



LWV/LAC VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

An Inter-League Organization — Beach Cities ■ Beverly Hills ■ Claremont Area ■ Downey and Southeast Area ■ East San Gabriel Valley
Glendale-Burbank ■ Long Beach Area ■ Los Angeles ■ Palos Verdes Peninsula ■ Pasadena Area ■ Santa Monica ■ Torrance ■ Whittier

ISSUE ONE

E-mail lwvlacounty.msn.org

May 2006

CALENDAR

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| | |
|--------------------|--|
| June 1, Thursday | Pasadena Area Annual Meeting, Women's City Club at 12 noon John Van de Kamp speaking on "Reflections on Public Policy" |
| June 3, Saturday | Pre-convention Briefing, Pasadena Area Office, 9:30-12:00 noon |
| June 3, Saturday | Palos Verdes Peninsula Annual Meeting, Ports O'Call Restaurant, 9:30 AM; 12:15 PM, Councilwoman Janice Hahn speaking on the "Port of Los Angeles and the Redevelopment of San Pedro" |
| June 10-13 | LWVUS Convention, Minneapolis |
| June 17, Saturday | LWV-LA Annual Meeting, City Hall Tower, 9:30-2:00 PM "Infrastructure" |
| June 22, Thursday | LWV/LAC Board meeting, Culver City Library, 9:30-1:00 PM |
| July 11-12, Tu&Wed | LWV/LAC Retreat, Mary & Joseph Retreat Center Rancho Palos Verdes |
| July 29, Saturday | Popovers in Pasadena, Women's City Club, 9:30-2:00 PM |
| Sept. 30, Saturday | Ballot Briefing, Hollenbeck Home |

FROM THE PRESIDENT—Lola Ungar

The role for the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County (LWV/LAC) for the next year was set at the County Convention in March when members decided that within the Social Policy positions, the LWV/LAC should specifically focus on Health Care and Affordable Housing and that special emphasis be placed on Los Angeles County's Homeless problem. We determined that education and action on Campaign Finance and Clean Elections should be the primary focus within the Government positions. We plan to provide VOTER articles, a League Day, calls to action, letters to the editor, and testimony before the Supervisors where appropriate.

HISTORIC HOMELESS PLAN In early April, following right on the heels of the County Convention, the County Board of Supervisors signaled a major shift in its homeless policy by approving a \$100-million plan to reduce the concentration of homeless services on skid row by establishing five centers across the county that would provide temporary shelter and social services for transients. The proposed centers will be built with the cooperation of local governments.

While there are many hurdles to overcome along the way to achieving the goals of this policy, the LWV/LAC applauds and supports the proposed centers to continue to provide essential services to the homeless throughout the County in a more innovative manner and sent a letter of commendation to the Board of Supervisors.

In response to our letter, Supervisor Antonovich said that he shares our concerns but states that it doesn't really address the underlying needs of the homeless.

He goes on to state, "What is needed is a change in State law to end the current "revolving door" mental health care system, where patients are in and out of homelessness because they fail to receive the necessary medical treatment. Also, it is vital that those who are alcoholics or drug abusers are required to successfully complete a rehabilitation program." He also suggests that the LWV could have a major impact on the effort to aid the homeless by taking the lead in pursuing changes in State law that would allow the County to treat the mentally ill and substance abusers to end the cycle of homelessness.

SUPERVISOR BURKE TO LEAD SCAG While notice has been given of Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke's (2nd District) plans to step down from her seat on the board when her term ends in 2008, she does not appear to be shying away from difficult tasks until that time. In June, 2006, Supervisor Burke will be incoming President of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The LWV/LAC sent a letter of commendation to Supervisor Burke on her future leadership role as President of SCAG and our offer to work with her in the future.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL I was pleased to attend the Leadership Council in Sacramento last weekend. Getting to meet and put faces on the people that I've been in contact with by phone and e-mail was most helpful. During the Council, the delegates adopted the LWVC budget for 2006-07 and participated in a variety of training sessions and networking opportunities. I managed to attend a Media workshop, a Green workshop, and took part in table topics on Redistricting while sitting in on another on Energy. The proposed Infrastructure Bond being followed by Trudy Schafer and Julie Rajan along with future Redistricting legislation being followed by Chris Carson were issues of high interest at the Council meeting. Handouts from the workshops, Kay Maxwell's remarks at the Saturday evening banquet, and other materials will be available soon on the members-only side of the LWVC Web site. The Local League presidents will be notified as soon as the information is posted.

