



VOTER

League Can use Your Help During Election Season

There are two elections coming up—June 3 and November 4, 2008. Helping with elections, registering voters, educating voters and even advocating on issues that the League has researched and taken a position on. There are dozens of tasks YOU can help with—some take an hour, some more—but each task is important in **Making Democracy Work**.

REGISTER VOTERS

Trish Taylor has lined up various places in Castro Valley, San Leandro and Hayward willing and eager to have the League come and register voters. Contact Trish at (707) 495-9440 (cell) or taylorfm@sbcglobal.net to find out more about this opportunity.

EDUCATE VOTERS

We have received several requests and expect more, to explain the pros and cons for each of the two state propositions and the county measure on the Utility Users Tax. Training sessions will be scheduled and study materials will be provided. Contact Angelina Reyes at (510) 583-4405 or email her at Angelina.Reyes@hayward-ca.gov.

CANDIDATE FORUMS

We have been asked to help with candidate forums to make sure they are equitable. Some of the tasks we need help with are moderating the forum, someone to time the speakers, and question sorters and runners to pick up questions from the audience. Contact Nancy Van Huffel at (510) 562-4473 or email her at lwvea@aol.com.

ADVOCACY

The LWVC is campaigning to put a Redistricting (Anti-Gerrymandering) on the November ballot. Our League is helping by gathering signatures on petitions and distributing information. If you would like to learn more about it (article was in last month's VOTER) contact Suzanne Barba, (510) 538-9678 or email at suzbarba@comcast.net.

POLL WORKERS

Although this is not a League function, the League encourages people to find out more and sign up to be poll workers for one or both of the upcoming elections. It is a paid position and you can split your time with a friend as long as the whole day is covered. The County provides training and allows you to pick what area you would like to work in. It is a long day, but you meet interesting people and are providing a real service. The Registrar's office can be reached at (510) 272-6971

Co-President's Report

Leaguers who love elections and voter education can find plenty to do.

Several:

We'd love to identify a chair for the Voter Affidavit project, as I mentioned last month. We have been asked to help with half-a-dozen public forums for candidates and ballot measures – this is a great chance for members to do the nuts-and-bolts work which makes local elections effective.

We're participating in several larger initiatives, about abolishing the death penalty in Alameda County and improving the state's redistricting process. If you're interested in these issues, give us a call!

Again, please calendar our annual meeting June 7, and say yes to our valiant Nominating Committee when they call. Co-President Angie and I appreciate our hard-working Board members, and urge you to join us. This is a great time to be a Leaguer, and what better place than our Board?—

Alison S. Lewis, Co-President

SUPERDELEGATES

Recently our League was asked to do a presentation explaining how the "Superdelegate" system works since it has become so important in this election cycle. Here's what we found out:

"Superdelegate is an informal term for some of the delegates to the Democratic National Convention. Unlike most convention delegates, the Superdelegates are selected automatically, based solely on their status as current or former elected officeholders and party officials. They are free to support any candidate for the nomination. They are called "unpledged" delegates.

The Republican Party also seats some party officials as delegates without regard to primary or caucus results. However, at the 2008 Democratic National Convention, the Superdelegates will make up approximately one-fifth of the total number of delegates—or 796. Regular delegates number 3,253, resulting in a total number of delegate votes of 4,049.

A candidate needs a majority of that total, or 2,025 to win the nomination. This assumes that Michigan and Florida delegates are not counted.

Board Briefs – March 12, 2008

- Reviewed the calendar of upcoming events and which members would attend.
- Confirmed that the next Board meeting will be back in Hayward at the City Hall.
- Bylaws will be reviewed and Pat Piras offered to help with this task. Any changes will be brought to the Annual Meeting in June for approval.
- Discussed possible theme for the Annual Meeting and speaker. Trish Taylor volunteered to help with the event.
- Decided to order an LWVUS booklet called "Electing the President" and provide ten copies to each of the Eden Area Libraries.
- Approved Jo Murdach being on the Nominating Committee and noted that she would need two other members, not on the Board to assist her.
- Received a report that Eleanor Parker has agreed to work with Pat Piras on updating the LWVEA Bylaws.
- Appointed Marian Handa as LWVEA representative for appointment to the Registrar's Elections Advisory Committee.
- Discussed doing our LWVC Legislative Interview with Assemblymember Mary Hayashi and suggested that Chabot students be invited to join our interview team.
- Requested volunteers to help count ballots for the Palomares Home Association Election which our League has agreed to do.
- Next Board meeting is April 9, 2008. All Board meetings are open to the public.

