



# 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 • Whittier

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June 2009

### LWV / LACounty Board of Directors 2008

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### Calendar 2009

June 13	LWVUS “Virtual” Council 9 am - 1 pm. See LWVUS Website for details
June 30	LWV/LAC Board Meeting 9:30 to 1:30 (location to be determined)
July 25	Popovers in Pasadena (see flyer inside)
September 25	County League Day (details to be announced)
January 30, 2010	County League Day
March 27, 2010	County Convention

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**From the President's Desk...**

The LWV/LACounty Board held its annual retreat in May. We worked on planning for the coming year. Popovers in Pasadena is our kick-off event. Sheriff Lee Baca is the keynote speaker, and we have several excellent workshops planned. It should be an informative – and tasty – day. A reservation form is in this Voter.

County League Days are tentatively scheduled for September 25 and January 30. We're waiting to set the subject of the days until we see if there are ballot measurers for the November election. We'll do a ballot briefing if there are propositions. County Convention is set for March 27, 2010.

Our County Jail Study continues. Committee members visited the twin towers jail – see the write up in this Voter. Although the state Prison Study was not adopted at Convention, several interested Leagues plan to work together on the study. We hope that our work on the Jail Study can coordinate with the Prison group regarding overlapping areas. Once again, the Jail Study Committee welcomes new members.

The board made the decision to subscribe to EDSOURCE materials and will check on ways to share information with our member Leagues.

It has been an eventful past year, and I'm looking forward to the coming year of study and action.

*Nancy*

**LWV/LAC Yearbook Notice**

Summer's almost here. Time to wax your surfboard and think about the coming League year!

If you're a local League President or otherwise involved in local League administration, don't be surprised when you get a request for information about your new Board and other active members such as consultants and committee chairs. This will go into the 2009-10 LWV/LAC Yearbook for countywide sharing.

Look for LWV/LAC Yearbook distribution to take place in September.

*Frances Talbott-White, LWV/LAC Consultant for Special Projects*

## Twin Towers County Jail Tour

The LWV/LAC Jail study committee recently went on a tour of Twin Towers County Jail in downtown Los Angeles. Our tour leader was Deputy Talamares, who has worked in this facility for almost two years. He was very knowledgeable and seemed straightforward, but I felt the actual tour was somewhat “sanitized.” We were in the part of Twin Towers, which housed prisoners who had been identified as having mental health problems.

When prisoners are admitted to the L.A. County Jail System they are evaluated, and those identified as having mental illness are segregated. They are housed in “pods” – groups of approximately 60 men.

We observed a pod through a glass barrier. We were in a central area, flanked on one side by an exercise area, and on another side by a large common room with two tiers of cells leading off from the common room. The cells appeared to be small rooms. I believe each cell housed 2 men. There was a bathroom leading off from the common room. There were tables in the common room, and places to sit which were attached to the tables. There were also a number of bunk beds around the periphery of the common room. Some of these were occupied by sleeping prisoners, covered with blankets. Other prisoners were walking about, standing, or sitting at tables. One prisoner yelled out a greeting to our guide a few times, and our guide finally answered him in a friendly manner.

There were probably 20 -30 prisoners in the exercise area opposite the common room-cell area. We couldn't see this entire area, but there was a basketball hoop on one wall, and some men were shooting baskets with basketballs. One wall was apparently an outside wall that was heavily screened but allowed in some fresh air. The exercise area seemed somewhat crowded -- many men were walking about or standing.

Another Deputy came out from an adjoining room and talked with us. He was in charge of this pod, which he told us was composed of prisoners with

mental health problems. Some, he said, may be malingerers, but after a time they can usually sort these folks out and return them to the general population (GP) of the jail. They are usually on psychotropic medications, which are passed out by the deputies. Many are not very active, but he encourages them to go to the exercise area when they are scheduled to do so. Sometimes prisoners can be encouraged by the promise of an extra meal.

During our talk with the charge Deputy, some prisoners appeared moving tables into the center of our area. Deputy Talamera said these men were “trusties” – well-behaved prisoners who work in the jail under the direction of Deputies or staff.

The tables were for a group session, and soon a woman psychologist appeared to lead the group and several prisoners came and sat around the table. She said the group meets once a week, although if someone is having severe problems there are opportunities for extra psychological help. They apparently operate as a therapy group, discussing their feelings and personal and family issues. Apparently there are about 60 psychologists who work at Twin Towers, evaluating prisoners and helping with psychological problems.

