treats carbon offsets. Briefly, industrial polluters can purchase offsets outside of California (i.e., support forest development in other states or countries) as an offset to their pollution in California. Opponents in the environmental community claim that this does lower green house gases globally but does nothing for people affected by local air pollution. They argue that local communities ought to benefit from efforts at reducing green houses gases. Other environmentalist disagree and point to green house gases as a global phenomenon that must be fought by all means. Opponents counter that very often communities adjacent to power plants and other polluters are peopled with disadvantaged citizens who have not benefited from technology or efforts at creating a clean economy. The Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment has filed a complaint with the US EPA about this offset program as currently structured. Go to <http://www.crpe-ej.org/crpe/index.php/component/content/article/37-press-releases/240-groups-claim-cap-and-trade-violates-civil-rights> for more information.

**Gnatcatcher:** Developers have proposed that the California gnatcatcher bird be removed from the ESA list (*LA Times*, 6/30/14). They argue that some scientific DNA research indicates that the listed gnatcatcher is no different from other gnatcatcher species flourishing in Southern California. Other scientists disagree with this research, arguing that not enough information is available to make such a determination. If ESA protection were removed, this could open the possibility of development on 197,000 areas in LA, San Diego, Ventura, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties. This would likely result in the loss of additional habitat and the introduction of more cars and people in an already crowded region. To learn more about the gnatcatcher go to:

<http://www.scpr.org/news/2014/06/11/44672/property-owners-petition-to-remove-california-gnat/>.

## Voting Rights – A League Priority by Elisabeth MacNamara, LWVUS President

LWVUS is working to get the Voting Rights Amendment Act passed by Congress to ensure the right to vote for all eligible citizens.

Forty-nine years ago, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act (VRA) into law. The VRA was a cornerstone achievement of the civil rights movement that ensured that every American citizen, regardless of race or language, had equal access to the right to vote. That is until last June, when the U.S. Supreme Court gutted a key part of the Voting Rights Act, leading to a full frontal attack on the voting rights of all Americans. With no legislative fix passed in the past year, voting rights remain at risk today.

H.R. 3899, the Voting Rights Amendment Act (VRAA), offers nationwide protections for current threats to voting rights. The legislation provides new tools to stop voting discrimination before it occurs, as well as ensuring that proposed election changes are transparent. *Unfortunately because the U.S. House refuses to move this bipartisan, common sense solution forward, the right to vote for all Americans is in danger.*

The VRAA is an important step forward for our democracy, where the right to vote is not about politics or the outcome of elections. This legislation will modernize the coverage of the Voting Rights Act to ensure it is based on recent acts of discrimination and provide narrow but appropriate mechanisms to prevent discrimination in voting nationwide. The right to vote is one of the most basic rights in our country and it must be protected.

Access to the vote is not about politics; it's about justice and equality. Every day that Congress fails to pass this critical legislation, Americans are in danger of increased barriers at the polls.

## Important Announcements

### **BALLOT BRIEFING AND ADVOCACY WORKSHOP**

9:30 AM to 12 noon. There will be coffee.

Action workshop in the board room.

***Reservations are not required.***

Hollenbeck Palms  
573 South Boyle Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90033  
Office 323-263-1005

*See the flyer on page 7*

### **NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY**

September 23, 2014

Be part of this national effort to increase voter participation.  
Plan a voter registration activity for this day.

### **FOOD BANK – THANK YOU!**

Thanks to the many members who donated to the Regional Food Bank at Summer League Day in Pasadena (“Popovers”). We collected over \$700 and several bags of food! As our liaison Carole Slavin will take these donations to the Food Bank. We are so pleased to make this contribution.

### **USE THE COUNTY VOTER**

Don't forget that information and articles in the County Voter may be reprinted in your Local League Voters.



# LWV/LA County

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Palos Verdes Peninsula/San Pedro • Pasadena Area • Santa Monica • Torrance • Whittier

## **BALLOT BRIEFING PROS & CONS OF MEASURES ON THE NOVEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup> BALLOT**



**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2014  
9:30 AM TO 12:00 NOON**

**HOLLENBECK PALMS**

**MAIN ACTIVITY ROOM  
573 SOUTH BOYLE AVENUE  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90033  
OFFICE 323-263-1005**

**THERE WILL BE COFFEE.**

***ACTION WORKSHOP IN THE BOARD ROOM***

*LMU2014*

## LWV/LA County VOTER

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.

### SUBSCRIBE to the VOTER

Send your email address to the Voter editor to be notified of the latest VOTER posted on our website at: [www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org) and to be included on the email distribution list.

Send to: [mebarnes@aol.com](mailto:mebarnes@aol.com)

### Join Us

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. **Find a local League below :**

Beach Cities - [beachcities.ca.lwvnet.org](http://beachcities.ca.lwvnet.org)

Claremont Area- [claremont.ca.lwvnet.org](http://claremont.ca.lwvnet.org)

East San Gabriel Valley- [esgv.ca.lwvnet.org](http://esgv.ca.lwvnet.org)

Glendale-Burbank - [gb.ca.lwvnet.org](http://gb.ca.lwvnet.org)

Long Beach Area - [lba.ca.lwvnet.org](http://lba.ca.lwvnet.org)

Los Angeles - [lwvlosangeles.org](http://lwvlosangeles.org)

Palos Verdes Peninsula - [lwvpalosverdes.org](http://lwvpalosverdes.org)

Pasadena Area - [lwv-pa.org](http://lwv-pa.org)

Santa Monica - [lwvsantamonica.org](http://lwvsantamonica.org)

Torrance Area - [lwvtorrancearea.org](http://lwvtorrancearea.org)

Whittier - [whittier.ca.lwvnet.org](http://whittier.ca.lwvnet.org)

**August / September 2014**

### Internet Election Resources

**Smart Voter** [www.smartvoter.org](http://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](http://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](http://www.easyvoter.org)

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

**Secretary of State** [www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov)

Official text of ballot measures

**CA Legislative Analyst** [www.lao.ca.gov](http://www.lao.ca.gov) Analysis of all ballot measures

**CA Voter Foundation** [www.calvoter.org](http://www.calvoter.org)

Data on campaign contributions to candidates and measures

**CA Budget Project** [www.cbp.org](http://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](http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org)



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