



# LWV/LACounty

An Interleague Organization

# VOTER

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

An Interleague Organization — Beach Cities • Claremont Area • East San Gabriel Valley • Glendale-Burbank • Long Beach Area  
Los Angeles • Palos Verdes Peninsula-San Pedro • Pasadena Area • Santa Monica • Torrance • Whittier

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May 2009

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Amy Bishop Dunbar

### Calendar

<b>Sat. May 2</b>	Presidents Meeting/Delegate Briefing 9:00 -12:00; Glendale Fire Station
<b>Sat. May 9</b>	HealthCare4All Conference/Single Payer Health Care at the Pasadena Presbyterian Church
<b>May 19</b>	Special Statewide Election - Ballot Measures
<b>Tues,Wed May 19-20</b>	County Board Retreat Mary & Joseph Center, Rancho Palos Verdes
<b>May 15-17</b>	LWVC State Convention in Long Beach
<b>June 13</b>	National Council - Virtual Meeting
<b>Sat, July 25</b>	Popovers 9:30-2:00 Pasadena Women's City Club

### Inside this issue...

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## Jail Study Report

At the LA County League summer luncheon and workshops event in Pasadena in July 2008, Sargeant Machnick (from the Inmate Services Unit of the L. A. Sheriff's Department) and Jose Rodriguez (chair of an organization of community groups concerned with prisoner rehabilitation) reported on the County Jail System. There are over 20,000 inmates at any given time in this system, and, according to Machnick and Rodriguez, the facilities are "maxed out". (*The Voter*, City of Los Angeles, September 2008, pages 4-5) They see two solutions – reducing the number of people being incarcerated and/or building new facilities. Scarcely a report is found that does not describe our county jail system as overcrowded. Ongoing litigation in federal court (*Rutherford v. Baca*) has led to monitoring of the County Jails by three oversight organizations, but oversight in itself cannot correct the crowded conditions. According to one source, there are simply "too many inmates, too few custody staff, and too little available space. The LASD has had to resort to a policy of releasing inmates early in order to keep the jails from overflowing with inmates." (*Reforming the Los Angeles County Jail System*, Memorandum by Kevin Barry, May 21, 2008, page 3).

L. A. County is not alone in facing overcrowding in its Jail System. According to U. S. Senator Jim Webb, prison overcrowding exists nationwide, contributing to a criminal justice system that "has deteriorated to the point where it is a national disgrace." (*Parade* magazine, Mar. 29, 2009, page 4) The *L. A. Times Online* describes California state prisons as being in an "overcrowding crisis", with some prisons housing "twice as many inmates as they were designed for." (Michael Rothfield, @latimes.com, Dec. 7, 2008).

Yet, neither the national, state, nor county League has a position which addresses incarceration of adult prisoners and the related issues of rehabilitation and recidivism. When legislation concerning these issues is proposed, we must either find statements in our Juvenile Justice or other policies for support or opposition, or remain silent because we have no position.

At its 2008 annual Convention, County League membership voted to undertake a study of the County Jails. A committee has met and selected the study's scope – Overcrowding in the L. A. County Jail System, with Focuses on Recidivism, Educational Programs, Costs, and Mental Health. We are currently researching these topics – delving into printed reports, clicking about the internet, and talking with knowledgeable people.

Our timeline includes finishing our research in June, working during the summer on preparing materials and consensus questions, and submitting a study packet to local Leagues for consensus meetings in the Fall. But, our committee is small. There are a few of us, representing only three local Leagues, working on this project. We are hoping that more County League members will join our endeavor. Volunteers, please call Vi Iungerich, at (310) 541-5092 or Betsey Coffman at (909) 626-1540. We need your help.