We then left the pod area and proceeded to the hospital unit. There are two towers at Twin Towers and a third area that is the hospital. In every passageway from one area to another in this facility, there is a small room which one enters after the entrance door is unlocked. This door is shut and locked again before the opposite door is unlocked for admission to the new area. (Some banks have this arrangement.) There are long hallways and elevators to get from floor to floor, and a number of people in the hallways, apparently mostly people who work at the jail in some capacity – e.g. delivery people, Sheriff's deputies, cleaning folks, psychologists etc.

The hospital unit had some patients and quite a few empty beds. These patients are prisoners who have medical conditions – fractures, chronic illnesses etc.

*Continued on page 4*

*Twin Towers Tour - continued from page 3*

A couple nurses were in the hospital corridors, passing medications. One patient had TB and was in isolation in a negative-pressurized private room. We saw a couple 4-6 bedrooms, and smaller rooms with 1 or 2 patients. There was a central glassed and partitioned-off area for doctors and staff.

Deputy Talamera told us that he was in his second year of working at the jail. After graduating from the Sheriff's Academy, deputies are assigned to the jail, and he was lucky to be assigned to Twin Towers. He apparently works on a floor with more severely disturbed mentally ill prisoners than the ones we observed. He said he was not taking us to the part of Twin Towers where the G.P. were housed. G.P. prisoners are similar to inmates in Men's Central Jail, which is nearby. He said Men's Central Jail is old, and looks like the jails we see on TV – cells with bars, walkways between etc.

Deputy Talamera seems to find satisfaction in his job, but says it is not for everyone. He is apparently well suited to being a deputy Sheriff. He seemed to have good rapport with prisoners, other deputies, and other staff. He finds the work interesting and sometimes very challenging. For example, a couple of years ago they had riots at Twin Towers. They seemed to be planned – started suddenly, but he thought there was a signal system for starting a riot. And he thought they were racially motivated – e.g. Blacks against Hispanics. He said that the law did not allow them to segregate prisoners.

Deputy Tallamera also mentioned that he worked at the Sheriff's Academy in personal combat training. He was not a particularly large man, but looked to be very physically fit. He has a wife and young daughter, and is looking forward to his next assignment, which will be in the Sheriff's Transportation Unit – a huge enterprise that transports prisoners to courts, etc. He is looking forward to having weekends off.

*~Betsey Coffman, Jail Study Co-Chair*

## The 'UDEL' Looms

You may have heard one or more of LWV's seasoned Voter Service workers refer to "the UDEL" – often with a certain degree of awe and dread – and you may have asked some of the following questions. (**Or not!**) But here's what you might have heard if you'd asked me or Margo Reeg, LWV/LAC's intrepid 2<sup>nd</sup> VP for Voter Service:

### What's the UDEL?

- With all due respect to fans of University of Delaware (UDel), this acronym stands for 'Uniform District Election Law' (California Elections Code Sections 10500-10556, Part 4, on line at <http://law.justia.com/california/codes/elec/10500-10556.html>.)

### When's the UDEL?

- UDEL elections are held in November of odd-numbered years. They're consolidated, which means that they're conducted by the L.A. County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk.

### Who's involved in the UDEL?

- Uniform District Election Law applies to a large number of school districts, special districts, and smaller cities, as listed (starting on page 3) at [http://www.lavote.net/voter/PDFS/SCHEДУLED\\_ELECTIONS\\_2009.pdf](http://www.lavote.net/voter/PDFS/SCHEДУLED_ELECTIONS_2009.pdf).

### Why should I care about the UDEL?

- UDEL elections are very likely to be occurring within your local League's Voter Service area. If so, your LL will probably be asked to help register voters, conduct a candidate forum, or take a position on a local ballot measure such as a school bond or parcel tax initiative (sure to be coming up in the wake of statewide cuts).

*Continued on Page 5*

UDEL - continued from page 4

### How does Smart Voter help with UDEL?

- Within a context of positive campaigning, Smart Voter gives free exposure to candidates who receive little or no press coverage. It also explains ballot measures that are crucial within their local areas.
- UDEL elections make an excellent training ground for local Leagues to expand their use of Smart Voter and build their visibility in under-served areas of their communities.
- Smart Voter has the capability to let local Leagues define questions for candidates to answer. This draws more attention from candidates and voters alike.

### When and how will I learn more about UDEL?

- Right now, by going to [http://www.lavote.net/voter/PDFS/SCHEDULED\\_ELECTIONS\\_2009.pdf](http://www.lavote.net/voter/PDFS/SCHEDULED_ELECTIONS_2009.pdf).
- On July 25, at Popovers in Pasadena, when lists of November 3, 2009 elections will be distributed to local Leagues.
- In mid August, when candidate lists will be posted on line.
- Any time, by putting your ear to the ground in your community! Local candidates are already testing the waters. It's not too early to talk to them about League's Voter Service activities.