SUNSHINE IN GOVERNMENT IS SHINING LIGHT FOR PUBLIC

March was Sunshine Week, and the LWVEA partnered with the Northern California City Clerks Association to put on a program called "The Public's Right to Know"

More than fifty people attended and heard Terry Francke, General Counsel and Founder of California Aware, talk about what should happen at public meetings and how the public has a right to have documents discussed at these meetings.

City Clerks who attended learned what their responsibilities are for providing access to public meetings and requests for public documents.

The speaker also discussed the fact that a few cities and counties (San Francisco, Richmond, Oakland and Contra Costa Board of Supervisors) have passed Sunshine Ordinances to support transparency in government and public records act requirements.

Mr. Francke suggested that the League would be a good organization to encourage various local bodies to adopt a Sunshine Ordinance. He said it would take: (1) a body open to change, (2) an effective author, (3) prominent media backing, (4) a knowledgeable attorney guide, (5) a corps of committed citizen participants, and (6) up to six months of patient negotiations.

Our thanks to Marian Handa and Angelina Reyes for coordinating this important and informative program. As icing on the cake, the two, who are also League members, made a power point presentation which showed how the League and City Clerks make ideal partners in fulfilling similar missions.

WE THE PEOPLE

Voting is the great equalizer in American society. No matter how much money you have or who your friends are or whether or not you contributed to a particular candidate, you have one vote—the same as everybody else. And with that one vote, you have the power to influence decisions that will affect your life, your job, your taxes, your health care, your Social Security, or go to war—they are all at stake.

TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

On February 22, the Bay Area League presented a program discussing Transportation Solutions to Climate Change. The following are notes from that meeting.

There will be a legislative effect as efforts are made to lesson transportation's negative impact on climate change. It will take years to note improvement, but changes made now will have profound results for the second half of the century.

We need short-term and long-term strategies. We can do this, but we must be bold and we must work together, focusing on these things:

Reducing congestion, emissions, and VMT (Vehicle Miles Traveled). Transit-oriented housing with services and business in close



proximity. The strategy will be complex--no single element will get us to the goal.

Actually, we have no consistent measuring systems for assessing our progress, or the externalities (Some externalities are two generations away.)

We'll see more:

- Efforts at fluidity of traffic, such as tolls, use of carpool lanes for single drivers
- Hot lanes
- Disincentives such as higher parking fees, peak-hours charges, other pricing strategies.
- Social Justice consideration.
- Targeting of travelers as *consumers*
- Collaboration between organizations
- Educational efforts to shift social values away from individualism, toward shared use.
- Mix of business close to housing to generate tax base.
- Telecommuting
- Transit villages.
- Bike lanes.

The Bay Area is currently among the boldest in the nation. VMT continue to climb across the country, and with population growth, total miles traveled will rise. More money is needed. Five times more just to meet currently proposed projects.

Trish Taylor, League Board Member



Steve Westly Joins Governor Schwarzenegger as Co-Chair of Redistricting Reform Campaign

California Voters First recently announced that former State Controller Steve Westly will co chair the redistricting campaign with Governor Schwarzenegger, who announced his support of the reform on December 3, 2007 alongside AARP, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, California Common Cause, and the League of Women Voters of California.

“I’m excited to be a part of this team. Legislators designing their own districts are a clear conflict of interest – this initiative solves that problem. California Voters First puts the task of reapportionment into the hands of a truly independent multi partisan commission,” Westly said.

“The people of this state deserve a system where voters choose the politicians not where politicians choose the voters. I ask all Californians - Republicans, Democrats and Independents alike - to join us in supporting this important measure,” said Governor Schwarzenegger.