### Food Bank

**Thanks to those who contributed to the LA Food Bank at the County Convention. We collected a box of food and over \$400!**



## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

# RECOMMENDS

MAY 19, 2009 SPECIAL ELECTION

### **PROP 1A    Restrictions on State Budget Process**

**OPPOSE**

Prop 1A is touted by its proponents as the way to bring stability to the state budget process. However, it would actually make it more difficult for future governors and legislatures to enact budgets that meet California's needs and address state priorities. It would amend the state Constitution to dictate restrictions on the use of funds put into the reserve and limit how "unanticipated" revenues can be used in good years. It could lock in a reduced level of public services by not taking proper account of the state's changing demographics and actual growth in costs. Prop 1A would also give future governors new power to make budget cuts without legislative oversight. Like the other propositions opposed by the League on this ballot, Prop 1A came from a deeply flawed process that resulted in measures written in haste and without public input or analysis. The League would support real budget reform, but we regretfully conclude that this measure would only make things worse. Most of its provisions would not take effect for two years; we should spend that time working on real budget reform.

### **PROP 1B    Education Funding. Payment Plan**

**NEUTRAL**

This measure requires the state to make \$9.3 billion in supplemental payments to K-14 education over approximately five to six years beginning in 2011-12. This funding is intended to address uncertainty about what the Proposition 98 school funding guarantee requires. The League supports full funding of public education and believes that making up for the devastating cuts of recent years must be a priority. Prop 1B is not needed, however, and even if passed by the voters, it would take effect only if Prop 1A is also passed. The legislature has the power to restore funding to education in a more straightforward way that is not tied to Prop 1A.

### **PROP 1C    Lottery-Based Borrowing**

**OPPOSE**

This measure makes changes in state lottery operations intended to increase its profitability and allows the state to issue \$5 billion in bonds that are "securitized" by future lottery profits. The lottery would no longer be a source of revenue for education, and the state General Fund would be required to make up for the loss to education of lottery funds. League positions on long-term financing anticipate the use of bonds for capital improvements, not borrowing, and call for prudent consideration of debt levels within the budget. In light of California's poor credit rating and the state of the economy, these bonds may have to be sold at interest rates very unfavorable to the state, if indeed they can be sold at all. The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office says that in the long term, lottery profits probably would not cover the higher payments to education required by Prop 1C.

*Continued on next page*

*LEAGUE RECOMMENDS - Continued***PROP 1D    Diverting Children's Services Funding****OPPOSE**

This proposition would redirect tobacco tax funds reserved for First 5 early childhood programs by Proposition 10 (passed in 1998) to the state General Fund. \$608 million would be diverted in 2009-10 and \$268 million a year for the following four years, creating the illusion that more revenues are available. In reality, Prop 1D raids these funds in the short term in order to pay for some services, while taking funding away from other services. It also includes unnecessary provisions, such as new county baseline funding levels unrelated to population needs. We oppose this stopgap measure.

**PROP 1E    Diverting Mental Health Services Funding****OPPOSE**

For the next two years, Proposition 1E would redirect about \$230 million a year from the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63 of 2004) to the state General Fund to replace state funding for an existing screening, diagnosis and treatment program. As with Prop 1D, it raids existing programs to create temporary "savings," but makes less money available for some services. It may even result in the loss of federal matching funds. The League opposes this short-sighted measure.

**PROP 1F    Elected Officials' Salaries****NO POSITION**

Because League positions do not cover the issues in Proposition 1F, "Elected Officials' Salaries. Prevents Pay Increases During Budget Deficit Years," the LWVC is taking no stand on this measure.

**VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ON MAY 19!****From the President's Desk...**

It was great to see so many of you at our County Convention at the end of March. Pickwick Gardens was a lovely environment. Thanks to Georganne Thomsen for recommending the site and making the arrangements – and to Gwen Cochran for her help. The Convention elected officers and directors – many are continuing their service on the Board from last year. Keynote speaker Frances Talbot White helped up brush up on Smart Voter and encouraged local Leagues to utilize this effective tool.

In May, many of us will be attending the LWVC Convention in Long Beach. The Convention offers a broad range of information and training opportunities, as well as a chance to network with League members throughout the state. Try to attend the Delegates Briefing on May 2, put on by the County League. Part of that morning will be a review of LWVC's strategic directions, presented by State President Janis Hirohama and State Board members.

