



LWV/LAC VOTER

March 2006

CALENDAR

- March 25** **LWV Los Angeles County Annual Convention** **9:30 – 2:30** (see flyer p. 3)
Almanson Court, 700 Almanson in Alhambra
Speaker: Susan Lerner, California Clean Money
- March 14 LWV/LAC Board Meeting at Burbank Police Dept. 10:00 – 2:00
- March 16 EdSource Conference Sheraton Suites Fairplex, Pomona 9:00 – 3:00
- March 16 **Open Government Forum Glendale Public Library** **7:00 – 8:30 p.m.**
LWV Glendale-Burbank
- March 18 LWV SoCal Environmental Action Comm. At Fullerton Public Library 10:00 am
- March 27 Last Day to Register to Vote for Municipal Elections
- April 11** **ELECTION DAY** **VOTE in Local Elections**
- April 22 LWVLA League Day on Homeland /Security at MWD
- April 29 Ballot Briefing for June Primary and “How to Prepare to do a Ballot Measure”
Hollenbeck Home 573 S. Boyle Ave. Los Angeles 10:00 – Noon
- May 6-7 LWV Leadership Council in Sacramento
- June 6** **Primary Election for California and Los Angeles County**
- June 10 – 14 LWVUS Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota

President’s Message

Congratulations to the Louisiana League!

The President of the Louisiana League was invited by Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco to attend the signing ceremony for these bills for which the League had fought. Our League colleagues in Louisiana succeeded in getting the Louisiana Legislature to pass three laws that will preserve the voting rights of Hurricane Katrina refugees whose homes were destroyed in New Orleans. These laws will allow temporarily displaced citizens who had registered to vote before the disaster occurred to cast ballots in the New Orleans mayoral election on April 22, 2006. Voters may vote at the office of the registrar in 10 satellite parishes during the early voting period. In addition voters who have not registered elsewhere will be allowed to request and vote an absentee ballot and to continue to receive ballots by mail for one year. Voters who had registered by mail before the hurricane and had not voted in person will also be allowed to vote by mail and receive mail ballots for one year. I also learned from a recent article in the LA TIMES, that the post office is helping to update the addresses of displaced New Orleans persons who have moved since their initial evacuation to facilitate their being able to vote.

Voting Rights Act

In December I testified in favor of the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act at a hearing held by the Senate Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendment committee in LA. I participated in a panel of “good government” proponents at the opening of the hearing. Following the statements of general support for the Voting Rights Act, another panels stated the case for the renewal of Section 5 that requires preclearance of any changes in election procedures

in specific counties with a prior history of discrimination. The third panel advocated for renewal of Section 203 that requires language assistance in counties with significant second language populations.

Conny McCormack, LA County Registrar-Recorder County Clerk testified in favor of renewal, stating that she had implemented all the language requirements. It was an effort but was worthwhile because of the increase in voter participation. Orange County Supervisor, Chris Norby, argued against the language provisions citing costs and lack of need. During public testimony a number of constituents representing English Only argued against Section 203.

Reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act

League members attended the conference February 4 at USC on the reauthorization of the federal Voting Rights Act and learned important strategies for making Congressional visits and holding a public forum on the crucial elements in the Voting Rights Act that will expire in 2007 unless reauthorized this year. Action on the Voting Rights Act will be forthcoming.

ACTION

In January and February many Calls to Action from LWVC and Action Alerts from LWVUS demanded attention because the issues directly impact services in Los Angeles County. We made many phone calls urging the passage of **AB 583** (Hancock) the California Clean Money bill to move it out of committees and to pass the Assembly floor vote. It now heads to the Senate. We also sent letters to all Congressmembers for LA County urging them to vote against the February 9 compromise wording in the renewal of the **USA PATRIOT Act**. Senator Boxer replied that she had voted for greater privacy requirements and protections in the Senate bill but the House version did not contain those protections. She helped to get an extension of the present version until March in order to hammer out a more acceptable final version. The bill has passed the Senate.

