

February
2004

LWV/LAC InterLeague Newsletter

President's Message

Hello all!

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.

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February and elections are only a month away. Seems like we just finished the last one! Now is a good time for us to remind one another that we are political but non-partisan. We support issues but not candidates. The president and voters service director as well as anyone else whose name is automatically connected to League should be very careful...don't attend fundraisers for candidates, don't make major donations and DON'T put out lawn signs for candidates. This shouldn't need repeating, it is only common sense. But I have heard every excuse. "My spouse isn't on the board. Doesn't s/he have a right to have lawn signs?" "Our city council/school board is non-partisan. Doesn't that make it all right?" "My son/daughter is working on the campaign and I am just supporting him."

Picture yourself as a candidate, as I once was. How confident would you be of a fair hearing, going into a candidate forum sponsored by the League, if you knew the League president had a lawn sign up for one of your opponents or if last year's president who is still on the board is featured in the list of endorsers in a newspaper ad? This is all just common sense, but the good name of the League depends on all of us being responsible. Our reputation depends on this.

However, if action is in your blood, if you are spoiling for a good fight, there is something you can do. League has taken positions in support of Propositions 55 and 56. These are both very important measures. You received an Action Guide from LWVC that explains these and the League positions that we are using to support them.

At the minimum become familiar with these issues, read through the Action Guide until you are comfortable discussing these with your family and friends. If you want to do more write a letter to the editor of your neighborhood paper. There is a sample letter in the action guide, but if you want more information, contact me. If you really want to get involved, get out and do public speaking, do a longer op-ed piece for the paper just contact me. I can provide you with

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more information or put you in touch with the people who have the information you need.

To some of us this is the most productive part of League. It is why we go through the work of doing studies and adopting positions. When an issue comes before us we go to these adopted positions and use them to support or oppose something League has come to a consensus about. This is the end product of the cycle of study, consensus, position adoption and, now, Action.

One more reminder: Make sure to keep a clear line between your Voters Service and Action activities. Voters Service can be supported by your Ed Fund, Action cannot. If your League is asked to speak in both areas to the same issue, use two different speakers. There is a nice intro describing this in the "In Depth" that you received from LWVC. Again, don't hesitate to contact me or another member of the County Board if you have any questions.

By this time next month it will all be over but the shouting or the crying and we will be talking about County Convention. See the flyer in this Newsletter. This will be our local kick off for SCA 1, the open meeting item on the November ballot.

Elections never end...

Joanne Leavitt (ac997@lafn.org)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Summary of LWVC Energy Committee Meeting

[At the LWVC Convention 2003, the delegated voted to instruct the League Energy Committee to continue its work. Below is a short report from the northern group. A southern group is being formed. For information contact Jack Sullivan, LWVC Natural Resources Director]

The major outcome of our meeting was the decision to develop five papers, which in their abbrevi-

ated versions could be printed in local League Voters – one a month beginning in March. The focus will be on electricity, though concerns regarding natural gas will be reflected.

The first paper will address the need for an update of LWVC's current energy position. It will speak to the importance of LWVC being politically involved as the balanced voice of public interest. The League has a responsibility to be influential in the development of sound public policy in many areas, including energy policy and our current policy positions limit our ability to speak out in areas of concern. Deregulation was a disaster; however, there were important lessons that can be learned. New methods for carrying out energy planning, marketing, provision and oversight are coming into being. Moreover, the industry itself has been restructured. .

The second paper will describe the current structure of the electricity system – what actually happens when a person flips a light switch. The third paper will cover Electricity Planning and Regulation – both state and federal.

The fourth paper will deal with Resource Adequacy and Portfolio Balancing – including Demand-side Management, Renewables, Natural Gas and LNG, Nuclear, Large Hydro and Promising New Resources. Quality and Quantity.

The fifth paper will address issues currently under consideration. Examples are: Assuring Needed Capital Investments; the Trade-offs between Reliability and Rates; Issues of Social Equity, such as Environmental Justice and Intervenor and Executive Compensation; A Hydrogen Economy; The Responsibility of the Public in the Planning Process, such as in the development of transmission corridors; and Governance: Is Reregulation the Best Solution?

The group concluded that it was not ready to put together much in the way of consensus questions, but did have several first thoughts. These included:

- 1) What should be the role of state govern-

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ment in pulling new technologies to market?

2) What would be the implications of a fully reregulated market? E.g., Core vs. Non-core customers? Who should have jurisdiction over direct access customers?

3) What should be the responsibilities of the public in planning, permitting and oversight?

Jane Turnbull, LWVC Energy Committee

County Convention

The 2004 Convention of the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County will be held on Saturday, March 27th at Tamayo Restaurant, 5300 E. Olympic Blvd., in the City of Commerce. The meeting, which commences with registration at 9:30 a.m., will deal with election of officers, adoption of program and budget as well as possible by-law changes. The featured speaker, following the luncheon, will be Richard McKee, former president of the California First Amendment Coalition. The meeting will adjourn by 2:30 p.m.

