

September
2003

LWV/LAC

InterLeague Newsletter

President's Message

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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Hello all!

Summer may not be officially over, but in all practical ways it is. As I write this we are celebrating Labor Day Weekend. Many children are already back in school, others will be starting soon.

My life was tied to the school year for so many years that I always considered this a second chance to start a new year, but this is not a year like any that I can remember. Labor Day is traditionally the kick off for the fall campaign season. Another way this is not a year like any other. In many ways it feels like last November's election cycle never ended. We are already into an election cycle like none we have seen before. Last month I thought I was being extreme when I said there might be 30+ names on the ballot. Was I ever wrong, it is 130+ and still changing as names drop off. I hesitate to write about it because what I write today may be wrong in two or three days when you read this.

This is a challenge to League and I am well pleased at the way we are meeting it. The state officers and staff are giving excellent direction. I hope all of you are reading

LWVCNews and checking frequently. Every League in the county is now on line and we have been trying to keep you updated, which is an effort we will continue.

As I read your Voters it seems each individual League is doing something to register voters, get out the vote and make sure people are informed as to what this election is all about.

A couple of vacation experiences to share. Being away from the phone and sharing a computer with others gave me time to read. I picked up the books my son had around the house that are things that I had wanted to read. First I read "Nickled and Dimed" by Barbara Ehrenreich. An easy read, but worth reading. Really brought the affordable housing crisis home and it is not just in California. Then I read Jonathan Kozal's latest "Ordinary Resurrections--Children in the years of hope". Kozal is one of my favorite writers and this book is much more hopeful than "Rachel and Her Children" or "Savage Inequities"; showcases one small program that is making a difference in the lives of the children it touches. The last book I read was "An Hour Before Daylight", Jimmy Carter's story of growing up in the rural deep south. Not new books, but well worth reading. I am sure

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having this time to read had something to do with not trying to wade through the Los Angeles Times every morning!

The other one happened back here at home. I want to thank those who carried on so well while I was gone. People fielded phone calls, forwarded messages from state and national offices to the local Leagues and generally kept things humming so I was able to relax and enjoy. Again, thank you all!

Several important meetings are coming up soon. The State Workshops will be September 20th, a County League Day on County Government is coming up October 4th and November 15th will be the first joint L.A. City/County League Day on "Prop. 13--25 Years Later. There are lots of local events as the active part of the League year starts up. I would encourage you to set a membership goal that is challenging. Our visibility is high now and it is a good time to reach out. Link the two together and see what you can do!

Joanne Leavitt
ac997@lafn.org

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DEBATE ON COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Local League members throughout Los Angeles County will gather at Taix Restaurant on Saturday, October 4th to hear study committee members debate whether to retain the current positions on enlargement of the Board of Supervisors and creation of the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This meeting will prepare members for the county government study in local Leagues this fall. The luncheon speaker, Michael Feuer, will present his views on Los Angeles County government. In addition, League Voter Service speakers will present the pros and cons on the two October ballot measures.

The LWV-LAC position on County Government was first adopted 43 years ago and has been studied twice since then. The current position supporting

expansion and separation of executive and legislative functions of the Board of Supervisors has been acted upon four times by the League since 1976. In 1992 the League supported both the expansion to nine Board members and the creation of the elected position of CEO. After failure of both those linked propositions, LWV-LAC supported the unsuccessful 2000 ballot measure to expand the Board to nine members.

Last year members throughout the county voted to do a short study of county governance with a scope limited to Board expansion and separation of powers by the creation of a chief executive officer position in the charter. At summer League Day local League members attended the study workshop, led by chair Katherine Dunlap, and heard Prof. Raphael Sonenshein present his views on county government. The study kit has been distributed and Leagues will take consensus in their local units prior to the December deadline.