In earlier action on the federal level the League lobbied Congressmembers to vote against severe cuts to social programs in the **Budget Reconciliation Act** affecting children’s health, child support, Medicaid, food stamps, and other low-income programs which would be felt severely in the county. Despite our concerted efforts significant cuts were made to vital programs in the final budget. Most recently we called our Congressmembers to solicit their support for strong ethics and lobbying reform.

Finally, in January we held a successful League Day on the LWVC Energy Update Study. (See article later in this issue.) Even though we have not published a VOTER recently the League has continued to be active. Thanks to everyone who has attended meetings, written letters, made calls and worked on consensus. You are the heart of the League.

Margo Reeg



PROS AND CONS and ELECTION INFO

Please remember to order your *Election Info* guides for the June Primary from the County League. You will receive an order form at the County Convention. LWV/LAC will produce the traditional “wrap-around” with information about candidates for Superior Court Judge as well as for Supervisors in the 1st and 3rd Districts, Sheriff and Assessor. They will be delivered in late April in time for the Ballot Briefing. **Pros and Cons** will be included so please do not order from LWVC. County will charge no more than LWVC and you will receive much more.



League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County

The Los Angeles County League is an inter-League organization serving Leagues throughout Los Angeles County: Beach Cities, Beverly Hills, Claremont Area, Downey Area, East San Gabriel Valley, Glendale/Burbank, Los Angeles, Long Beach Area, Palos Verdes Peninsula/San Pedro, Pasadena Area, Santa Monica, Torrance, and Whittier.

44th Annual Convention

Speaker: **Susan Lerner**

Executive Director, California Clean Money

Topic: **Clean Money, AB 583**

Campaign Finance Reform and Public Financing of Campaigns in California and LA County

Saturday **March 25, 2006 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

Almanson Court
700 Almanson Street
Alhambra, CA 91801

Directions: From 10 freeway:
Exit Garfield north; Cross Valley Blvd;
Turn right on Park St.
Continue 4 blks to Almanson St.
Left on Almanson and Right to parking

Convention Kits for delegates will be mailed to Presidents at the end of February. Additional copies will be available at the meeting. **All members are encouraged to attend.**

Reservations for convention and lunch **by March 15: \$28 per person**
Reservations **from March 16-20: \$30 each**

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

Name(s): _____

(Please indicate which members are delegates [D]and which are non-delegates[NV]
League: _____

No. Reservations _____ @28.00 Total Reservation Fees\$ _____

No. Reservations _____ @30.00 Total Reservation Fees \$ _____

No. Chicken Entrée _____ No. Vegetarian _____ No Nuts Entree _____

Please remember to bring canned or boxed goods or a check for the L A Regional Food Bank

KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON II

Deregulation of energy and electricity in California has been “a rousing failure” avowed Assemblyman Lloyd Levine, (D-40) of Van Nuys at the LA County League Day on Energy and the LWVC Energy Update Study at the Taix Restaurant on Saturday, January 28. Mr. Levine is Chair of the Assembly Utilities and Commerce Committee.

Assemblyman Levine’s talk addressed “Where We Were, Where We Are, and Where We’re Going in California Energy Policy.” Since the collapse of the deregulated energy market in California in 2000, the state has created a new market structure for energy that is “not unregulated.” California now has a CPUC requirement of 15% reserve capacity.

He described the energy market as a triangle with Price, Reliability, and Environment as the points. As the market approaches the cheapest price there is a loss of reliability and less environmental protection. Greater reliability increases cost and sacrifices environmental protection or level of green energy sources. Heavier reliance on green energy sources results in higher costs and lower reliability. So all these elements must be balanced.

In describing the current generation capacity for the state and prospects for the future, Levine stated that California must have baseload capacity of clean energy plants that operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Peak load generators tend to be dirtier and less efficient.