Delegates from the 13 local Leagues in Los Angeles County will consider adoption of a new position on Los Angeles County government, following the completion of a recent study of the chief executive administrator's position as well as expansion of the Board of Supervisors. The convention will also vote on re adoption of existing program and positions.

Tamayo Restaurant showcases a magnificent collection of large-scale paintings and tapestries by Mexican modernist master Rufino Tamayo, who offered the use of his name when the restaurant took over the historic Spanish Colonial hacienda 17 years ago. In addition, the restaurant now displays work by Vladimir Cora, Tamayo's apprentice and student from 1979 until the master's death in 1991.

The banquet buffet will feature chicken fajitas, a variety of salads and vegetables as well as cheese enchiladas, rice and tortillas, with sauces on the

side. The charge for the day is \$25 with reservations paid to Treasurer Gwen Cochran no later than March 15th and \$30 for reservations paid between the 15th and the March 23rd deadline.

The restaurant is said to be in the geographical center of Los Angeles County. The closest freeways are the I-5, or the 710, taking the Olympic Blvd. exits east, or the Pomona Freeway - 60 - going off at Atlantic Blvd., heading east. The restaurant has ample free parking with valet tipping.

Georganne Thomsen, LWV LAC

Voter Service

Pros & Cons

Once more, the voters of our State have put initiatives on the ballot. Information about the Pros/Cons may be obtained at our League's website, <http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org>.

This year LWV California has added a new feature. They have placed "In Depth," the comprehensive objective analysis of ballot measures, on their website. League members who are involved with Speakers Bureau have long known how valuable these "In Depth" analyses are. Now everybody has access to them. If you want comprehensive non partisan coverage of the potential legal and financial impacts of the Propositions, then this is the place to find it. This is part of the Education Fund's mission to inform voters. <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/edfund/elections/2004mar/id/index.html>

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LWVUS Statement on Electronic Voting Machines and Voter-Verified Paper Trails (VVPT)

The League of Women Voters strongly supports full and equal voting rights for all eligible Americans, including persons with disabilities. The League also supports voter verification of ballots, including the requirement in the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) whereby the voter verifies the ballot before it is cast and counted. However, the League does not support proposals for a new requirement for paper-based voter verification – the voter-verified paper trail (VVPT) system that would require Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) voting machines to provide an individual paper confirmation for each ballot for each voter to verify.

A VVPT requirement undermines voting access for people with disabilities or limited English proficiency, raises costs, fails to guarantee security, unnecessarily complicates the voting process, undermines federal certification standards, and slows the replacement of outdated voting machines.

—**The voter-verified paper trail requirement undermines voting access.** DREs make it possible, for the first time, for persons with visual disabilities or limited manual dexterity to cast secret and independent ballots. Because DREs can be programmed in multiple languages, voters with limited English proficiency can participate fully and equally. The millions of Americans who face literacy challenges also can take advantage of the audio features of DREs to cast independent votes without embarrassment. The VVPT system requires the voter to verify the written paper ballot, which historically disenfranchised voters will find difficult to do if they cannot see or if they have difficulty reading the paper verification. The VVPT requirement is costly and will also slow down the replacement of outdated voting machines or push election administrators toward optical scan ballots,

which are less accessible to the types of historically disenfranchised voters described above.

—**The voter-verified paper trail system doesn't work. It does not guarantee a solution to the security concerns it is intended to fix.** If an electronic voting machine can be programmed to record an incorrect vote, it can be programmed to print out a misleading confirmation. VVPT advocates say the paper confirmations can be counted, but paper ballots are notoriously difficult to recount accurately. And there is a long history of lost, mangled and manipulated paper ballots. The real solution to security concerns is to institute the measures described below.

—**Management and operational procedures can be put in place now to protect voting machine security.** Among these are: physical isolation of each machine to protect against “hacking;” maintaining election official control over ballot creation, source codes, and management systems; statewide security programs binding on jurisdictions; improved equipment management practices and polling place operations; testing prior to and after Election Day; and parallel monitoring during Election Day.

—**A VVPT unnecessarily complicates Election Day processes for voters, poll workers and election administrators.** Printers jam, need paper, and are slow. With long lines already a problem at polling places, printing individual ballots and requiring a confirmation process for each voter will only exacerbate problems, confuse voters, and undermine voter privacy.

—**Federal standards already require that new voting machines, including DREs, provide paper records for recounts and authentication of elections.**

—**The VVPT requirement undermines the certification and standards process that protects voters and state and local governments.** VVPT systems are not certified. Mandating their use without a thorough certification process weakens the reliability of voting systems.

