

October  
2004

# LWV/LAC 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.

The League of Women Voters welcomes new members, both men and women, who are citizens of voting age.

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## President's Message

Advocacy and Voters Service are two pillars of League activity and ones that cause misunderstanding. We are often accused of being partisan when we take a position on ballot measures because the public has difficulty separating parties from issues. On the other hand, candidates frequently ask for our endorsement because they don't realize that our endorsement of ballot measures is totally separate from our nonpartisan stance on candidates. As League presidents, we often must respond to these requests and accusations.

First and foremost, we need to remind the public and our members that we are a nonpartisan organization and as representatives of the League we, as presidents and other key board members, cannot support specific candidates or parties through yard signs, endorsements, or published contributions (usually \$100 or more.) In some communities, League representatives attend many events and fundraisers, thus showing no favoritism but indicating interest in the race and promoting the League.

But, Advocacy on issues is an important aspect of the League's identity. As presidents, we are the chief spokespersons for the League in our communities. Action letters to the editor are signed by the president. The president and the action chair and other committed speakers may speak about the League's positions and participate in rallies and advocacy events. The only condition is that those people do not also participate in Pro and Con presentations.

As president, I encourage each local league president or action chair to distribute "Vote with the League" cards which state the League's support for **Prop. 59 Open Meetings and Open Records** and **Prop. 72 Health Care Coverage Requirements** and the League's opposition to **Prop. 69 DNA Collection. Database. Funding.** We can also adapt the LWVC sample letters to the editor, found in the **Action Guide**, to our local communities and submit them to the newspapers. An ideal time is the day after the paper prints its opinion or analysis of each measure.

People do care where the League stands on ballot measures because many know that our opinion is based on study and deliberation. When people at a

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Pros and Cons presentation ask the League's recommendation, you can tell them privately after the meeting or provide position cards at the door when they leave.

This election is your chance to **Speak for the League.**

*Margo Reeg  
President*

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## SOCIAL POLICY

The Senate Appropriations Committee has voted on the HUD budget. Below is what the committee approved in terms of the HUD Budget. Especially note the first program Section 8 had an increase of \$2.24 billion over the president's proposal. This is great news for the program and creates a better situation for when the two houses meet in conference to reconcile the two budgets. Note also that most every other program under HUD is funded at the same level as last year or in some cases increased slightly with the notable exception of the Public Housing Operating Fund

**Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):** HUD is funded at \$36.4 billion, an increase of \$1 billion over the FY04 level and \$700 million over the Budget Request.

-- **Section 8** is funded at \$20.707 billion, an increase of \$2.24 billion over the Budget Request and \$1.426 billion over the FY 04 level.

-- **Public Housing Capital Fund.** The bill includes \$2.7 billion for the Public Housing Capital Fund for FY05, an increase of \$4 million over the FY04 level and \$26 million over the Budget Request.

-- **Public Housing Operating Fund.** The bill includes \$2.61 billion for the Public Housing Operating Fund, a decrease of \$969 million from the FY04 level and \$963 million from the Budget Request. This reduction reflects a requirement that PHAs convert to calendar year accounting which

results in savings of a little more than \$1 billion. About \$50 million in additional funds are included for transition costs.

-- **Revitalization of Distressed Public Housing (HOPE VI).** The bill includes \$150 million for HOPE VI, approximately the same as the FY04 level and an increase of \$150 million over the budget request which recommended elimination of the program.

-- **Native American Housing Block Grant program (NAHASDA).** The bill includes \$650 million for NAHASDA, the same as FY04 and some \$3.2 million more than the budget request.

-- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** The bill includes \$4.95 billion for CDBG, an increase of \$29 million over the FY04 level and some \$332 million over the budget request.

-- **HOME Program** The bill includes \$2.05 billion for HOME, an increase of \$44 million from the FY04 level and a decrease of \$34 million from the Budget Request. The account includes \$50 million for the American Dream Downpayment program. The account also includes \$45 million for housing counseling.

-- **Homeless Assistance Grants** The bill includes \$1.26 billion for homeless assistance which is \$44 million more than the FY04 level and \$34 million less than the budget request.