### Let's keep in touch about UDEL!

*Frances Talbott-White, Smart Voter SoCal Liaison-*  
[ca-south@smartvoter.org](mailto:ca-south@smartvoter.org); 310 397 4970

## LWVC Convention 2009

### Program Outcomes

#### At Convention, the delegates adopted the following program for 2009-2011:

- Retention of existing positions
- No new study, update, or concurrence
- Issues for Education and Advocacy -  
Redistricting implementation -  
Government reform – including: state

and local finances, initiative and referendum process, state constitution, campaign finance, voting rights.

### Legislative priorities for the coming year were presented by the Board:

#### Priority issues:

- Support reform of the state budget process
- Support equitable and adequate generation and distribution of tax revenues

#### Other issues:

- Support requests from local Leagues and ILOs for advocacy on bills of specific interest to their areas
- Take action as appropriate on core issues: redistricting, elections, voting rights, campaign finance reform, reproductive choices
- Consider Program Director recommendations for action on the highest priority bills in their areas – anticipating action on health care, water, and climate change.

#### Delegates passed three resolutions:

- That LWVC ask LWVUS to actively support the principle of single payer national health insurance
- That the Board of LWVCEF consider reinstating the publication of Pros and Cons of the statewide ballot measures . . . for future statewide elections
- That LWVC urge LWVUS to add the principle of transparency to the SARA resolution

[Secure, Accurate, Recountable, Accessible – response to electronic voting controversy]

Details and additional information is available on the LWVC members Web site:

[www.ca.lwv.org/lwvonly](http://www.ca.lwv.org/lwvonly)

~ Nancy Mahr, LWV/LAC President

## Water: Getting the Price Right

Farm workers held a march in the San Joaquin Valley the recently. The marchers were not protesting job losses or civil rights violations but a shortage of water. (*N. Y. Times*, 4/21/09) In particular, they were protesting the fact that less water has been sent down the California Aqueduct because of the precarious state of an endangered species, the Delta smelt. The *Times* article claimed that the marchers were paid by growers to protest. That may be true, but the point is that people were sufficiently agitated about the lack of water for farmlands that they took action. We have not yet seen marchers in southern California but we may. Southern California gets a good portion of its water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and signs of shortages are beginning to appear.

Growers and farm workers are not the only ones protesting. Recently a group of Delta interests (farmers, recreational businesses) also protested the possibility of an "isolated structure" (aka the peripheral Canal of the 1980's). Such a structure would draw water upstream from the Sacramento River for delivery to the pumps in the southern part of the Delta. This would reduce the need to pump water directly out of the Delta thereby avoiding further threats to the Delta smelt. If less water were to flow into the Delta, it would likely become more saline and Delta interests fear that the increased salinity would harm Delta farming interests, the recreational fishing businesses, and other Delta interests. Others argue that in the longer span of geological time, the Delta always oscillated between a seawater estuary and a freshwater one.

It is quite clear that water will continue to be a major policy issue for the State. There have already been a number of efforts to reduce consumption and to recycle water as much as possible. The Orange County Water district recently began a major project in which highly treated sewer water is pumped to spreading grounds for percolation into an underground aquifer. Similar recycling projects exist in L. A. County and more will be developed in the future.

The L. A. City council recently approved a two-pronged approach to water conservation. (*L.A. Times*, 4/23/09) On the one hand, the Council passed an ordinance restricting the watering of gardens with automated sprinklers to Monday and Thursday. In addition to this "command and control" policy, the Council also approved a change to the tiered water rate system. The first tier in the system will be reduced by 15% and ratepayers will pay more for water as they consume more water beyond the first tier. This "market-like" mechanism will only work, of course, if ratepayers are sensitive to price increases. Thus the price for water in the higher tiers must be high enough to signal to ratepayers that they are consuming a scarce resource.

The use of tiered pricing is an effort to introduce some elements of a market into the water delivery process. It is important to keep in mind that markets often function in such a way that some people are excluded from them due to their financial situation. It is also important to remember that we all require water each day to survive and there is no substitute for water. Thus, in setting up a tiered pricing system, care will have to be taken that the first tier is priced such that no one is excluded from the "water market." For more information on water pricing and other water issues, visit the blog Aguanomics (<http://aguanomics.com/>)

If we use price properly, if we use regulations properly, and if we commit to further recycling of water, it is possible that we will be able to cope with future population growth and economic growth. It is even possible that we could avoid the need for a Peripheral Canal. Such a canal will not be of much use for our current water woes, as it will likely take 10 to 20 years to construct. For the short run, say the next 10 years, conservation and recycling are key to a more sensible allocation of water.