Levine predicts that California will build no new nuclear, coal or oil generation plants because of the toxic nuclear waste danger and the high air pollution from coal and oil. Policy can prevent the utilities from purchasing power from out of state coal-fired plants also. He also stated that California will not build any new hydroelectric plants because there are very few potential sites and the environmental community “will never allow it.” For the near future California will rely on natural gas-fired plants for electricity. Because California is not rich in natural gas resources we are dependent on suppliers in Canada and El Paso, Texas.

To increase our supply of power generation California can increase the supply of natural gas with one option being Liquefied Natural Gas terminals and/or other non-fossil fuel energy sources.

Establishing a diverse array of energy sources will benefit California. Solar, Wind, Geothermal and Fuel Cells are all receiving attention. In solar energy both distributed sources such as the Governor’s 1 Million solar homes rebate program and solar thermal projects such as the one near Mojave which produces several hundred MW are in the works. Levine wants the rebate program to be performance-based. That is, defined by actual generation rather than by potential capacity. He also wants the solar rebate program to be defined as rooftops rather than homes in order to achieve a greater contribution to the amount of green energy produced. Levine also mentioned a SoCal Edison project using Sterling engines that have solar collectors and heat storage capacity so they function around the clock.

California is working on repowering wind turbines of 250 KW or less. Many will be upgraded to much larger 3 MW turbines on 200 foot towers which will help reduce the bird damage. Currently the project is being slowed due to the high demand for steel from other industries. Geothermal capacity at the Salton Sea is also being developed.

California is now in a transition period moving toward heavier reliance on green energy sources and more distributed generation. Levine reported that he carried a bill to require Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs) to deliver at least 20% of their electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010 and 33% by 2020. The California Energy Commission (CEC) has set the goal of 20% renewables by 2010. SoCal Edison is at 18% today. LA Department of Water and Power (DWP) is just now

Keeping the Lights On cont.

starting to increase its renewables but is still in single digits. The LA City Council has passed a resolution to reach the goal of 20% renewables by 2010 but the DWP has not adopted the goal.

Fuel cells that run on hydrogen and do not pollute the air require less transmission capacity but reliable commercially available fuel cells are still 40-50 years in the future.

Meanwhile, the state needs to upgrade its transmission system and make it more secure. At times the high power lines are carrying the maximum amount of electricity and forcing higher loads can cause fire or burned out lines. Levine suggested that replacing the high line wires with new cables could reduce transmission loss by about 30% thereby increasing the supply of electricity. An Assembly hearing on transmission capacity and siting will be held in Los Angeles on Thursday, February 2.

Levine described his new bill, the 2006 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act, to be introduced in February. The bill will include incentives to homeowners and businesses to install energy conserving windows, insulation, and appliances. It will include incentives to utilities to sell less energy (rather than charging a lower rate or higher rate for large consumers.) A contest to encourage the development of new energy efficient products is part of the bill. Levine hopes that the League will support this bill.

LEAGUE MEMBERS PROVIDE ENERGY STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

League Energy experts also addressed aspects of the LWVC Energy study at the County League Day. Jo Anne Aplet, a self-employed air quality consultant and member of the Los Angeles League, presented an overview of the state study. Martha Clark, a member of the Long Beach League Energy committee, has 30 years' experience in industry working with energy generation projects. She is presently employed at Fluor Corp. Lois Ledger, President of the Long Beach Area LWV and chair of the Long Beach LNG study, discussed the issue of a Liquefied Natural Gas terminal in Long Beach.

Jo Anne Aplet pointed out that the League's Energy positions adopted in 1978 are still quite applicable, but since the deregulation of the energy market in 1998, and the energy crisis in 2000-01, there are energy issues that our position does not address including transmission facilities and market and governance structure. Therefore the state League is concluding its Update Study of Energy.

One important fact is that California needs greater transmission capacity to deliver electricity to all parts of the state. One of the biggest issues is that energy can be imported from other states in the Western States Alliance but in times of peak demand the transmission lines into California cannot carry any additional electricity. The other problem with transmission is that the state is developing new wind and solar generation fields but these are in areas of the state that do not have high voltage transmission lines serving them. Transmission lines will have to be built in order to deliver electricity from new renewable generation sites. In addition, because electricity cannot be stored for times of peak use, sufficient generation and transmission capacity need to be available to meet peak demand loads.