-- **Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)** The bill includes \$295 million for HOPWA for FY05, about the same as the FY04 level and the same as the budget request.

-- **Housing for the Elderly (Section 202 Housing)** The bill includes \$774 million (including \$53 million for service coordinators) for Section 202 Elderly Housing, approximately the same as FY04 level and the budget request.

-- **Section 811 Disabled Housing** The bill includes \$250 million for Section 811 Disabled Housing, about the same as the FY04 level and the budget request.

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-- **Office of Lead Hazard Control** The bill includes \$175 million for the Office of Lead Hazard Control, which is the same as the FY04 level and \$36 million more than the budget request. The bill includes \$50 million for the Bond-Mikulski Lead Hazard Elimination program which was proposed for elimination.

*Daphne Lake*  
LWV/LAC Housing Director

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### **ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE RELEASES UPDATE ON URBAN HARDSHIP INDEX**

A study released by the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government tracks changes in the condition of the largest cities in the most-populated U.S. metropolitan areas from 1990 to 2000. The study looks at unemployment, poverty, educational attainment, crowded housing, and other factors. According to "An Update on Urban Hardship," the popular media fuels the view of extensive hardship in urban areas despite declining levels of hardship in most central cities. The study found that nearly 75% of the cities in the study had a decline in hardship scores from 1970 – 2000 of 4% or more. Fewer than one in five (18.2%) of cities in the study had an increase in hardship scores of 4% or more. Unfortunately, Los Angeles ranked worst overall with hardship score increase of 22.6%.

Report: [www.rockinst.org/publications/urban\\_studies/UrbanHardshipUpdate.pdf](http://www.rockinst.org/publications/urban_studies/UrbanHardshipUpdate.pdf)

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### **LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Land Use Study: Unincorporated Areas of the County of Los Angeles**

Wide community reaction to a perception of overdevelopment in the County's unincorporated areas led the LWV/LAC to approve a new Land Use Study in the Spring of 2004.

At their meeting on September 14, 2004, the

LWV/LAC Board approved the following SCOPE: **To assess the feasibility and impact of land development in Los Angeles County's unincorporated areas.**

The Land Use Study Committee will be getting together in November 2004 to determine the range of the Study and the Study materials. The meetings will be held at the LWV/Los Angeles Offices, 3250 Wilshire Blvd., Ste 1005, LA. We will try to arrange a meeting on a Saturday morning from 10 AM to 12 noon. Please contact me at (310) 375-7410, FAX (310) 375-0444 or skyhawk172@socal.rr.com if you are interested in getting in on the ground floor of this topic that has increased the public's concern in communities all over the Southern California region.

*Lola Ungar,*  
LWV/LAC Study Chair

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### **LA TOPS TRAFFIC DELAY LIST BUT INLAND EMPIRE SEES LARGEST INCREASE**

According to a new study by the Texas Transportation Institute, though the Los Angeles area — which includes portions of Ventura and Orange counties — still has the country's worst traffic, motorists in the Inland Empire (Riverside – San Bernardino) who travel during rush hour have endured more than a 500% increase in the amount the time spent stuck in traffic: from 9 hours in 1982 to 57 hours per year on average in 2002.

**ANNUAL HOURS OF DELAY PER TRAVELER**  
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana – 41 hours in 1982, 93 hours in 2002 (current ranking 1)  
San Francisco-Oakland – 30 hours in 1982, 73 hours in 2002 (current travel time index 2)  
San Diego – 8 hours in 1982, 47 hours in 2002 (current travel time index 10)  
San Jose – 25 hours in 1982, 53 hours in 2002 (current travel time index 10)  
Sacramento – 12 hours in 1982, 36 hours in 2002 (current travel time index 23)

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Oxnard-Ventura – 6 hours in 1982, 31 hours in 2002 (current travel time index 40)

Bakersfield – 2 hours in 1982, 7 hours in 2002 (current travel time index 80)