The Governor, Steve Westly, AARP, The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, The League of Women Voters and California Common Cause are actively working to gather signatures and qualify the California Voters FIRST Act for the November 2008 ballot.

The Act will create a 14 person independent citizens commission comprised of five Democrats, five Republicans and four individuals not registered as a member of either major party to draw district boundaries for the Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization. The measure creates a more open and transparent redistricting process, takes the power to draw district lines out of the hands of lawmakers and puts into place a non partisan process that requires respecting existing city boundaries, county boundaries

and communities.

Currently, communities are split up into as many as four districts. This proposal will change that and give a voice to communities currently silenced by the way our legislative districts are drawn. The initiative was filed with the Attorney General’s office on October 23, 2007. The measure is a constitutional amendment, which requires 694,354 signatures to qualify for the ballot. ----

All League members will receive a four-signature initiative petition and return envelope. It’s easy to get just three signatures besides your own.

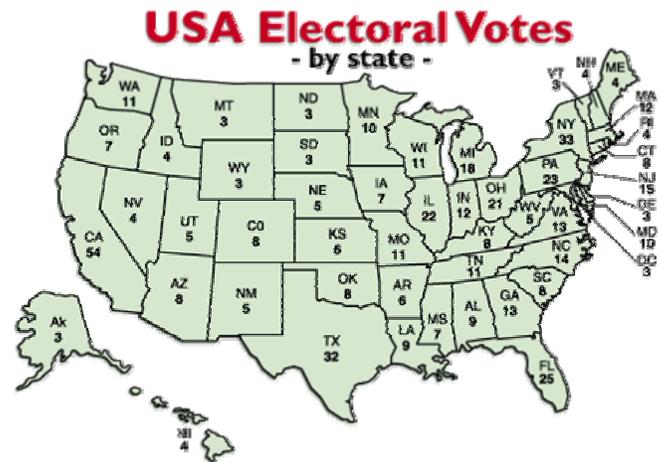
Return the petition to the LWVC office. Join volunteers all over California who are working to make reform of the broken redistricting process a reality.

Find out the latest news at the official campaign Web site: www.cavotersFIRST.org

For petitions, contact Suzanne Barba at suzbarba@comcast.net.

HOW DOES THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE WORK?

The Electoral College was established by the founding fathers as a compromise between election of the president by Congress and election by popular vote. The people of the United States actually vote for electors who then vote for the President.



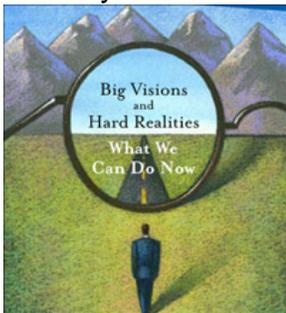
The Constitution authorizes each state to appoint a number of electors equal to the number of representatives (435) plus senators (100) that the state has in Congress. Three more were added later for D.C. bringing the total to 538 electors. If one candidate for President gets 270 electoral votes—a President has been elected.

Big Visions and Hard Realities: What We Can Do Now – EdSource Conference

2008: Last spring Governor Schwarzenegger declared it would be California's "year of education."

But, in December, the governor declared the state to be in a fiscal emergency, setting in motion plans to make serious cuts to state-funded programs. 2008 is not likely to be the kind of "year of education" we'd all hoped for.

As discouraging as the budget news is, policymakers can still take steps to improve California's K-12 system. The challenge is to identify actions that are possible in 2008, while beginning to develop more comprehensive policy reforms that may take several years to refine and phase in.



This EdSource Forum continues the momentum for change. We have pulled together top experts from California and around the nation to focus on three of the most pressing issues

facing the state: **(1) the need to complete a comprehensive education data system, (2) the imperative for bold strategies to turn around schools in Program Improvement, and (3) the call for a more effective school finance system.**

Providing a reality check, the state's Legislative Analyst Elizabeth Hill will share updated state and education budget projections and a look at Governor Schwarzenegger's plans for 2008–09.