Jo Anne also summarized the regulatory structure in California, describing the roles of the Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) which sets rates, sets the peak demand reserve target and licenses transmission line; the California Energy commission (CEC) which promotes energy conservation and licenses power plants; the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) which claims authority to approve new facilities siting; and the CA Independent System Operator established by AB1890 in 1996 and manages transmission.

Martha Clark gave an overview of generation and transmission issues in California. She pointed out that the majority of electricity is generated from fossil fuel fired plants (57%) and hydroelectric stations (21%).

Renewable sources, including wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass, constitute only 9% of the total energy generation today. Examples of biomass plants (1070 MW statewide) are the waste-to-energy plants in Long Beach (which burns trash) and Tustin and Riverside DWR (which burn methane gas collected from landfills) and the Puente Hills Landfill methane gas turbine generator.

Geothermal sites located in Sonoma and Imperial counties currently generate 2600 MW. Potential sites have been located in the Salton Sea and may be developed in the next decade.

Gas fired plants, generating 57% of California's electricity and owned mainly by merchant generators, are often older and less efficient and the cost of natural gas has been rising for several years. Hydro plants are aging and in need of repairs to the dams holding water. They were built during the 1930s to 1960s but no new ones have been built since the early 1970s and none are likely. Nuclear power plants remain controversial. Some like nuclear because plants do not emit greenhouse gases, but the issue of toxic, long-lasting nuclear waste is a public issue. The real cost of nuclear power is \$1000/MW due to safety and security redundancies.

California generates 1818 MW of wind energy from four major areas, the largest in Kern County. Wind is cheap, but reliability is a factor because wind generation is greatest at night but demand is highest in the day. Solar power comes from thermal plants in the desert where sunlight is free, but transmission lines are limited. Photovoltaic (PV) roof top panels collect solar energy to provide electricity to homes and businesses. Excess power can be sent back into the grid. The Governor and Legislature just passed a bill to designate \$3.2 Billion for incentive funds over the next 11 years to subsidize the installation of PV roofs.

New applications for the future include harnessing water currents by installing turbines in rivers and oceans. New York City is planning one in a major river and San Francisco is considering a project.

New transmission line projects require 10 years to build from start to finish. Much of this time is taken up in securing rights of way and getting reports (including environmental and system impacts, potential problems and solution, and real costs) approved. It also requires public hearings and the Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) issues. There are 14 projects proposed at this time.

Lois Ledger filled us in on the issues the Long Beach League has investigated during their study of the proposed Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal in Long Beach. The proposed terminal being considered in Long Beach would bring LNG from wells in Australia (chilled to -260C) in tankers containing giant vacuum storage vats to a terminal in Long Beach where it would be piped as a liquid to storage facilities and later used to operate city-owned buses, street sweepers, port haulers, and also the residual propane piped to Conoco to use to burn in gasoline refineries. The tankers transporting the LNG will be powered by the "boil-off" natural gas and thus will not use dirty diesel, helping to improve air quality. Much of the LNG will be used to fuel ocean going ships.

The Long Beach terminal differs from proposed terminals in other locations because the LNG will be piped ashore as a liquid rather than regasified before being sent ashore. This is because Long Beach intends to use the LNG as a fuel for many vehicles.

The biggest issue is **safety**. Various experts have determined that the danger zone from a fire would be a one-mile radius, a 2.5-mile radius or a 3-mile radius from the ship or terminal. Within one mile there is no residential development, but at 1.5 miles there is some residential, mostly lower income, and at 3 miles there are thousands of homes. Natural gas has the potential to explode at concentrations in air of 5% to 15%. Because the LNG terminal will have its own shipping lane separate from the main shipping lanes in the Long Beach port the danger of collision is reduced.