LWV[®]

League of Women Voters
Los Angeles County

42nd ANNUAL CONVENTION

Saturday, March 27, 2004

Location: Tamayo's Restaurant

5300 E. Olympic Blvd. Commerce

(I-5/710 exit Olympic Ave. east, 60 exit Atlantic Blvd. east)

Registration: 9:30am, Convention: 10:00am-2:30pm

LWV[®]

Lunch Speaker: Richard McKee,
California First Amendment Coalition

Cost: \$25, includes morning coffee, buffet lunch (including vegetarian options) and materials, for registrations received by March 15th; \$30 for registrations received March 16th-23rd. No reservations will be accepted after March 23rd.

RSVP, including checks payable to LWV/LAC, to:

Gwen Cochran, 427 East Walnut Ave. Burbank, 91501

Name(s) _____

League _____ Delegate ____ Visitor ____

Phone _____ Email _____

LWV[®]



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS PASADENA AREA

PRESENTS

A Community Forum On Health Care Delivery

WITH

State Senator SHEILA KUEHL

Author of SB921 providing single-payer health care coverage—
passed by the Senate last year and heading to the Assembly

State Assemblymember JUDY CHU

Member of the Assembly Health Committee

AND OTHER LEGISLATIVE AND HEALTH CARE REPRESENTATIVES

Moderator: **KITTY FELDE**

Commentator/Host of "Talk of the City" on KPCC 89.3 FM

Saturday, March 20, 2004

9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Atherton Baptist Home, Merriam Chapel

214 South Atlantic Blvd.

(1.2 miles south of Huntington Drive)

ALHAMBRA

Ample parking

Requested donation: \$3

For reservations (priority seating):

Call us at **626-798-0965** between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., or leave a message.

E-mail us at office@lwvpasadenaarea.org

(Visit our website at www.lwvpasadenaarea.org)

The United States leads the world in health care spending at about \$5,000 per person per year on average... [but] ranks 37th in population-based health outcome measurements...

"...20-30 percent of the health care dollar is spent on administration (excluding profit)... [Under SB921] California could reduce administrative costs to 1.8 percent of health care spending..." [restoring] \$14 billion dollars annually to direct health care services."
— **Sen. Sheila Kuehl**



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS RECOMMENDS

MARCH 2, 2004 PRIMARY ELECTION

YES ON PROPOSITION 55

STATEWIDE SCHOOL BONDS

Support Proposition 55 Kindergarten-University Public Education Facilities Bond Act of 2004.

This \$12.3 billion bond measure is the second phase of a school construction and repair plan to meet expanding state needs. The first part passed overwhelmingly as Proposition 47 in 2002. This measure includes \$10 billion for K-12 school facilities, with about half for new construction and a quarter each for modernization and critically overcrowded schools. There is also \$2.3 billion for higher education (community colleges and the CSU and UC systems) that has been hard hit by the state budget crisis.

The state treasurer confirms that in these hard economic times, it is important to continue our long-term investment in education facilities. Prop. 55 will provide state matching funds for locally approved school bonds. It will create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and stimulate the local economy, while holding to strict accountability standards. California's total school population is projected to increase by one million in the next decade; higher education expects 700,000 additional students. Prop. 55 will provide our kids the safe, clean learning environment essential to improving student achievement.

For more information: www.yeson55.com

YES ON PROPOSITION 56

BUDGET ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Support Proposition 56 for real budget reform that holds our legislators accountable.

This measure is designed to end the legislative gridlock which has prevented the state from dealing responsibly with the challenges of passing a budget. It holds legislators accountable by requiring them to pass the budget on time or face real consequences. They would have to stay in session and work only on the budget, and would forfeit both their salary and expenses until the job was done. Voters could learn how legislators voted on the budget from an easy-to-use Web site, and the Voter Information Guide (ballot pamphlet) would contain a summary of how the state's money is spent.

This constitutional amendment would end partisan gridlock by reducing the vote required to pass the state budget and related bills, including tax measures, from two-thirds to 55 percent. Only two other states routinely require a two-thirds vote to pass a budget. This high threshold has given a handful of California legislators the ability to demand concessions, such as spending on projects in their districts or tax breaks for special interests, to get their support for a budget. Under Prop. 56, the state would build up a "rainy day" reserve fund when revenues are greater than needed to fund existing services, and use the fund to maintain service levels in bad times. Late, irresponsible budgets hurt all the people of California. Proposition 56 will bring real reform of the budget process now.

For more information: www.budgetaccountabilitynow.org

VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ON MARCH 2

February 2004

**League of Women Voters
of Los Angeles County**

Joanne Leavitt, President
Chris Carson, Editor
carsonlww@earthlink.net

We're on the Web!!
<http://lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org>

Calendar

February 10—LWVLAC
Board Meeting

February 17—Last day to
register to vote in March Pri-
mary Election

February 22—LWVUS-
Sponsored Democratic Presi-
dential Candidates' Debate

March 2—Primary Election

March 3—WPC Meeting
(Note change of date)

March 9—LWVLAC Board
Meeting

March 27—LWVLAC Con-
vention

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Local League _____

Email Address _____

For information, contact carsonlww@earthlink.net