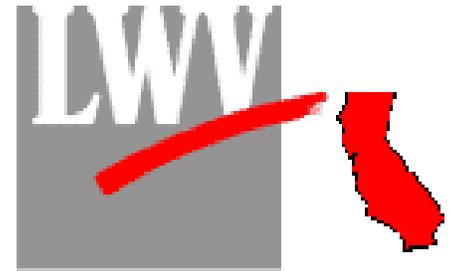
So, join us for EdSource's 31st Annual Forum, On behalf of the state's 6 million students, let's continue the focus on important ideas for state education policy reform.

DATE: Friday, April 18
TIME: 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
PLACE: Crowne Plaza Cabana Hotel,
Palo Alto.

DEADLINE: April 9
COST: \$70

Register at EdSource@EdSource.org

LWVC - Forward Together: A Budget for All Californians



We believe California's budget should invest in California's future:

We believe in a California that provides high-quality public services for all Californians, protects consumers, the environment, and our quality of life, builds the infrastructure we need to prosper, educates our children, and that fosters opportunity, economic growth, and strong and vibrant communities.

We believe that a responsible California budget would keep its commitment to meet the basic needs of our children, our seniors, our families, and our future. We believe there are budget choices beyond budget cuts.

We believe in a balanced budget that invests in the future, rather than one that mortgages our future with one-time "fixes" that fail to address California's structural problems.

We support a balanced solution to the budget crisis:

We oppose arbitrary policies, such as across-the-board reductions, that ignore critical priorities.

We support a balanced solution to the budget crisis, rather than a budget that seeks to solve the problem only through cuts and borrowing.

We support raising revenues needed to prevent cuts, including closing tax loopholes, eliminating the tax cuts of the last decade, and updating our tax system to reflect our changing economy.

SB840 SINGLE PAYER HEALTH SYSTEM

"Politically feasible" is just another way of saying that folks are scared to stand up to insurance companies. I don't accept that. It's time to take a stand for what we really want. It's time to have hope. " - Senator Sheila Kuehl

SB 840 is alive and well in the Assembly Appropriations committee, much further along in the legislative process than it was in 2006, just before its historical passage out of both houses of the legislature and onto the Governor's desk. Legislative deadlines for passage out of fiscal committees aren't until August 15th and, between now and then, grassroots organizing and education efforts are really taking off. Every day, Senator Kuehl and her staff receive requests for presentations regarding SB 840, the truly universal healthcare bill.

The litmus test for "politically feasible" has historically been largely defined by where doctors, insurers, business and labor stood on the issue. Throughout the last century, there was no grassroots group as singularly focused on the passage of single payer health care as the physicians and insurers were opposed to it.

That's changed considerably, especially in California, as the 500 or so organizations that support SB 840 continue their evolution into an effective coalition that works tirelessly (and largely under the radar of many in Sacramento) to educate and organize Californians on universal health care.

More importantly, groups that traditionally oppose single payer, like physicians, are no longer unified against it. The American College of Physicians made history last year in their endorsement of single payer and the California Medical Association includes a large and growing minority of members that strongly support single payer. The American Medical Students Association has quickly risen to become one of the most passionate and inspired groups advocating for passage of SB 840.

Another powerful provider group, the California Nurses Association has gone "all in" for single payer and is working in much the same way for single payer as the American Medical Association once worked to oppose it. Their dedication unites with that of organizations like Health Care for All - California, school employees,

the League of Women Voters, retired teachers, and others who are deeply embedded in communities across the state.

Only single-payer boasts the kind of unified and dedicated grassroots movement for something that makes large reform possible
Sara Rogers, Consultant, Health

POWER PLANT UPDATE

Hearings have been held, briefs have been submitted and now it is in the hands of the California Energy Commission to decide whether Hayward gets a second thermal power plant in the general vicinity of the first they approved—Russell City Energy Center.



If you would like to read the thousands of pages of documents in hundreds of briefs filed by the applicant, the CEC staff and the opponents, go to <http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/eastshore/documents/index.html> you won't be happy, but you'll be informed.

The most hopeful piece of information in the CEC staff document is a statement that they recommend denial because there is no way to mitigate the harmful and hazardous effects of a power plant so close to the airspace of the local Hayward airport. Will the CEC abide by its own staff's recommendation?