Lois mentioned that Japan has several LNG terminals in Tokyo-Osaka harbors and has had no safety breaches. The Mitsubishi Company that is negotiating with Long Beach for the LNG facility operates terminals in Japan.

Margo Reeg

SPOTLIGHT ON SOLAR ENERGY

by Lola Ungar, Natural Resources

Recently, the League of Women Voters of Torrance (LWVT) held their Energy Consensus Meeting at Amonix Incorporated headquarters located in Torrance. Amonix Incorporated is owned by Vahan Garboushian, brother of Sheri Messerlian, LWVT's Energy Chair. Amonix Incorporated is the world leader in integrated high-concentration photovoltaic (IHCPV) systems. The Torrance headquarters manufacture high-concentration silicon solar cells using a proprietary hydraulically-driven tracker system that maximizes energy production by following the sun the day.



Local members from the Torrance and Palos Verdes Peninsula Leagues attended the meeting along with a surprise guest who joined the group, Mayor Miguel Pulido of Santa Ana.

Sheri and Lola Ungar presented a summary of the LWVC Energy Study related to the Consensus Questions along with a PowerPoint presentation depicting the LWVC current energy position, California's electrical service areas, fuel types and their gross system power percentages, California statewide power plants, California generation capacity by fuel type, California's electricity regulatory structure, the way things used to look before the energy crisis in 2000/2001 and afterwards, and finally, the intricacies of the payment tiers of a homeowner's electric bill. It is significant to note that in 2004, of California's gross generation of electricity, natural gas lead the way with 40.8% while solar, termed a renewable resource, brings up the rear with less than 1% of the total power generation in our state.

Sheri introduced her brother, the dynamic Mr. Garboushian, who presented a comprehensive outline of sources of energy in the world, nationally, and areas of the western states and the relationship of solar energy within the wide variety of those energy sources. Germany and Japan lead the way in solar energy with the U.S. far behind. He also exhibited Amonix's unique high-concentration photo-voltaic cell, demonstrated its properties, and explained that the system can be deployed as part of a centralized solar farm or can be used in distributed applications. Amonix has installed solar farms in Prescott and Tempe, Arizona, and systems are being constructed in Spain. Queries about the system have increased since President Bush's call to Congress to offer incentives to help companies expand their research and development programs to decrease our reliance on oil. Though solar energy generation in California comprises less than 1% of the gross electrical generation, Mr. Garboushian sees the future brightening as alternative sources of energy have caught the imagination of our nation and California, in particular, where the goal is for 20% of generation from all types of renewable energy sources by 2010.

Participants came away from the meeting with a wider vision of energy production in California and greater enthusiasm for the potential for solar energy generation in California and the world.

Taken from the LWVC UPDATE of January 2006.

Water Unprivatization?

The League of Women Voters of the Claremont Area has just issued a report titled *Water Issues in the City of Claremont, 2005*. The report is in response to a proposal that the city of Claremont made to purchase the local water system from the current private owner, Golden State Water Company. If the city does purchase the water system, it will involve taking the system out of the private sector and making it a publicly run system. There are a range of issues involved and the LWV Claremont Area report discusses various aspects of these issues. The Claremont Area LWV has held unit meetings in an effort to reach consensus on the question and the League board will work to frame a consensus position in the very near future.

This report will be of interest to local Leagues around the state. Single copies are free; if more than one copy is requested, postage will be charged. Contact the LWV Claremont Area at 226 W. Foothill Blvd., Suite E, Claremont, CA 91711, 909-624-9457, Fax 909-624-9839, info@claremont.ca.lwvnet.org.