Georganne Thomsen,
LWV-LAC Government Study Member

SPECIAL RECALL ELECTION

With 135 candidates for Governor listed on the ballot, voters are urged to study the Sample Ballot they receive before going to the polls. The order in which candidates are listed was decided by random drawings and will not be the same in every precinct. It is suggested that you write down the number listed next to the name of the candidate you want to vote for before going to vote, as these numbers will correspond to those on the ballot for your precinct. It is also important to note the address of your polling place that appears on the back of the Sample Ballot as polling places have been consolidated and may be different from previous locations. Polling places used in the last election will have signs posted saying where voters in that precinct should go. If possible go to the correct location to vote since the ballot order of candidates may not be the same for all precincts and Provisional Ballots would be difficult to correlate. Los Angeles County's ballot will

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contain Part 1, Part 2, and Propositions 53 and 54 on one ballot card. Some other counties may have to use more than one card.

Part 1 asks: Shall Gray Davis be recalled as Governor of California? Part 2 lists candidates to replace Governor Davis in the event the majority of voters vote to recall him. If you vote not to recall the Governor, you can also vote for your choice to replace him in the event he is recalled. Election information is available on the Internet at www.lavote.net, <http://gb.ca.lwvnet.org>, and <http://www.smartvoter.org>.

Arline Ames, LWVLAC Government Consultant

NATURAL RESOURCES

Turning on the Light

In early June, I attended an Energy Conference with 22 other members of the League in Sacramento. We had been invited by the Energy Commission and their staff. In addition, Chairman Keese of the Energy Commission officiated. Much of the information was technical along with an alphabet soup of euphemisms, but I will try to give you the gist of the all day meeting.

The current market for electricity and natural gas in the State is generally characterized as a hybrid system. To provide adequate capacity for electricity, the system must first determine the need for supply, then determine efficient and reliable linkages between generation, transmission and distribution. As required by law, the Energy Commission staff is proposing an Energy Plan for the future of California. Here are some examples of ways in which the Plan moves beyond current planning and coordination. The Plan sets goals for peak demand reduction through a variable pricing system. The Commission will be evaluating the pricing systems in a pending proceeding. The Plan declares an appropriate capacity range for new electric resource additions and an appropriate range for reserve margins. Similarly, the Plan also declares a level of needed new peaking capacity.

The Commission staff emphasized that three specific new transmission projects are needed. One of the projects, the Path 15 upgrade south of San Francisco, is the subject of two draft decisions that are currently pending before the Commission. The Path 15 upgrade is proposed to improve approximately 84 miles of high-capacity transmission lines between PG&E's Los Banos and Gates Substations that connect customers in northern and southern California. Staff members elaborated on the necessity for this Path 15 upgrade to close a weak link in the state grid. The other two – a second Palo Verde-Devers line and an expansion to serve wind farms in Tehachapi -- are as-of-yet not even the subject of formal applications are also emphasized. The Plan proposes that sufficient new transmission must be built to ensure high quality power supply throughout the state. The Plan also suggests the adoption of exemptions for various technologies at levels not represented by any Commission orders as yet.

Basically, I learned that the California Energy Commission (CEC) is looking for support for their Plan because they speak to the transmission capacity needs while the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) determines whether the financial costs can be justified. During the events of the day, we became aware that though some re-regulation is essential, overall pressures toward some market responsiveness are great and likely to prevail. We Leaguers also urged the Commission to continue to support new technologies that supply more alternative energy.

Finally, Chairman Keese commented that from his perspective the League's input seemed to give the commissioners some justification for what they would like to recommend in the way of policies.

Lola Ungar, LWVLAC Land Use Director

Our Connections Are Many and Varied

The recent blackouts in the northeastern United States bring home to us all how interdependent modern industrial society is. While the ultimate cause is not yet clear, it does appear as if some

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anomalies in Ohio created the beginnings of a problem that cascaded throughout the electrical grid in the northeast U. S. and southwestern Canada. Very small problems became very large problems and affected millions people, disrupting business and curtailing recreational activity. The interconnectedness brings efficiencies in power use but it also brings greater risks and potential instability.