~John D. Sullivan, *Natural Resources*



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Beach Cities Claremont Area East San Gabriel Valley Glendale/Burbank Long Beach Area  
Los Angeles Palos Verdes Peninsula Pasadena Area Santa Monica Torrance Whittier

## 2009 ANNUAL SUMMER LEAGUE DAY POPOVERS IN PASADENA

**160 NORTH OAKLAND, PASADENA**

Parking in rear off N. Madison Avenue,  
1-1/2 blocks north of Colorado Blvd.

**SATURDAY, JULY 25, 2009**

**9:30 AM TO 2 PM**

**SALAD LUNCHEON**



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
SHERIFF LEE BACA**

WORKSHOPS  
Presidents  
Education  
Redistricting  
Natural Resources

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Please send form and check payable to **LWV/LAC**  
Mail to **LWV/LAC Treasurer, 427 E. Walnut Ave., Burbank 91501**

League Name \_\_\_\_\_

Attendee Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Deadline is July 13, 2008**

Reservations # \_\_\_\_\_ @\$25.00 Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***If postmarked after July 13<sup>th</sup>***

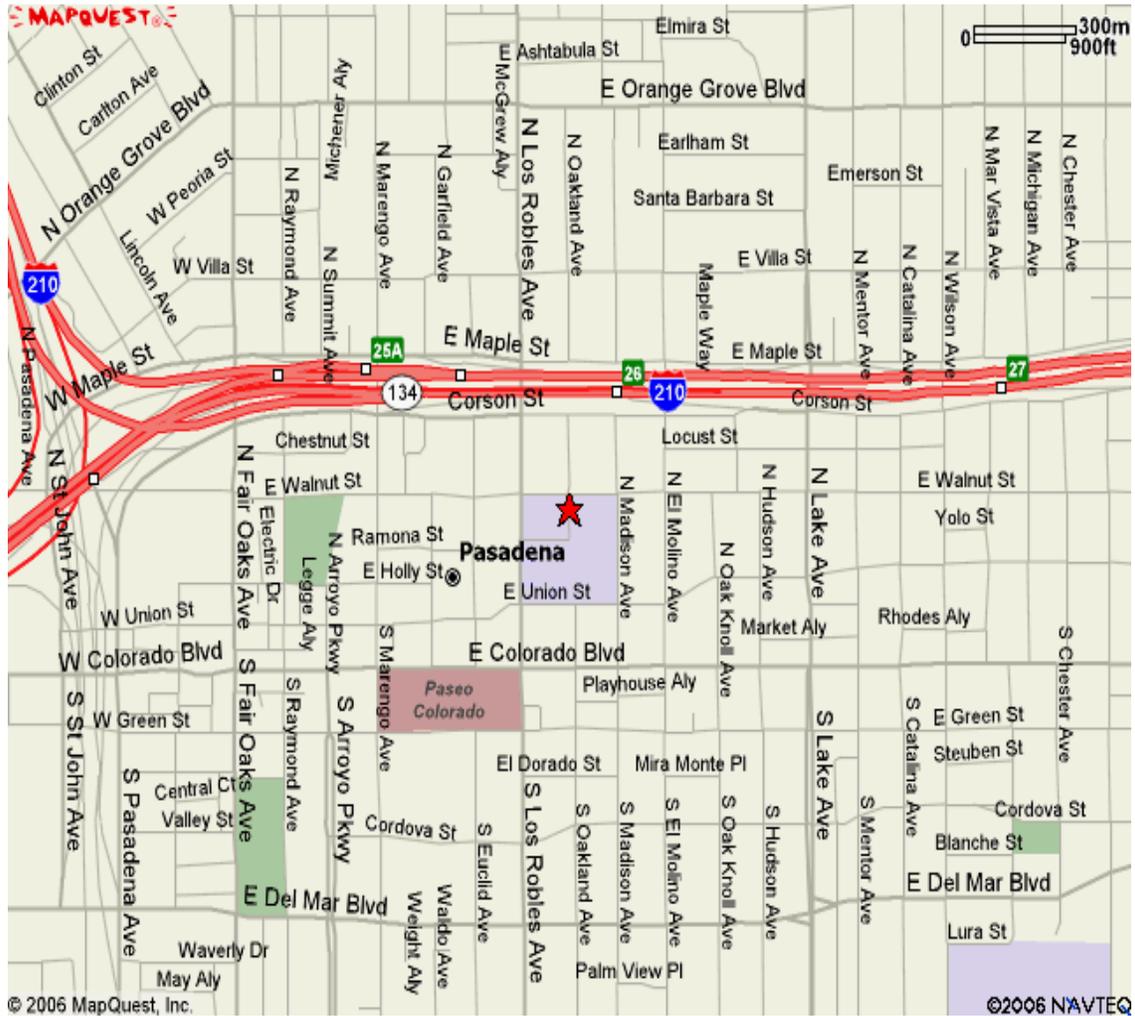
Reservations # \_\_\_\_\_ @\$30.00 Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Chicken Salad Luncheon # \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian Luncheon # \_\_\_\_\_ W/O NUTS or other allergens # \_\_\_\_\_  
(name food)