Our League did not formally join the opponents to the power plants, but individual League members did testify and help with fundraising to pay attorney fees.

WATER SYSTEM IN CRISIS

California has faced a water problem almost since its inception: people seem to want to live, do business, and farm in places that are short of water. To cope with this situation, the state has developed a water infrastructure that moves water from the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and the Colorado River to places where people live, work, and farm such as the Bay Area, the San Joaquin Valley, and southern California. In an extremely important way, citizens of this state are intimately connected by these extensive water transport systems.

Now the state finds itself with a water system that is in crisis. The crisis stems from a number of sources: an extended drought with no end in sight, increasing population, an aging water infrastructure, and ongoing fights over who should get the water that is available.

Southern California has witnessed a constant focus on water issues with, most recently, the City of Long Beach declaring a water emergency and imposing measures to alter the way people in that city use water. This decision comes partly as the result of the current drought and partly as the result of a legal decision by a federal judge that could result in lower deliveries of Delta water to the southern part of the state. The judge's decision was based on the perilous state of the Delta smelt, which are protected by the Endangered Species Act.

To deal with this crisis, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proposed a \$9 billion bond issue. If passed, the bond money would be used for the construction of at least three new dams in different parts of the state, as well as address the need for a "conveyance facility" to move water across the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The purpose of these new dams would be to increase the supply of water to water-poor parts of the state.

A network of environmental organizations around the state (including the LWVC) known as "Green California," has made a counter proposal to State Senator Don Perata for an "appropriate water supply response package." Green California's proposal would get the state additional supplies of water at half the cost of the Governor's proposal and require that the bond money be spent on improving water supply

reliability (water recycling and water use efficiency), groundwater protection, water quality improvements including a focus on disadvantaged communities, Delta restoration and enhancement, and river and watershed restoration. Green California argues that its suggestions would cost about \$4.525 billion, roughly half of what the Governor is proposing and without the construction of new dams.

The League is a signatory to the Green California letter and will likely take a position on any water bond on the ballot.

John D. Sullivan, LWVC Water Consultant

ARE YOU A BABY BOOMER? WERE YOU BORN BETWEEN 1946 AND 1964?

If so, the Hayward Library would love to have you participate in a survey or focus group in the near future. The Library has gotten a grant to find out something about baby boomers and their proclivity for community service and community activism since they will be retiring in the near future. Will baby boomers join generations that preceded them in participating in community service or will they find something else to fill their retirement years?

There are also survey questions about your use of local libraries. If you are interested in participating in this survey or focus group, please reply to heidiontiveros@library.hayward-ca.gov. If you have questions, call her at 881-7980.

SAVE THE DATE

**for our
LWVEA
Annual**

**meeting,
Saturday, June 7,
9a.m. to noon**



League of Women Voters of Eden Area

P. O. Box 2234 – Castro Valley, CA 94546 • 510/538-9678
 Representing cities of Hayward and San Leandro
 and unincorporated areas of Ashland, Castro Valley,
 Cherryland, Fairview, Hillcrest Knolls and San Lorenzo

**IT'S EASY TO JOIN THE
 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

Just cut out and mail this coupon with your check to:
 League of Women Voters of Eden Area
 Treasurer, P.O. Box 2234, Castro Valley, CA 94546

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Dues: Regular \$50 Same Household \$25, Student \$20

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

LWVEA Officers

- Co-President - Alison S. Lewis (538-3692)
- Co-President - Angelina Reyes (792-9545)
- 1st Vice President, Program – Marian Handa (577-3367)
- 2nd Vice President, Membership – Jo Murdach (581-6794)
- Treasurer - Pat Piras (278-1631)
- Secretary - Open

DATE	TIME	CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS
April 9	5 to 6:30 p.m.	LWVEA Board meeting at Hayward City Hall, Room C
April 10	Noon to 2 p.m.	San Leandro Chamber City Council Candidate Forum
May 14		LWVEA Board meeting
May 17-18		LWVC Leadership Council, Sacramento
June 7	9 a.m. to noon	LWVEA Annual Meeting
June 13-17		LWVUS Convention – Portland Oregon

Please visit our website for up-to-date event information - www.lwvea.org