California has developed much interconnectedness in the delivery of water. This interconnectedness extends from the far north of the State to the far south. It is useful to look at the nature of some of these connections and how they may affect us in the future. In southern California, we are able to maintain our lifestyle because of three aqueous arteries that bring this much needed liquid to us: the Los Angeles Aqueduct that brings water from the Owens Lake region to the City of Los Angeles; The California Aqueduct which brings water from the San Francisco Bay Delta to Southern California; and the Colorado Aqueduct which brings water from the Colorado River to our region.

Thus, we are connected to the watersheds that feed the Owens Valley, the Bay Delta, and the Colorado River. These water sheds include the eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Western Sierra Nevada Mountains, the area around Mount Shasta, the Trinity River watershed (Trinity River water is pumped over the mountains to the Sacramento River) and the entire Colorado River watershed (which extends into Wyoming). Events in all of these regions-such as earthquakes, fires, pollution, local population growth--can have effects both on the quantity of our supply and on its quality.

We can reduce our dependence on imported water, and improve the reliability of our supply, by focusing on two important activities: conservation and recycling. Southern California showed in the drought of the early 1990s that it could conserve water by reducing consumption. Many of the ways we did that involved structural changes -low-flush toilets, low-flow showerheads, etc.-which produce reductions that continue into the future.

Southern California also does a great deal of recycling of water. Treated recycled water is used to irrigate golf courses, is injected into the ground near the ocean to prevent salt-water intrusion into coastal aquifers, and is percolated into other groundwater systems.

As population continues to grow, we will have to continue to seek additional ways to conserve water and to recycle it. We will be asked to consider changes in the way we develop our residential gardens (better than 50% of the water in each household is applied outside the house) and to focus more on native plants and less on grass and plants with high water needs. We will also be asked to accept more uses of recycled water. We should also demand that policies be developed that allow us easily to re-use grey water in our homes (from washing machines and dishwashers) to irrigate our gardens.

We are highly dependent on other watersheds for our water supply. It is unlikely that we will be able to expect additional supplies from those watersheds. It is likely that we will remain dependent on them for the foreseeable future.. We can, however, reduce somewhat our dependence on those watersheds by increasing the efficiency in the way we use our current supply through conservation and recycling. In future articles, we will look more closely at issues involving the S. F. Bay Delta, the Salton Sea, the California Water Project, and the Colorado River.

John D. Sullivan, LWVC Natural Resources

UPGRADE OF FOSTER CARE

The proposal is a result of a federal threat to withhold funds for child welfare services. This June the federal government approved an ambitious California plan to improve child welfare services within two years, including reducing incidents of abuse in foster care and setting uniform training standards for social workers and foster parents.

State officials said the plan is designed to improve the safety of children, particularly in Los Angeles

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County, which has 40% of the state's 97, 000 children in foster care. But they also expressed concerns that the state budget shortfall could slow funding of the reforms.

Major features of the plan include providing more supportive services to troubled families and less court intervention to remove children from parent's care. Biological parents will have more say in what happens to their children even if there is a need to place them in out-of-home care.

The state intends to create a more vigorous monitoring system and hold counties accountable for meeting new standards, issues that children's advocates have long urged the state to address. The approved plan seeks to reduce the number of children who are repeatedly abused, limit the movement of children from foster home to foster home, bolster efforts to reunify children with their biological parents and streamline adoption services.

Harriet Chase, LWVLA Children's Services Consultant, Abstracted from the L.A. Times

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A review of the state budget's effect upon children in the 2003-04 budget year shows "basic survival" in this time of fiscal crisis.

The budget calls for approximately \$384 million in cuts and savings to child care with the primary results being the 8% reduction in child care provider rates and the elimination of subsidies for 13-year-olds. While the funding for CDPAC, the Child Development Policy Advisory Committee, was eliminated, there was a "victory" of sorts in that funding for childcare and development programs were not realigned to the counties as first proposed.