PRE-LWVUS CONVENTION BRIEFING There will be a Pre-LWVUS Convention Briefing on June 3, 2006 from 9:30 to 12 noon at the Pasadena Area League Office, 1353 N. Hill Avenue, Pasadena, 91104. Please call, write, fax, or send an e-mail to me at skyhawk172@socal.rr.com if you are planning to attend.

STATEWIDE VOTER DATABASE — *Margo Reeg, Voters Service*

In response to the requirement in the Help America Vote Act of 2003 (HAVA), California is implementing a process to make its CalVoter database workable for Registrars of Voters to verify identity when processing voter registrations. HAVA requires all voters who register to supply the California Drivers License number, California ID number or the last 4 digits of the Social Security number on the voter affidavit. Then the voter registration information and the drivers license or Social Security data can be compared. States must also establish an accurate statewide voter database.

However, California's CalVoter database is not complete or adequate to satisfy HAVA requirements for polling place registration lookup. In the interim, while the newer database VoteCal is being created, the Secretary of State, Bruce McPherson, set up administrative regulations for verifying new voter registrations which required an exact match of name and drivers license number. Due to a variety of reasons including data input error and computer downtime as well as lack of the required driver's license or social security number, thousands of registrations were rejected by the state system, *Calvalidator*. In LA County about 42% of all registrations received between January 1 and March 15, 2006 were rejected due to some type of error or non-match.

After intense lobbying by registrars including Conny McCormack, LA County Registrar-Recorder County Clerk and president of the California Election Officials organization, Secretary McPherson authorized an amendment to the regulation that allows registrars to validate registrations that lack the California Drivers License number or SSN if an exact match can be made using name and birth date. Then the Drivers license number can be added to the registration form and the registration accepted.

According to Ms McCormack this amendment will help reduce the number of rejected registrations but will not completely avoid disenfranchising many people who are simply reregistering to change their name, address or party. Registrars would prefer a "pending" category that would allow voters to supply their CA driver's license at the poll in order to vote and the number could be added to the database at that time. As it is now, voters without accurate information will have to vote using a provisional ballot. Voters whose registration is rejected will not receive a sample ballot.

League members who conduct voter registration should insist that voters copy their name off their drivers license and copy the drivers license number onto the form in order to make the match of information more

Questions about Smart Voter? Give me a call at 310/397-4970 or an e-mail at ca-voter@smartvoter.org.



SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, July 29, 2006 — Popovers in Pasadena

9:30 AM to 2 PM

SPEAKER on HEALTH CARE or HOMELESSNESS

Land Use Consensus Approval

Workshops on Presidents, Redistricting Action, Social Policy, and Voters Service



CONSENSUS ON LAND USE — *Lola Ungar, President*

At their May meeting, the LWV/LAC Board approved the following Land Use consensus for submittal to the Local Leagues for review and adoption at the Popovers in Pasadena meeting on July 29, 2006.

PROPOSED NEW LAND USE POSITION (2004-2006)

- A. Retain the existing LWV/LAC Land Use position, include the additions that **are in bold**, and delete those shown with a ~~strikethrough~~.