Beyond Water Privatization

The Pacific Institute has just published a report titled *Beyond Privatization: Restructuring Water Systems to Improve Performance*. The abstract indicates that the debate over privatization has overshadowed discussion of the determinants of performance. This document is unique in that it argues that "public versus private" is not the bright line that separates success from failure. Instead, performance depends on effective staffing, consistent public support for sufficient funding, better asset management systems, performance measurements and rewards, and more stakeholder involvement and transparency. (p. VIII)

Local Leagues that are working on water issues will want to consult this report. More information and directions for downloading the report are available at http://www.pacinst.org/reports/beyond_privatization/

Water Use Efficiency

The Pacific Institute has also issued a report on water efficiency, *California Water 2030: An Efficient Future*. It is quite clear to many observers that, as population continues to grow in California, it will be necessary for all of us to become more efficient in our use of water. This report discusses "how smart technology, strong management, and appropriate rates and incentives can allow the state to meet its needs well into the future with less water." For more information on this report, including directions on downloading, go to http://www.pacinst.org/reports/california_water_2030/index.htm.

Charolette Fox, *Natural Resources Director*, natural_resources@lwvc.org

ENACT to Meet in Fullerton

Saturday, March 18, at 10 am

Claire Schlotterbeck of Hills for Everyone and Hills and Open Space Education Coalition (HOSEC) will be the guest speaker when ENACT meets at the Fullerton Main Library, 353 W. Commonwealth Ave, Fullerton, on Saturday, March 18, at 10 am.

Ms. Schlotterbeck founded Hills for Everyone in a effort to preserve open space in North Orange County. Her organization worked toward the establishment of Chino Hills State Park, east of Brea. The group was instrumental in preserving wildlife corridors leading to the Cleveland National Forest and it worked with other groups to preserve 4000 acres of open space in the Whittier/Puente Hills.

Hills for Everyone and HOSEC are now trying to save the "missing middle", 8700 acres that will link the Whittier /Puente Hills with Chino State Park. Proposed development by Shell-Aera companies and City of Industry pose threats to the biodiversity and beauty of this area, and people in Orange, Los Angeles and San Bernardino have united to fight the projects.

A question period will follow Ms. Schlotterbeck's talk, after which everyone is invited to share a "brown bag potluck" of fruit, veggies, cheese, crackers and other snacks. From noon until 2 pm, the regular meeting of ENACT will be held, with discussion and reports on current projects and issues.

ENACT is the Environmental Action Committee formed by Leagues in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties to inform League members and coordinate action on matters covered by Natural Resources positions. This is an excellent opportunity to learn what is happening in places as far as the Tejon Ranch or Temecula and as near as our own hills. ENACT also keeps members informed on issues of water and air quality, land use and waste management.

Taken from the LWVC UPDATE of January 2006.

Statewide Environmental Coordination Meeting in Sacramento

LWVC staff Program Director/Advocate Trudy Schafer and Natural Resources Director Charolette Fox represented the LWVC at the first meeting of a public health and environmental collaboration on December 16, 2005 in Sacramento. Hosted by the California League of Conservation Voters (CLCV) and moderated by long-time advocate Pete Price, attendees discussed the legislative climate in Sacramento and the challenges that have somewhat subsumed the role of issue-based advocacy in passing strong environmental and public health policy. The subsuming structural and political factors were identified as:

- term limits
- the budget adoption process (two-thirds vote requirement, funds restricted by initiatives)
- reapportionment
- campaign finance
- the initiative process.

In discussing what environmental and public health advocates could do better to adopt strategies that effectively address these challenges, a short list of suggestions emerged:

- *Coordinate and strategize*--Currently health and environmental groups are respected, but are not leveraging the media or utilizing their grassroots bases; as a result our message is confusing and weak.
- *Prioritize*--There are well over 60 environmental bills each year; successful coordination is required, and legislators have been blunt about the need for environmentalists to identify their highest priority bills.
- *Messaging and communication*—Clear, simple, thematic messages work; preach to the agnostics, not the choir.
- *Dispute resolution*—The number and diversity of environmental groups active in the legislative process have grown and so, too, has grown the potential for differences among us. We need to develop a “dispute resolution” process to reduce/avoid distrust.