According to CDPI, the Child Development Policy Institute, the budget uses \$188 million in "one time" funds and \$74 million of "reduced caseload estimates" which probably won't be available next year. This leaves child care and development in a \$262 million hole when discussions begin on the 2004-05 budget.

The budget retains the June, 2003 cost of living adjustments (COLAs) for CalWORKS (welfare reform) programs, but suspends 2003-04 COLAs. It further shifts \$11 million of federal TANF dollars from CalWORKS to Child Welfare Services and authorizes state participation in the federal transitional food stamp program. This will provide Californians with \$70 million in food stamps at an estimated state cost of \$2.5 million.

K-12 education is funded \$288 million below last year's budget as enacted in September, 2002. This will result in a \$180 per pupil funding drop from \$7,067 to \$6,887. The budget funds the basic allocation school districts receive from the state, but does not fund enrollment growth in categorical programs or COLAs in either revenue limits or categorical programs. It also delays until July, 2004 payment for \$1.2 billion in K-12 payments for programs operated in 2003-04.

Budget reductions hit all state departments including the Department of Child Support Services. The state is still being assessed stiff federal penalties for lack of a single statewide computer program for child support collections. Because child support agencies in California are funded with state and federal funds, Los Angeles County was hit with a \$10.6 million reduced allocation. This has resulted in the County Child Support Services Department having to lay off 15 permanent and 107 temporary staff members.

The CSSD managed approximately 500,000 child support cases, collecting \$465 million on behalf of children and families last year. While L.A. County has 28% of the state's population and 25% of the child support caseload, it receives only 20% of statewide funding for child support services.

Acknowledging the state's dire financial situation, most everyone agrees the budget impact on children could have been worse while expressing concern about future years.

Jean F. Cohen, Chair, LWVC Working Party for Children

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BOWLING ALONE

Robert Putnam, the acclaimed author of *Bowling Alone* came to a Santa Monica League salon on a Friday evening in July to talk about his book and the work he has been doing on civic life and social capital. The core of his argument – that created a new field research when the article of the same name appeared in the 1998 – is that, while there are more bowlers in America than ever before, there are fewer bowling leagues. It matters because informal - - or even formal social networks such as organizations like the League of Women Voters and bowling leagues – have a great deal to do with the health of a society. He made the point, in fact, that they also have a great deal to do with the health of individuals: meetings are good for you! They actually prolong life!

The salon was a small fundraiser for the Santa Monica League and those attending received a signed copy of his book (as well as excellent deserts), but it was also as good a way to spend an evening as one can imagine. The Harvard professor talked about what an amazing thing it was to come to California just when our democracy seems to be falling in upon itself. If you carry his point about loss of the benefits to society of individuals spending their lives in social networks, it is clear that government is also endangered. Trust is down everywhere. And nowhere are people more isolated from one another than in the state of California. When you are part of a group, you feel you can make a difference; when you are not a participant, government is far away and out of reach and it is not difficult to see how, at least in our case, government has become frustrating and an object of anger.

Putnam has a lot to say to the League, beginning with the fact that we, like every other major membership organization in the United States began in the same period: from the late 19th Century to the 1920s. And, like every other membership organization, we have suffered declining membership since the late 1960s/mid-1970s. When organizations began to notice, first the leveling off, and then

actual drop, the tendency was first to blame last year's program chair, then to call for stronger leadership in a membership committee. The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, this is a national, indeed, an international phenomenon. Every developed nation, with the possible exception of Great Britain, is suffering organizational decline. The difference in England is – not so much that they have solved the problem – but that they are addressing it directly in government and through the schools.

National organizations developed to solve the problems of the day: dramatic changes in technology and communication, and the loss of community. The League, and what Putnam calls the “animal clubs:” Elks, Moose, etc., replaced sewing bees and barn raisings. They were an urban and suburban solution to the loss of small town communities. The industrial revolution brought huge shifts in the economy, including frequent depressions, large deficits, immigration, etc. Problems, not unlike those we face today. The question is what mechanisms can we develop to cope with them? Membership organizations may – or may not – be today's answer. Nor, for that matter, can the Internet – which does get us away from television – answer. E-mail helps keep us in touch, but it is not sufficient for establishing relationships. Face-to-face communication must take place from time to time. His next book will look for examples.