Report PDF: <http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/>

## **MOBILITY 21 COALITION RELEASES TOP TEN TRAFFIC BUSTERS**

Mobility 21 is an LA County effort to bring together elected officials, transportation providers, businesses, local municipalities, labor and community leaders to develop solutions to the transportation issues facing the county. The “Top Ten Traffic Busters” include:

\*\* Alameda Corridor East Railroad/Street Crossing Improvements (\$920,000)

\*\* LA Airport Access Improvements (Green Line Connection & FlyAway System Expansion) (\$120,000)

\*\* Metro Exposition Light Rail Project (Downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica) (\$1,350,000)

\*\* Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension (\$900,000)

\*\* Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension - Pasadena to Montclair (\$1,300,000)

\*\* Metro and Municipal Operators Bus Expansion and Improvements and Metrolink Rail Expansion and Improvements (\$300,000)

The Mobility 21 Coalition also has a smart growth partnership designed to promote better coordination between growth and the transportation system. For more information on the coalition (and to view the full list of traffic busters):

[www.mobility21coalition.com/](http://www.mobility21coalition.com/)

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## **EDUCATION STUDY UPDATE**

Your League should now have the last mailing, the Study Guide and Leader's Guide before receiving this Update. You have received three previous mailings from the committee. All of these are a part of your study kit.

The study committee is available to you, subject to scheduling conflicts. We have funding to travel and be available at your education related forums or your consensus meetings. Also, we will be happy to clarify any questions by email or phone.

The Tri League group in Los Angeles County had an excellent meeting recently where Mary Perry from EdSource talked about school finance issues. The presentation was videotaped and will be available to any League. The price is not yet established, but will not be more than \$15.00. For more information contact Harriet Chase at [hzchase@earthlink.net](mailto:hzchase@earthlink.net) or 310-545-1026.

Funding is still available for mini-grants to Local Leagues to present information to your communities about educational issues. Application forms are in your first mailing and are on the LWVC website. This could either be a meeting this fall to help inform your membership or something in the spring to share the information you have learned with a larger school community.

Please let us know any way we can be helpful to you. This is your committee and we are here to help you in any way we can.

*Joanne Leavitt/Barbara Inatsugu  
LWVC Education Position Update Committee*

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## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **US LAGS IN RENEWABLE ENERGY CAPACITY**

At the end of 2003, the entire United States had only 464 megawatts of wind energy capacity in place (One megawatt can supply about 1,000 homes). Compare that to Germany's capacity of 14,609 megawatts; Spain, 6,202; Denmark, 3,110; and Italy, 904. U.S. solar energy production was about 127 megawatts last year, compared to 331 megawatts in Japan. World Renewable Energy Network.



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
RECOMMENDS  
NOVEMBER 2, 2004 GENERAL ELECTION**

**✓ YES ON PROPOSITION 59      GOVERNMENT OPEN TO THE PEOPLE**  
*Support Proposition 59—Public Records. Open Meetings.*

This measure will add to the State Constitution the requirement that meetings of public bodies and writings of public officials and agencies be open to public scrutiny. California's open government laws have been weakened by special interest legislation, court decisions that put the burden on the public to justify disclosure, and government officials who want to avoid scrutiny and keep secrets. Prop. 59 establishes a new civil right of access to meetings of government bodies and writings of government officials. It protects personal privacy and allows reasonable exceptions in the public interest. Citizens should not have to prove to government officials why they should have access to "public" records and procedures. Prop. 59 shifts the burden, requiring government officials to prove their need for secrecy.

For more information: [www.yesonprop59.org](http://www.yesonprop59.org)

**✗ NO ON PROPOSITION 69      FIGHT ATTACK ON PRIVACY RIGHTS**  
*Oppose Proposition 69—DNA Samples. Collection. Database. Funding.*

More than a fingerprint, DNA exposes personal, private medical information about you and your family. California already has a DNA database for criminals who have committed sexual assault and other serious, violent crimes. Proposition 69 would expand the collection of DNA to include all convicted felons and some nonfelons, and, beginning in 2009, all adults *arrested* for any felony. This expansion is an invasion of privacy not needed for criminal justice. Once individuals are put into the criminal DNA database, they must request a court order to be removed—even if they are factually innocent and never charged with a crime—and the government has no obligation to remove them. Prop. 69 violates the principle that one is innocent until proven guilty.

