



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

July/August 2012

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 61 NO.2

Message from our President, Mary Giventer:

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to serve, along with my husband Larry, as your delegate to the League of Women Voters National Convention in Washington, D.C. I learned quite a bit about how the League operates on a national scale and met many dynamic, committed women (and a few men) from all over the country whose passion is voter education and League advocacy. After attending a voter education workshop, I came away realizing that in Stanislaus County we are and have been doing an outstanding job in the voter education area. In this county we are the go-to organization for candidate forums, and our forums are well respected. I learned that is not the experience of every local League, and we should be proud of our efforts. Ellen Meyer and Marsha Waggoner are already working on scheduling this fall's voter education activities which will be extensive. I hope each of us can give some time to make their efforts successful.

Nearly 800 members attended the convention and approximately 100 of them were from California. We were definitely the largest delegation and had a significant influence as the League debated resolutions and consensus items. While we all realize that the state of California has serious problems, it was eye-opening to learn of the problems voters are facing in other states. Restrictive voter ID laws, purging of voter lists, impediments to registering new voters, and redistricting practices which prevent freely contested elections are issues in many states. We can be both proud and relieved, that with the support of LWV California, California voters established the Redistricting Commission and the legislature has not allowed measures that restrict voting to gain traction in this state. The advocacy role of the League in protecting voter rights is more important than ever.

At the Lunch and Learn on July 26 I gave more of a report on the positions adopted at the convention and Convention highlights from that report are included in this issue.

Mary Giventer, President

Voter Service Starting Plans for Fall 2012

Voter Service is starting plans for forums, Pros and Cons Presentations and voter registration. We will be looking for volunteers to register voters. We will need moderators, timers and greeters at forums and those willing to present the pros and cons of the ballot measures.

Look for dates for our Voter Service events in this month's calendar and in the upcoming Voter.

Please contact Ellen Meyer or Marsha Waggoner if you are willing to help.

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National Action:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has received a record number of comments from the public both supporting and opposing their proposed regulation to limit carbon pollution from new power plants. The EPA will be sorting through the comments in the coming months as they prepare to issue a final standard on carbon pollution. The LWV in coalition with like-minded groups has collected more than two million comments in support of the proposed standard.

The US Senate Disclosure Bill has been streamlined. The main revision raised the level of campaign contributions donors are required to report to \$10,000 or more.

State Action:

Don't be misled by the title of Proposition 32, which will be on the November Ballot.

The "Stop Special Interest Money Now Act," selectively addresses the flow of money into campaigns. This measure does limit campaign contributions directly to candidates by unions and corporations. However, during an election, most corporate money is spent on campaigns and initiatives through super PACS and corporate front groups, which can raise unlimited amounts of money. The initiative exempts these secretive super PACs and creates special exemptions for Wall Street investment firms, hedge funds, and many other powerful interests. Check out the California LWV web site for further information.

Ann Krabach, State & National Action

Marge Brooks

The League lost a good friend and active member with the death of Marge Brooks. Marge regularly attended Lunch and Learn and frequently assisted with Candidate Forums. Besides the League, Marge was active in many community organizations, most recently the county Area Agency on Aging. She was a writer of both poetry and essays and a regular contributor to feature columns for the Modesto Bee. She has been honored for her teaching, her writing and her community service. In 2012, Marge was named Stanislaus County Outstanding Senior Citizen. We extend our deepest condolences to her family. Marge will be greatly missed.

Highlights of the LWVUS Convention

Voter Service

Power the Vote: The emphasis is on registering under-represented populations, mainly youth (18 to 30) and minorities. It was suggested local leagues hold voter registration events on community college and college campuses and at naturalization ceremonies. Visiting high school campuses to register voters was also suggested, but is best done in the spring when many of the seniors will have turned 18.

September 25 is National Voter Registration day.

Encouraged the use of social media to promote league activities. On Facebook keep comments easy, light, fun. Use Facebook to share information and engage others. Use Twitter to drive traffic to our Web site and link to other sites. Encourage people to reTweet. Quality of social media posts is more important than quantity.

Much of what was covered in voter service workshops we already do and we do well.

Advocacy

Based on member input from the program meetings held by local leagues last spring the LWVUS legislative priorities are:

- Environmental Protection Defense
- Health Care Defense
- Campaign Finance Reform
- Voter Rights Defense

LWVUS Program for 2012 -2013

- Retained current positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy.
- The retained positions included the recently completed education study in which 377 leagues participated. For ideas on how to utilize the position statement locally, go on the Members Only section of the LWVUS Web page and sign up for the Education List Serve.
- Voted to update the Agricultural policy, which was last updated in 1988 to address new issues such as genetically engineered food.
- Adopted by concurrence the Sentencing Policy position of LWVDC: The LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

Resolutions

The following resolution was adopted:

We, the representatives of local and state Leagues assembled at the 2012 LWVUS Convention, call upon the LWVUS Board to advocate strongly for all appropriate, duly considered measures which may include but are not limited to a constitutional amendment and which are consistent with our current positions on finance reform and individual liberties; allow Congress and states to set reasonable limits on campaign contributions and expenditures, ensure that elections are determined by the voters.