Xandra Kayden, LWVUS Board Member

EDUCATION UPDATE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The ad hoc committee planning the process for updating the LWVC Education position is seeking League members with some specific experiences to assure a diversity of perspectives. Do you know someone who has these experiences and is interested in working on the committee? Will you volunteer? A person with one or more of these experiences would be valued as a committee member:

- has children currently in elementary school
- current or past school board member
- member or officer of an employees union

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- current or former classroom teacher.

The committee is also looking for a member from northern California and one from a rural area. The ad hoc committee already includes members who are willing to continue as part of the update/study committee and who have the following backgrounds: parent involvement/past PTA Council president, readiness to learn/pre-school, classified administrator, parent of secondary school age children in public school, former classroom teacher, and former administrative (confidential) employee in a K-12 district. Geographic areas already represented are Los Angeles County, Central Valley, and the Bay Area.

If anyone from your League is interested, please ask them to contact Joanne Leavitt, ad hoc committee chair, at ac997@lafn.org

TRANSPORTATION

ecommute PROGRAM LAUNCHES PHASE III

The Global Environment & Technology Foundation (GETF) announces the launch of the new ecommute Program website to support the Telework and Emissions Trading Study (known as the ecommute Program). GETF has teamed up with five local pilot cities, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Resources for the Future (RFF) to implement Phase III of the ecommute Program. The ultimate goal of the ecommute Program is to achieve meaningful emission reduction results, develop credible analysis and strategy to communicate those results, and stimulate replication of the approaches that work to provide incentives for the greater use of telework in meeting air quality goals. Learn more about telecommuting and the ecommute Program at <http://www.ecommute.net>.

And according to the website above, LA is the only pilot city in California:

The Southern California Economic Partnership (The Partnership) is the local ecommute Program

administrator in the Los Angeles area. The Partnership is working with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to institute the Los Angeles ecommute Program, which commenced in April 2000. Los Angeles is focusing its effort on activities that will have an impact in the South Coast Air Quality Management District and can potentially leverage their active Regional Clean Air Incentives Market (RECLAIM) for emissions trading.

The greater Los Angeles market is one of the largest in the country covering five counties: Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernadino, Riverside and Ventura. The region has a population of approximately 17 million people in an area of more than 38,000 square miles.

The South Coast region in California, which include the greater Los Angeles area, is an "extreme" non-attainment area for ground-level ozone, and is in serious non-attainment for both particulate matter and carbon monoxide. In addition, with its large population (about half the population of the state, and the second most populous area in the U.S.), the South Coast region suffers from tremendous traffic congestion. For Los Angeles, involvement in the ecommute Program represents an innovative means in which employers can contribute to relieving traffic congestion and improving the region's air quality.

Official website: <http://www.the-partnership.org/ecommute/index.htm>

Chris Carson, LWVLAC Transportation Director

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Corrections and updates to the County Yearbook will be emailed directly to Board members, local Leagues, consultants and others who received the Yearbook.



PROS & CONS

801 12th Street, Suite 220, Sacramento, CA 95814

Press Date August 21, 2003

STATEWIDE SPECIAL ELECTION

OCTOBER 7, 2003

There will be three questions on this statewide special election ballot: a two-part question regarding the recall of the governor; Proposition 53; and Proposition 54.

The recall question contains two parts. You may vote on both parts or on just one. The first part will ask, "Shall Gray Davis be recalled (removed) from the office of governor?" The second part will list the names of candidates running to replace the governor if he is recalled. If you choose to vote for a replacement candidate, you may vote for only one of those candidates. For more information: www.smartvoter.org, www.ca.lwv.org

PROPOSITION 53 FUNDS DEDICATED FOR STATE AND LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE Legislative Constitutional Amendment

THE QUESTION

Should the California Constitution be amended to require specified percentages of General Fund revenues to be committed to pay-as-you-go infrastructure projects for state and local governments?