Changes to EPA Rules on Toxic Release Inventory Standards Opposed

The LWVC recently joined several other state Leagues in opposing changes to the current EPA rules on the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI). Under existing rules, facilities that release 500 or more pounds of toxic substances each year must reveal how much of each chemical is emitted into the air, discharged into waterways and taken to landfills or other disposal sites. The changes were opposed as detrimental to public health and safety as well as to the public's right to know for these reasons:

- Moving annual reporting requirements to every other year reporting would eliminate half of all toxic release data and make emergency planning, as well as other local and state planning, more difficult.
- Raising the reportable amount from 500 pounds to 5,000 pounds would allow companies to release 10 times as much pollution before reporting how much pollution was produced and where it went.
- Less detailed reporting of persistent, bio-accumulative, toxic chemicals would allow them to be under-reported, potentially withholding information from the public on releases identified as "chemicals of special concern."

Thanks to Linda Phillips of the LWV Santa Barbara for her valuable help.

Charolette Fox, *Natural Resources Director*, natural_resources@lwvc.org

BREAKING NEWS

***Los Angeles has experienced a major earthquake
in the downtown area***

***You are at work—the power and phones have gone out
One child is at a school basketball game;
the other is at the mall
Your spouse is in traffic on the I 405***

How Prepared Are You?
How Prepared Is Los Angeles to
Respond to a Large Scale Disaster?

**The League of Women Voters _ of Los Angeles
Invites you to a Community Education Forum**

April 22, 2006

We will present important findings from our interviews with local officials and
community members
that have responsibility for security, emergency preparedness and response. We
will ask a panel of
speakers who represent local government, first responders, the Los Angeles
Unified School District,
local utilities, and community organizations to answer the question:

How prepared are we to respond to man-made or natural disasters?

**Join us and find out what the government can and cannot do and what
responsibilities individuals have in these emergencies.**

When: Saturday, April 22, 2006

9:30 am – 12:00 noon

Where:

**Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Headquarters Building-Board Room
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012**

Wheelchair accessible.

REDISTRICTING

Redistricting Reform--Pressing the Legislature into Action

Many Californians recognize that reform of the redistricting process is sorely needed. However, voters in the November special election understood that [Proposition 77](#) had too many flaws to be a viable option for reform and decisively rejected the measure.

The LWVC has consistently pressed for a redistricting process that encourages public participation and scrutiny, has fair criteria for drawing district boundaries, and transfers responsibility for redistricting to an independent commission that reflects the interests and diversity of all Californians. The League opposed Proposition 77 because of the makeup of its redistricting panel, the lack of a criterion respecting communities of interest in the drawing of lines, its call for a mid-decade redistricting, and its requirement of a vote of the people on every plan. We clearly stated that we sought redistricting reform but that this proposal was not acceptable.

Even before the defeat of Proposition 77, legislative leaders stated their desire to enact a reform measure in 2006. Since the election, the League has been active in leading a growing coalition of organizations to define standards for real reform and to prod the legislature into action. A meeting of interested groups in early December brought agreement on a set of principles for reform and a plan for approaching the legislature to craft a measure to be put before the voters.

Some of the principles we outlined reflect lessons learned from the failure of Proposition 77. Stakeholders from both sides in the election agree that an independent redistricting commission should be larger than in Prop. 77 and have membership that reflects the geographic and demographic diversity of the state; that redistricting should be conducted only once each decade; and that there will not be a required vote of the people to confirm the adopted plan.

Other principles include transparency of the process and a meaningful opportunity for interested parties and the public to participate effectively. We endorse a prioritized list of criteria for district lines, beginning with equal population in accord with federal constitutional standards and compliance with constitutional and Voting Rights Act requirements with respect to minority populations. Criteria would also include contiguous districts as well as respect for communities of interest and for city and county boundaries. We agree that there must be restrictions on political activity, etc., to prevent conflict of interest on the part of redistricting commission members. However, defining the makeup of a truly independent commission and the method of its selection is proving to be a difficult task that will take thoughtful consideration from stakeholders and legislators.