LAND USE (Adopted 1974; revised and amended 2001-2002; revised and amended 2004-06)

Support for the following:

1. Comprehensive planning on a regional basis. A regional plan should follow national and state guidelines, if these have been adopted, and should include input from local governments. Fragmentation and duplication of planning and responsibility should be reduced. Local governments should be responsible for implementing land use policy under national, state and regional guidelines. Strong environmental protection guarantees must be written into all plans.
2. Actions which will make planning commissions responsive to the public. Limits should be set on the number of terms a commissioner may serve. Strong conflict of interest policies should be enacted for all commissioners. Regional Planning commissioners must reside in the district they represent.
3. Measures which encourage meaningful public participation in planning, strengthen the public hearing process, improve the public notification process, insure the public's right to be heard and informed, and make information on decisions readily available.
4. The acquisition of additional permanent open space in Los Angeles County. Provide open space in congested areas and insure an adequate distribution of park lands throughout the County. Natural open space must be protected. Park lands should be acquired prior to increases in density. Adequate funding should be provided for rehabilitation of degraded land in order to restore natural areas and to provide parks and open spaces in underserved areas.
5. Greater consideration of public values in land use planning. Zoning laws must be strengthened **and enforced**. Hazard zoning must be used to protect the public from **potential dangers**. ~~arising from building on earthquake faults, slide areas, subsiding soil, etc.~~
6. A multifaceted approach by County government to acquiring and controlling open space. The Quimby Act should be implemented to require dedication of park land by subdividers. Government should encourage the use of donations, leaseback agreements, federal and state grants, improved clustering laws and school-park cooperation as means of securing additional open space.

Justice System: Current Conditions and Possible Directions for Change. Among other things, it highlights eight directions for change in our juvenile Justice System.

1. **Data Limitations:** The Probation Department is not keeping the records it needs to keep and they are working on a new automated system that should be available in 2007. The report concluded that without more centralized, integrated data collection and analysis systems, even the best efforts of the Probation Department and its partners will continue to be too little, too late.
2. **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services:** The adequacy and availability of mental health services for youth in the juvenile justice system has raised serious concerns among Probation staff and others. More systematic assessment of alcohol and drug problems is clearly needed, as are substance abuse treatment options for youth in both juvenile halls and in camps. Unfortunately, Federal guidelines limit the resources available to fund treatment at the County level by removing Medi-Cal eligibility when juveniles are incarcerated.
3. **Education:** The educational challenges faced by the youth themselves, as well as the interagency problems faced by the Probation Department, LA County Office of Education and the many other local school districts to which these youth return raise serious concerns that cannot be solved by any one entity alone. Progress will require the coordinated efforts of all of these organizations along with a very large number of community partners.
4. **Cross-Over Youth:** Concerns expressed by the Courts, advocates, and Probation Department representatives, continue to highlight the enhanced interdepartmental collaboration needed to respond effectively to the needs of so-called “cross-over youths” – children who are under the jurisdiction of multiple agencies, such as Probation and Department of Children and Family Services or the Department of Mental Health.
5. **Inadequate Support for Families:** Help for parents in understanding the juvenile justice system and participating effectively in legal processes is urgently needed according to Probation staff. Local sources of information and support for parents does not exist in many communities, but this kind of support, combined with transportation when youth are in detention and adequate bilingual staff or translation services, could help increase parent involvement, easing the transition back home for youth and parents.
6. **Transition Services for Youth:** Service for youth leaving the juvenile halls and camps are limited and not necessarily available in all of the communities where they are needed most. Services for pregnant and parenting teens and their children are extremely important, including mentoring for young men who are about to become parents.
7. **Staffing, Workforce, and Facilities:** Keeping up with changing demographics and workforce requirements presents significant challenges for the Probation Department. Current requirements call for primary staffing of juvenile halls by Detention Services Officers (DSO), a staff position that requires an AA degree. This represents a change from decades ago when Deputy Probation Officers (DPO) staffed both halls and camps, and were required to hold BA degrees. No longer requiring BA degrees for juvenile hall staff means that staff may not be as prepared as they should for the many challenges associated with caring for mixed groups of youth who may be aggressive, violent, traumatized, and in need of special medical and mental health services. The report also noted that in January 2006, the Board of Supervisors approved hiring an additional 237 staff and the Department is working to hire and train these new workers. It further noted that the Probation Department should coordinate its efforts with planning in other department to assure that the SCFS social workers, DMH mental health staff and the DPOs of the future are able to work more collaboratively together.
8. **Disproportionate Representation of African American Youth:** The LA County Probation Department is not alone in trying to solve the problem of disproportionate representation of minority youth. Nevertheless, it represents a significant ongoing problem. Consider this statement from the Annie E. Casey Foundation: *“At every stage in the juvenile justice process, minority youth receive tougher treatment than white youth: They’re more likely than white youth to be arrested, more likely to be formally charged in court and more likely to be held over in secure detention pending court and more likely to be committed to youth corrections facilities.”*