THE SITUATION

California has hundreds of billions of dollars invested in public infrastructure. This includes facilities and structures for water resources, transportation, higher education, natural resources, criminal justice, health services, and office space. In addition, the state provides funds for local infrastructure, including K-12 schools and community colleges, streets and roads, parks, water treatment, flood control, and jails. This infrastructure, from time to time, requires modernization or expansion. State infrastructure needs are estimated at \$54 billion over the next five years.

At present the only major dedicated revenues are for transportation (highways and mass transit). In the past five years the state has spent about \$2.3 billion annually on that infrastructure. Most state infrastructure projects use funds from general obligation bonds that must be presented to the voters for approval, or lease-revenue bonds approved by the legislature and repaid out of rent payments. The state has spent about \$4.2 billion of bond proceeds annually over the past five years. Direct General Fund appropriations, called "pay-as-you-go financing," have

totaled about \$275 million annually in the past five years.

THE PROPOSAL

- establishes an infrastructure investment fund and commits a percentage of the General Fund for "pay-as-you-go" infrastructure projects
- requires the Legislature to allocate the funds annually—50 percent for state-owned projects and 50 percent for local government projects, other than schools and community colleges
- transfers 1 percent of General Fund revenues to the infrastructure fund beginning with the 2006-07 fiscal year, and increases transfers to the fund annually over several years to a maximum of 3 percent of General Fund revenues. Transfers would be subject to increase, decrease, or suspension with revenue increases and decreases.
- reduces the transfer rate if growth in the Proposition 98 school funding guarantee exceeds the percentage growth in revenue. Caps transfers so that total of transfers plus debt payment for bonds would not exceed 7.5 percent of revenue.

FISCAL EFFECT

The amount of transfers from the General Fund to the infrastructure fund is difficult to determine. The Legislative Analyst's estimate for 2006-07 is \$850 million, increasing to several billion dollars when transfers reach the 3 percent maximum rate.

SUPPORTERS SAY

- The Legislature has failed to keep up with critical infrastructure needs such as highways, water systems, and universities in California, and that is damaging both our economy and our quality of life.
- Proposition 53 would meet those needs without raising taxes by requiring a stable pay-as-you-go system of infrastructure financing.

OPPONENTS SAY

- Less than 30 percent of the state budget is currently discretionary. Proposition 53 locks in spending increases out of limited existing revenues, meaning that the money will come at the expense of other important services such as education, health care and public safety.
- It is a blank check with no oversight or guidelines, which will allow more pork barrel spending by the Legislature.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Supporters

Yes on California's Future,
Yes on Prop 53
916-444-5701
www.yeson53.org

Opponents

California Tax Reform Association
916-446-4300

PROPOSITION 54

CLASSIFICATION BY RACE, ETHNICITY, COLOR, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN

Initiative Constitutional Amendment

THE QUESTION

Should the California Constitution be amended to restrict state and local governments from "classifying" (collecting and using) information on an individual's race, ethnicity, color, or national origin?

THE SITUATION

Currently, information relating to race, ethnicity, color, and national origin is collected by state and local government institutions on individuals for various purposes, all allowable by the state constitution. Much of the information collected is required by the federal government to assure compliance with federal nondiscrimination legislation and as a condition for receiving federal funds. The state constitution prohibits state and local government agencies from discriminating against or granting "preferential treatment" to any individual or group based on race, color, ethnicity or national origin in public employment, public education, and public contracting.

THE PROPOSAL

Proposition 54 prohibits the classifying (collection and use) of race-related information by state and local governments, effective January 1, 2005. The exceptions are:

- to comply with federal law
- to remain eligible to receive federal monies
- to comply with a court order in force as of 1/1/05
- to allow law enforcement agencies to describe individuals
- to place prisoners and assign undercover officers
- to collect and use information related to medical research subjects and patients
- to allow the Department of Fair Employment and Housing to collect certain race-related data through 2014.