Continued page 4

Convention Highlights *continued from page 3:*

Speakers

The complete speeches of the major speakers at the convention are available as video clips at the LWVUS Members Page. Click on convention. Major speakers included Attorney General Eric Holder, speaking on protecting voter rights; Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Director of the Annenburg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, speaking on deceptive campaign advertising; John Zogby, political pollster discussing how he sees the upcoming presidential election.

Mary Giventer, President

Welcome new members: Anne and George Britton



Membership

Dues are considered delinquent September 30, 2012! Avoid extra postal costs and reminders by sending your dues today!

Thank you!

Board Highlights:

June 20, 2012

- The Board approved the adoption of our Non-partisan Policy, Policy and Procedures for the 2012-13 year, and the Executive Committee to include the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary
- Incoming President, Mary Giventer, reported on Convention activities
- Discussed open positions on the Board. Two changes have occurred:
 - Ellen Meyer has been appointed to the open Voter Service position
 - Jean Tenney has joined Ann Krabach as State and National Action Co-chair. This leaves the PR Director position open and available.

July 8, 2012

- The change-over from the 2011-12 board to the 2012-13 board is complete with banking signatures updated along with access signatures for our files in Doc-U-Stor
- MSC (Rhine/Bairey) that we accept the nomination of S. Beratlis and A. Krabach for the 2012-2013 Nominating Committee
- MSC (Bairey/Krabach) that we establish a committee to further investigate the 501C3 process (changing to a non-profit status) -Seena Rhine and Joan Goldsmith will serve on the committee, additional members are being solicited
- Lunch and Learn speakers have been scheduled through February-kudos to J. Goldsmith and R. Hennesey
- Ellen Meyer, Mary Giventer, and M. Waggoner have met to begin planning for another busy and informative 'forum season'.

Laurie Carley, Secretary

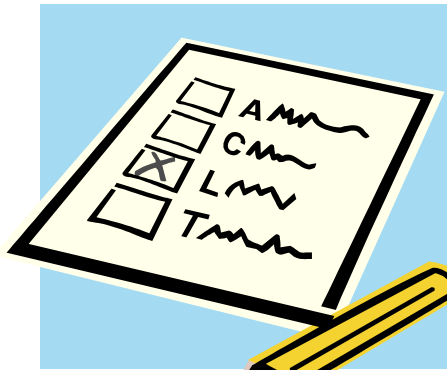
LWVC Initiative and Referendum Update Study

As of March 2012, the number of initiatives targeted for the November 2012 ballot is huge: four have qualified, 67 have been cleared for circulation, and five are pending at the Attorney General's office. On average, 21 percent of proposed measures actually make it to the ballot, predicting 20 measures will be decided in November.

Had enough? During the May 2011 LWVC Convention, delegates adopted an update of LWVC's study of California's initiative and referendum process. The study committee is working to develop the material that all local Leagues in California will use to come to consensus at meetings later this year or early 2013—after the 2012 presidential election

The group also agreed to create community education and outreach material as part of its work, with the help of some as-yet-to-be-identified grant money. There are multiple ways to find out more about the study, and join in the ongoing discussion. There is a Facebook group (League of Women Voters of California Initiative and Referendum Study), a Yahoo Group that you can link to via the LWVC members only page. To sign up on the Yahoo Group, go to www.lwvc.org/membersonly, and click on the link which reads "Join the Yahoo Group (email list) to help you." Scroll down to locate California Initiative and Referendum ListServe instructions. In addition, there's a page on the League's website (<http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/issues/initiativeand-referendum.html>), where the study committee will provide a continually updating list of articles and reading materials.

If you are interested in participating on a local study group that will address the issues surrounding the I & R process, please contact Stella Beratlis at vp@lwvstanislaus.org. Thanks!



**I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO YOURS
BY JOINING THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF STANISLAUS COUNTY!**

- Student Membership \$25
- Individual Membership \$60
- Household Membership \$90

Please contact me with more information.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone (for directory) _____

Email _____

Please deliver my Voter by E-mail US mail

MAIL TO

LWVSC

P.O. Box E

Modesto, CA 95352



PROP 30 Schools and Local Public Safety Protection Act YES

Proposition 30 begins to move California toward financial stability and adequate funding for all the services we want from our government; we can't continue to cut vital public services like schools and public safety. This measure will provide some much needed income from a temporary increase in income tax rates for the wealthy and a modest temporary sales tax increase. The plan is a part of a balanced approach to eliminating our deficit that includes \$8 billion in cuts, \$6 billion in new revenues, and \$2.5 billion in loans, deferrals, etc., this year. Proposition 30 also guarantees a stable source of funding for counties to pay for their new public safety responsibilities such as housing low-level prisoners and providing substance abuse treatment.