We usually view the summer months as a slow period – a time to rest, catch-up, and plan. But this summer, we are likely to see a lot of activity on the state budget. We'll need to be alert and keep up on legislative actions.

Put July 25 on your summer calendar for Popovers in Pasadena. I'll see you there!

*Nancy*

## Election Resources

The League of Women Voters of California is here to help for the Statewide Special Election on May 19, 2009. Below you will find many valuable resources for your voter education and outreach efforts. Feel free to contact us - [lwvc@lwvc.org](mailto:lwvc@lwvc.org) or by calling 916-442-7215 with any questions. We will be periodically sending messages notifying you when League publications are posted online. Thank you for all you do to help make democracy work.

### Voter Service Information

The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund is pleased to announce that the Easy Voter Guide Project is supported by a grant from The James Irvine Foundation and Easy Voter Guides are available for free for the Statewide Special Election.

**Easy Voter Guide Project** - The Easy Voter Guide and [Easyvoter.org](http://Easyvoter.org) help new and busy voters makes sense of California elections. The free, printed booklets are available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean. Additional resources are available online. Order FREE Easy Voter Guides ([www.easyvoter.org](http://www.easyvoter.org)) online before March 27 for delivery between April 10-20.

*In Depth* - Your essential resource for speaker training.. This trusted publication provides detailed information about the election and each proposition. Available online April 1 in HTML and PDF.

**SmartVoter.org** - Everything a voter needs! [Smartvoter.org](http://Smartvoter.org) provides comprehensive resources online and via mobile phone. Polling place lookup, candidate info, measure analysis and more. Check [Smartvoter.org](http://Smartvoter.org) after March 23 for updated Statewide Special Election.

**Voter Service Advertisement** - An attractive advertisement in .jpg format for use on your Web site, in your Voter newsletter, in print, or by your partner organizations to promote your voter services. Check the members only Web site the week of March 23 for this ad.

**LWVC.org election page** - Check the [LWVC](http://LWVC) Web site often for voter education materials as well as other great nonpartisan resources.

Questions about the LWVCEF resources? Contact LWVC Voter Service Director Thea Brodtkin ([tbrodtkin@lwvc.org](mailto:tbrodtkin@lwvc.org))

### Advocacy Information

**Action Guide** - Your essential resource for training your action/advocacy speakers. Available online April 10 in PDF.

**The League Positions on the Ballot Measures** - The League Opposes Propositions 1A, 1C, 1D & 1E.

**The League Recommends Flyer** - Our positions on a handy, one page flyer. Available online March 23 in PDF.

Questions about the LWVC Advocacy/Action resources? Contact LWVC Advocacy Director [Linda Craig](mailto:Linda_Craig@lwvc.org) ([lcraig@lwvc.org](mailto:lcraig@lwvc.org))

### Other nonpartisan election resources:

The Legislative Analyst's Office provides analysis on the ballot measures online -[www.lao.ca.gov](http://www.lao.ca.gov).

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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City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Local League \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Internet Election Resources**

- Smart Voter** [www.smartvoter.org](http://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](http://www.lavote.net)  
Election calendar, polling place look-up, absentee voting info, multilingual voting materials, Locations for Touchscreen early voting
  - Easy Voter Guide** [www.easyvoter.org](http://www.easyvoter.org)  
Concise facts on statewide propositions; Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, and English
  - Secretary of State** [www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov)  
Official text of ballot measures
  - CA Legislative Analyst** [www.lao.ca.gov](http://www.lao.ca.gov)  
Analysis of all ballot measures
  - CA Voter Foundation** [www.calvoter.org](http://www.calvoter.org)  
Data on campaign contributions to candidates and measures
  - CA Budget Project** [www.cbp.org](http://www.cbp.org)  
Analyzes the fiscal effects of statewide ballot measures
- This **VOTER** is ready for viewing on our website: <http://www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org>



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