Race-related information could continue to be collected and used in areas other than public education, contracting, and employment if "classification" of those individuals is approved by a 2/3 majority of the Legislature and by the Governor as serving a compelling state interest.

For some current government activities, the effect of the measure is unknown and would depend on future interpretation of the measure's language by courts and future actions by the Legislature.

FISCAL EFFECT

State and local governments could experience minor one-time costs to modify forms and data collection systems. Minor annual savings might be experienced due to reduced data collection and use. Overall, no significant fiscal effect is expected.

SUPPORTERS SAY

- Labeling people as to their ancestry and racial background without their knowledge and/or consent is an invasion of privacy.
- Government-imposed racial classifications have been used to divide people by emphasizing minor differences rather than common interests and values. We should stop categorizing citizens and create a color-blind society where we're all just Americans.
- The California Constitution forbids state and local governments from discriminating against or granting preferential treatment based on race; therefore there is no need to classify people by race, ethnicity, color or national origin.

OPPONENTS SAY

- Preventing the collection, analysis and use of race-related data will hinder the ability to address disparities by race and ethnicity in public health, education, crime prevention, and civil rights enforcement.
- The exceptions leave open questions about the scope of the prohibitions, making numerous legal challenges a certainty.
- America is not close to being a color-blind society. We need to understand our differences in order to deal with them in a positive way.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Supporters

American Civil Rights Coalition
916-444-2278
www.racialprivacy.org

Opponents

Coalition for an Informed California
510-452-2728
www.informedcalifornia.org

ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2003

Polls are open from
7am to 8pm



www.smartvoter.org

- ✓ Personal Complete Ballot
- ✓ Polling Place Lookup Including Map
- ✓ Candidate Statements ✓ Election Results

QUALIFICATIONS FOR VOTING

In order to vote in the October 7th election, you must be:

- ✓ 18 years old
- ✓ a resident of the state
- ✓ registered to vote
- ✓ not in prison or on parole for a felony conviction
- ✓ not have been judged mentally incompetent by a court

WHEN DO YOU NEED TO RE-REGISTER TO VOTE?

- ✓ When you move
- ✓ When you change your name
- ✓ When you want to change your political party affiliation.

Last Day to Register to Vote

September 22, 2003

First Day to Apply for an Absentee Ballot

September 8, 2003

Last Day County Elections Officials Will Accept Absentee Ballot Application by Mail

September 30, 2003

Secretary of State: www.ss.ca.gov



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS RECOMMENDS
OCTOBER 2003 SPECIAL ELECTION

✓ NO ON PROPOSITION 53

DEDICATED SPENDING

Oppose Proposition 53—Funds Dedicated for State and Local Infrastructure. This measure would lock into the state constitution a new program of pay-as-you-go infrastructure funding. It is true that public works projects are needed, but Prop 53 is the wrong way to pay for them. Legislators would allocate funds, half to state and half to local projects of their choice, with no requirement for funding the projects of greatest need and no accountability. K-12 schools and community colleges would be excluded. Prop 53 does not provide new revenue but simply earmarks funds, even if that means cuts for essential health care, education, public safety, or other programs. Even in hard times, transfers from the General Fund might still be required, reducing the state's flexibility in setting priorities.

✓ NO ON PROPOSITION 54

INFORMATION BAN

Oppose Proposition 54—Classification by Race, Ethnicity, Color, or National Origin. This constitutional amendment would ban state and local governments from using information essential to public health, education reforms, crime prevention, and civil rights enforcement—even though much of this data would still have to be collected to meet federal mandates. The medical "exemption" is poorly written, will invite litigation, and could jeopardize the use of information important in fighting cancer, heart disease, diabetes, the spread of infectious diseases and other illnesses. The California Medical Association and more than 40 other health organizations agree that Proposition 54 is bad medicine for all Californians.

VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ON OCTOBER 7



Why Does It Matter?

Adapted from the newsletter of the Association of Bay Area Governments

The morning news details another mugging; it is news because, this time, it is in a “good” neighborhood. Pouring your morning coffee, you wonder why the police are not more vigilant. Later you hear that the mugger has been caught and this is not his first offense. You wonder what his probation officer has been doing.

Driving your grandson to school, there is additional graffiti on the overpass near the school, and last week’s swear words have not yet been erased. As you leave your grandson at the school, you think about how large his class has grown, that the building needs paint, and that he has complained that there is no orange construction paper (and it’s October!).

On the way to the grocery store you drive over another pothole. It is getting harder to avoid the corners where homeless folks stand with signs such as, “Will work for food.”

You want to stop at the library on your way home, but realize that the library has cut back its hours and will not open until noon. You wonder why the city is not acting more quickly to solve the problems that are affecting your quality of life.

A cogent argument can be made that there IS a connection between the above thoughts and the fact that your community has fewer and fewer resources, and many of those resources have strings attached. The state’s authority to allocate resources strikes at the very heart of a local government’s ability to meet public demands and expectations. Although not “sexy,” state and local finances matters more than we may have realized!



Something to Think About— Doing the Math

Assume a neighbor earns \$1 million annually and you earn \$30,000. You buy a used Ford Escort for \$10,000. With a sales tax of 7% you pay \$700 in sales tax; this is 2.3 percent of your yearly income. Your neighbor buys a new BMW for \$40,000; he pays \$2,800 in sales tax or 3/10 of 1 percent (0.3%) of his income for the tax on his car purchase.

You each need a new refrigerator and purchase the same model for \$900. About \$63 in sales tax is almost 11 percent of your weekly paycheck. Your richer neighbor pays 1/3 of 1 percent of his weekly paycheck in sales tax for the same item.

You are contributing 12 times as much of your income in sales tax to support your state government as your neighbor, despite the fact that his income far exceeds yours.

It quickly becomes apparent that the sales tax has a far greater impact on the middle class and working poor than on the wealthy.

From Dick Seeley, LWV Glendale/Burbank

Southern California Area

LWVC Membership Training Workshops

Topics:

**Voter Service, Elections and Beyond
Fund Development
League 101 or Introduction to League
Membership Recruitment and Retention**

Saturday, September 20, 2003

Registration/Coffee: 9:30 AM

Workshops: 10:00-3:00 PM

**Location: Center - Sisters of St. Joseph
480 South Batavia, Orange**

\$20.00 Lunch/Registration, if payment received by September 13th

\$25.00 Lunch/Registration, if paid at the door

\$5.00 Registration Only/Brown Bag

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Send registration and checks payable to LWVC, to: Joanne Leavitt,
2920 Kansas Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90404

Name: _____

League: _____

No. of Persons: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

What's Wrong with L.A. County Government?

Saturday, October 4
9:30 am-2:00 pm
(Including lunch)

TAIX Restaurant
1911 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles

Conveniently located near the Hollywood Fwy and Alvarado

Valet parking \$1.25

Featured Speaker Michael Feuer

This County League Day will help prepare you
for the fall County Government Study consensus in your local League.

Mail your check for \$25 payable to LWV-LAC by Sept. 24 to:

Gwen Cochran 427 E. Walnut Ave. Burbank CA 91501

Name: _____

League: _____

Phone: _____

Lunch choice: Chicken Salad Vegetarian Salad

September 2003

**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

September 10—LWVLAC
Board Meeting, LA League
Office

September 20—LWVC
Member Training Workshop
– Orange (see flyer)

October 4—County League
Day (see flyer)

October 7—Recall Election

October 14—LWVLAC
Board Meeting, LA League
Office

October 30—WPC Meeting,
10:00 am, LA League Office

October 30-November 1—
OpenGov03 Conference; see
www.CFAC.org

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For information, contact carsonlww@earthlink.net