We have just held the first of what promises to be a fruitful series of meetings with legislators and their staff to craft the best possible proposal and see that it receives consideration in a timely way. Equally important as our work at the Capitol, however, League members' grassroots lobbying of their representatives will help convince legislative leaders that this effort must be taken seriously.

Local League legislative interviews provide an excellent opportunity to begin this communication with assembly members and senators.

Polls taken shortly after the November election showed that large numbers of Californians support redistricting reform in principle. Reform themes that voters support strongly include the conflict of interest of politicians drawing lines, that voters should choose their representatives instead of being chosen, and that district lines should keep communities together. However, voters do not clearly see the relevance of redistricting in their daily lives. The polls show the importance of grassroots, nonpartisan reform efforts and the trust that voters have in the views of the League of Women Voters.

Cont. P. 11

Redistricting from p.10

Eventual success at the ballot box will require support not only from recognized good-government groups and legislators of both parties, but also from other organizations representing all parts of the political spectrum and all facets of community life.

While the League and many others focus on the legislative approach to putting redistricting reform on the ballot, Proposition 77 proponent Ted Costa and several others have submitted a new initiative that will be cleared for signature gathering by late February. The measure does not include some of the objectionable provisions of Prop. 77 but continues to require a vote of the people on new plans, and its approach to selection of the redistricting commission is quite different. The LWVC will analyze it and keep local Leagues informed.

For more information, visit the Redistricting page on the LWVC Web site, www.lwvc.org/lwvc/action/redistrict/. You can sign up there to be on the League's redistricting activists e-list, or send an e-mail to redistricting@lwvc.org.

Chris Carson, *Government Director*, govt@lwvc.org

ELECTION INFO

LWV/LAC will be producing the County **ELECTION INFO** for the June 2006 Primary. It will have information about candidates for Supervisor, Sheriff, and Assessor, as well as for Superior Court judges. Pros and Cons on the state ballot measures will also be included.

Please order your **ELECTION INFO** from the County League using the order form sent to each League President and Voters Service Director.

Bundled orders will be available for pickup in late April, before the Ballot Briefing.

Ballot Briefing/Training

Saturday, **April 29, 2006, at Hollenbeck Home** is the date for the Ballot Briefing on State Ballot Measures. **Irma Silverstein**, doyen of Ballot Measures in the Los Angeles League, will present her model for preparing a ballot measure for presentation. Pros and Cons for the state measures will be presented.

An Action workshop will be conducted simultaneously.

Make plans to be there on **April 29 at 10:00 a.m.**
573 S. Boyle Avenue, Los Angeles.

INFRASTRUCTURE BOND

The League of Women Voters of California has been working with a coalition of environmental and other groups to develop a set of criteria for an acceptable Infrastructure Bond to submit to the Governor and the Legislature as an alternative to the Governor's plan as presented in the State of the State message.

In the last month a list of Ten Principles was crafted with much input from the League. After signing the joint letter, the League program directors and consultants in environmental, education and government areas worked with the League Advocate to craft an LWVC letter that presented our positions on many of the items. This letter was sent to the Governor, Senator Perata, Speaker Nunez, and other members of the conference committee on the bond.

A compromise bill, **AB 134 (Nunez)** passed the Assembly and went to the Senate on Friday night, March 10, where it was debated starting at midnight. The bill finally failed by a 24-12 party line vote at 2 am. Four members did not vote or were absent. The Republicans refused to agree to the natural resource portions and insisted on some pay-as-you-go funding. A compromise had not been agreed on by March 14.

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

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- Smart Voter** 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
Election calendar, polling place look-up, absentee voting info, multi-lingual voting materials, locations for Touchscreen early voting
- Easy Voter Guide** www.easyvoter.org
Concise facts on statewide propositions; Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, and English
- Secretary of State** www.ss.ca.gov
Official text of ballot measures; state ballot pamphlet
- CA Legislative Analyst** www.lao.ca.gov/
Analyses of all ballot measures
- CA Voter Foundation** www.calvoter.org
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