Highlighting the continuing problems with our Juvenile Justice System, the *Los Angeles Times* reported on May 8, 2006, that Federal monitors are reporting to the Board of Supervisors that suicidal and mentally ill inmates are being kept in restraints for days and that there is a high incidence of guards using

force again these inmates. This violates medical and mental health guidelines for the treatment of inmates at these facilities. These new incidence may place the county at risk of being sued by the US Justice Department which has given the county until August 2006 to improve conditions at its three juvenile halls.

The Uninsured in LA County UCLA Center for Health Policy Research has issued a new report entitled *Concentrations of Uninsured Residents in Los Angeles County Communities*. It examines the distribution of LA County residents without health insurance. The data is based on the 2003 California Health Interview Survey. The report contains a chart and map detailing concentrations of uninsured children and adults in 61 cities, LA City Council districts and communities.

High concentrations of uninsured residents were found in areas near downtown Los Angeles such as City Council districts 1 and 13; South L.A. in areas such as City Council District 9 and Florence-Graham; and East L.A. communities such as Cudahy and Maywood. While the overall county uninsured rate is approximately 24 percent, areas in the most affected communities have uninsured rates among persons under age 65 as high as 52 percent.

Here are selected findings from the report:

- Lennox had the highest percentage of uninsured adults below age 65 in 2003 at 53%, compared with the LA County average of 30%.
- The cities of Hawthorne, Gardena and Inglewood had the lowest rate of uninsured children, with each at 7%.
- LA City Council Districts 1 and 9 (Northeast and South LA) had the highest percentage of uninsured adults under 65 of any district (both at 52%).
- 18 Communities had 40% or more uninsured adults.
- Rowland Heights had the lowest rate of uninsured persons under age 65 at 21%.

A copy of this Fact Sheet can be obtained on the web at http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/news_04272006.html

STATE HEALTH CARE — *Sheila Hoff, Health Policy Consultant*

The League of Women Voters of California has endorsed the **OneCareNow** Campaign and with that means becoming a participant in this grassroots effort to organize Community Action Teams in at least 365 cities across the state. The campaign will begin this August. The effort will enable us to build the movement for single payer health care in California and put it on the map. Leagues can partner with other groups in their communities and/or take the lead themselves and form their own Community Action Teams. I think it is beneficial if more groups participate together with other local organizations.

Activities will consist of signature gathering, providing a resolution to your city council for adoption, and hosting a community event of some type on a designated date. This means that there are to be scheduled events in California for 365 days and we want the media to be aware of this endeavor. The result will result in every city joining the movement, falling into line and culminating in a massive rally unifying several hundred thousand people in Sacramento on August 19, 2007.

All Local Leagues are urged by LWVC to participate at the highest level possible in their towns and cities.



Once again, SAVE THE DATE!
Saturday, July 29, 2006 — Popovers in Pasadena





Lola Ungar, LWV/LAC President
 3903 Bluff Street
 Torrance, CA 90505

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The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County in both its values and practices affirms its belief and commitment to diversity, pluralism and affirmative action.

The League of Women Voters welcomes new members, both men and women, who are citizens of voting age. Associate membership is open to all others.

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Send the information below to be notified of the latest VOTER posted on our website at lwvlacounty@msn.com or for a hard copy subscription send \$10 to LWV/LAC Treasurer, 427 E. Walnut Avenue, Burbank, CA 91501. Sign Up Today!!

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Internet Election Resources

- 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
 Data on campaign contributions to candidates and measures
- CA Budget Project** www.cbj.org
 Analyses the fiscal effects of statewide ballot measures

The MAY VOTER is ready for viewing on our website.

<http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org>