PROP 31 Government Performance and Accountability Act NO

Proposition 31 is based on good intentions and has some pieces that, taken alone, the League could support. However, Prop 31 has several significant flaws. There are questions about whether or not the provisions allow local governments to suspend state environmental requirements. What is clear is that there will be significant legal uncertainty, and years of litigation. In addition, the measure prescribes the specific manner of state and local government budgeting and puts this process into the state constitution. Prop 31 has other questionable provisions, such as establishing a significant shift of power over appropriations to the governor at times of fiscal emergency.

PROP 32 Special Exemptions Act NO

This measure is not the campaign finance reform measure its proponents say it is. Proposition 32 promises "political reform" but is really designed by special interests to help themselves and harm their opponents. It looks like a campaign finance reform measure but unfairly targets one set of large campaign donors while giving other donors unlimited power. Its ban on payroll deductions for political giving will affect unions but not corporations, and even the restriction it places on contributions to candidates by corporations is full of loophole exemptions. It does not fix the problem of money in politics; Super PACs and independent expenditure committees will continue to spend without limitation.

PROP 34 SAFE California Act YES

The SAFE California Act will replace the death penalty in California with a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. Convicted killers will stay in prison for the rest of their lives, eliminating the possibility of executing an innocent person in California. This will save over \$100 million every year—because the court and incarceration costs are so much higher for prisoners at risk for a death penalty. \$100 million of these savings will be allocated over the next four years to pay for increased investigation of unsolved rape and murder cases. Convicted killers will be required to work and pay restitution into a victims' compensation fund.

PROP 40 Referendum on Redistricting YES

We strongly urge a "YES" vote on this referendum on the state Senate maps drawn by the independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. The question on a referendum is not intuitive; it asks if you want to retain the new law, or in this case, the maps drawn by the Citizens Redistricting Commission. So vote YES to affirm the maps drawn by the Citizens Redistricting Commission, YES—in support of the Commission, YES—to validate the open, transparent process, YES—to retain fair districts.

VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ON NOVEMBER 6!

Adequate revenue to provide for the public good is critically needed. The League supports Prop 30 on this ballot as the best way to provide some relief from the endless cutting of vital government services. We see some merit in the following two measures, Props 38 and 39, but have taken a neutral position on them because of their earmarking of revenues.

PROP 38 Tax for Education and Early Childhood Programs NEUTRAL

We are neutral on Our Children, Our Future, the measure supported by the California State PTA and activist Molly Munger. It provides significant funding for education and early childhood programs. In addition, for the first four years, this measure provides money to help the other underfunded government services. However, in the longer term, it earmarks essentially all the new money for education and early childhood programs. These programs definitely deserve to be adequately funded, but so do all of the government programs we support, from mental health programs to the court system to childcare.

PROP 39 Tax Treatment for Multistate Businesses NEUTRAL

This measure will close a tax loophole for multistate businesses, generating revenues of about \$1 billion per year—a good thing. However, it earmarks about half the new revenue for the first five years, so that portion can only be used for energy efficiency and alternative energy projects. We are neutral on this proposition because we believe new revenue for the state should be available for all of the programs funded by state revenue—schools, law enforcement, health care, jobs programs, the judiciary system.

The League has not studied the issues in the following measures, and so has **no recommendation** on **Proposition 33** (Auto Insurance Rates), **Proposition 35** (Human Trafficking), **Proposition 36** (Three Strikes Reform), and **Proposition 37** (Genetically Engineered Foods).

VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ON NOVEMBER 6!

8/6/2012

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

[\(Check Website for Updates\)](#)

Thursday, August 30	Lunch and Learn: Pam Able, Superintendent of Modesto City Schools; Good News, Bad News Location: Appetez Restaurant
Wednesday, September 12	Board Meeting 6:30 p.m. Location: Dale Commons, Modesto, CA
Tuesday, September 25	Voter Registration, CSUS Turlock
Thursday, September 27	Lunch and Learn: Larry Giventer, Professor Emeritus CSUS Location: Appetez Restaurant
Tuesday, October 2	Oakdale Forum, 5:30 - 8:30 pm
Wednesday, October 3	Turlock Forum, 6:30 pm, Council Chambers
Tuesday, October 9	Modesto Rotary, Pros and Cons 12 noon
Thursday, October 11	Riverbank Forum, Riverbank Community Forum 6-8 pm