For more information: [www.protectmydna.com](http://www.protectmydna.com)

**✓ YES ON PROPOSITION 72      SUPPORT CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE**  
*Support Proposition 72—Health Care Coverage Requirements. Referendum.*

Prop. 72 allows a 2003 law (SB 2) to go into effect, giving health coverage to a million uninsured employees and dependents. Prop 72 requires large and mid-sized employers to provide health benefits or contribute to a statewide purchasing pool. About 80 percent of those who will be covered are employees of large companies (200 or more workers) and their families. Small businesses with under 50 employees are exempt from Proposition 72. Rising healthcare costs are a concern to all Californians. Prop 72 will help employees by limiting their share of premiums and out-of-pocket costs; it gives employers marketing power to lower premiums. It will level the playing field for companies that provide health insurance benefits but have to compete against those who don't.

For more information: [www.yesonprop72.com](http://www.yesonprop72.com)

**VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ON NOVEMBER 2**

**League of Women Voters of Whittier and Whittier College**

**Present**

**A Democracy Film Festival: The Right to Vote**

**Saturday, October 23, 2004: 10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**Whittier College, Hoover 100 - Lautrup Ballroom  
13406 Philadelphia Street, Whittier**

**Featured Films with Speakers and Discussion**

**Screening 1: 10:30 a.m.**

**Dying to Vote  
(Producer: Sue Dorfman)**

**No Vote, No Voice  
(Producer: Laurel Greenberg)**

**Screening 2: 11 a.m.**

**Trouble in Paradise  
(Producer: Laurel Greenberg)**

**"...Real-life drama unfolding in the chaotic landscape of Florida politics over the course of a two-year period spanning from Election 2000 to Election 2002."**

**Screening 3: 12:50 p.m.**

**Invisible Ballots  
(Producer: William Gazeckl)**

**Special Guest Speaker to Discuss Electronic Voting Machines (DRE):  
L. A. County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk Conny B. McCormack**

**Screening 4: 2:20 p.m.**

**Chisholm '72 - Unbought & Unbossed  
(Producer: Shola Lynch - P.O.V.)**

**"This screening is held in partnership with P.O.V./American Documentary, PBS's acclaimed non-fiction film series."**

**Come and Join Us for One, a Few or All Films!  
Free Admission, Complimentary Snacks**



**League of Women Voters of Los Angeles Education Fund**

## **LEAGUE DAY**

# **A Look at Charter Schools And K-12 Education Finance**

### **Keynote Speakers:**

**Dr. Roberta Benjamin, LAUSD**

A panel of charter school staff, parents & students

**Dr. Larry Picus, USC School of Education**

Ed Source Board Fiscal Officer

**Friday, November 5, 2004**

**9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

## **CARECEN – Central American Resource Center**

**2845 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Los Angeles, CA 90005**

**Lunch provided by Mama's Hot Tamales**

**Cost \$15.00    More Info: 213/368-1616  
(carpools encouraged – parking is limited)**

**Funding provided by a grant from  
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to the  
League of Women Voters of California Education Fund**

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tear-off

**Checks payable to LWVLA Education Fund, 3250 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1005, Los Angeles, CA 90010**

**Reservation deadline November 1, 2004**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Make \_\_\_\_\_ Reservation(s)                      Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**October 2004**

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

**Margo Reeg, President**  
**Chris Carson, Editor**  
*carsonlww@earthlink.net*

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

**Calendar**

October 6—WPC Meeting,  
LA League Office

October 9—LWVC Training  
Workshops, Orange

October 12—LWVLAC  
Board Meeting, LA League  
Office

October 18—Last day to reg-  
ister to vote!

October 23—Democracy  
Film Festival (see flyer)

November 2—Election Day!!

November 3—WPC Meeting,  
LA League Office

November 9—LWVLAC  
Board Meeting

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*For information, contact [carsonlww@earthlink.net](mailto:carsonlww@earthlink.net)*