**PLEASE SIGN UP FOR A MORNING WORKSHOP**

Presidents # \_\_\_\_\_ Education # \_\_\_\_\_ Redistricting # \_\_\_\_\_ Nat. Resources # \_\_\_\_\_

**Map to Pasadena Women’s City Club  
160 North Oakland, Pasadena CA**



**TIMING PADDLE SETS**

**LWV/LACounty is selling top quality timing paddle sets.**

**4 colorful sturdy paddles per set:**

**1 minute**

**30 seconds**

**15 seconds**

**Stop**

**\$15 per set at Popovers ~ \$20 per set by mail order**

## The Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council

The Education Coordinating Council (ECC) was created in November of 2004 to provide oversight and accountability for improving the educational outcomes of Los Angeles County's 60,000 foster and probation youth. These youth, who lag far behind other youth academically, are perhaps the neediest in Los Angeles. A solid education, beginning in their earliest years, is the best way to provide them with the opportunity for adult success they very much want and deserve.

- About three-quarters of children in foster care perform below grade level.
- Nearly half fail to complete high school, and only about two percent ever earn a bachelor's degree.
- Over 35 percent of foster and probation youth receive special education services.
- The average reading level of probation youth in grades 9 through twelve is below grade 5.

This achievement gap is due in part to the abuse and neglect or exposure to violence that these youth experience before entering the dependency or probation systems. The rest can be largely explained by administrative problems they encounter once in these systems. Once they leave the public system at age 18, about half of these youth are unemployed, more than a quarter are homeless, and one third require public assistance.

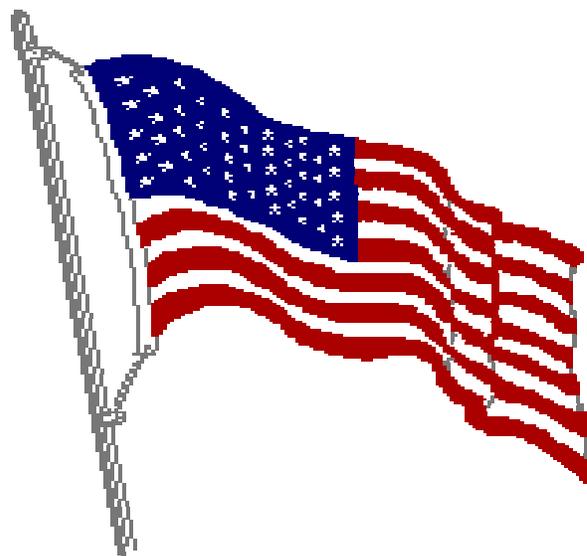
To meet this daunting challenge, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors authorized the creation of the ECC. A county wide collaborative body dedicated to raising the educational achievement of foster and probation youth. This brings together, for the first time, the top leadership of the major groups responsible for these youth's educational performance. Since its creation, the ECC has reached out to hundreds of organizations, agencies, constituent groups and communities through out the county to help break down barriers and build relationships with those who share responsibility for

or have an interest in the education of system youth. Problem areas have been identified, best practices established and some significant accomplishments have occurred that enable sharing of information between agencies, first ever data matches between school districts and the Department of Children and Family Services, and ongoing dialogues among county and city department directors, the juvenile court, and school superintendents to address the unique educational needs of these youth and how best to meet them.

To recognize the importance of education for youth under the care of the county (and the success of the ECC during the initial four years) the Board of Supervisors has voted to institutionalize its activities by making the organization a formal part of the Chief Executive Office of the county in July of 2009.

The LWV LAC Education Committee will continue to monitor this work.

*~Joanne Leavitt*



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>

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Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 League \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**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)



**Nancy Mahr, LWV/LACounty President**  
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