



League of Women Voters Eden Area

VOTER

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LWVEA TO UNDERTAKE IMPORTANT STUDY WITH RAMIFICATIONS CONCERNING "CITIZENS UNITED"

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT STUDY

LWVUS has asked each local League to form a Constitutional Amendment education and study group to learn about the process for amending the U.S. Constitution which includes:

1. developing guidelines for evaluating constitutional amendment proposals,
2. aspects of an Article V Constitutional Convention,
3. how the League might put these guidelines into practice.

The results of this study will enable the League to determine whether to support or oppose a particular constitutional amendment or the Article V Constitutional Convention process.

The most important question is whether the League supports or opposes the subject of the amendment based on League public policy positions. Once League public policy positions are applied, then we have to ask ourselves whether the amendment is appropriate since the Constitution is a "near-sacred" document.



Do we agree with the proposed amendment? Under what circumstances is it appropriate to amend the Constitution? There is debate among scholars as to whether a Constitutional Convention can be controlled in any way. Those who believe it cannot be controlled are afraid of a "runaway convention," one that could go beyond its original purpose and alter the Constitution in any way it chose.

Congress has not passed any legislation to clarify, and the U.S. Supreme Court has refused to hear cases related to amendment procedures, calling such questions "political" and not ones for the Court to consider.

**The Constitutional Amendment Study
will take place:
Saturday, November 7
10am to 2pm**

Members will be notified by email of the time and venue. A survey and pertinent documents will also be sent to all members.

Contact lwvea@aol.com if you are interested in participating in the study..

President's Report

By Nancy Van Huffel

A WILDLY SUCCESSFUL WEEK from our VOTER SERVICES and PROGRAM Teams.

Joanne Young, Chair, Voter Services Team and Aiwa Zelinsky, Program Chair, led their teams to outstanding victories this past week.

September 22 was National Voter Registration Day and under the leadership of Joanne, we recruited 30 volunteers and registered 135 voters.



CastroValley Library--Joanne Young, Amy Madsen, Al Murdach



BART-Ken Pon registers Guadalupe Rodriquez & King Dazem Stevenson

SLZ-Norm Fobert, Nancy Van Huffel, & Kathy Ready

The volunteers registered voters at the Castro Valley, Hayward, San Leandro, and San Lorenzo Libraries. They were also at the BART stations in Castro Valley and San Leandro.

Joanne deserves a five-star rating for all the time she put in to making this endeavor a huge success.

Special thanks to the following Volunteers:

Elisabeth	Bathgate	Kenneth	Pon
Helene	Carr	Kathleen	Ready
Carolyn	Darcey	Alice	Sarafian
Cimberly	Eng-Tamura	Linda	Slater
Pamela	Evans	Jean	Turner
Norman	Fobert	Nancy	Van Huffel
Marian	Handa	Joanne	Young
Gail	Lundholm	Aihua	Zelinsky
Amy	Madsen	Genie	Lester*
Ronald	Moore	Judy	Harrison*
Allison	Murdach	Linda	Myers*
Jo Ann	Murdach	Jo Ellen	Rice*
Carol	Norberg	Winnie	Thompson*
Mark	Norberg	Diane	Turner*
Dorothy	Partridge	Robbi	Pal
Penny	Peck	*AAUW	Volunteers

Proposition 13 Education Forum

Newest Boardmember, Aiwa Zelinsky chaired her committee of Penny Peck, Rene' Belsold, Suzanne Barba, Jennifer Ong, Del Delmo-Dora, and Nancy Van Huffel. Their event resulted in the largest audience we have had for a forum. Approximately 100 folks listened to: Senator Loni Hancock, David Wolfe, Howard Jarvis Taxpayers' Association, and Hayward City Manager Fran David discuss the Pros and Cons of proposed changes to Prop 13 (SCA5).



Fran David, David Wolfe, Loni Hancock

stated that they have a better understanding of the topic and liked the format. Another five star rating to Program Chair, Aiwa Zelinsky and her committee!

FOLLOW THE MONEY IN POLITICS—ON LEAGUE'S RADAR

The LWVEA is joining Leagues from across the nation to take part in the Follow the Money in Politics (FMIP) Review and Update. Adopted at the 2014 LWVUS Convention, this involves a member study and consensus to update the League's position on campaign finance in order to obtain member understanding and agreement on the extent to which political campaigns are protected speech under the First Amendment.



Leagues are being asked to consider: the rights of individuals and organizations to express their political views through independent expenditures and the finance of election campaign activities; and how those rights, if any, should be protected and reconciled with the interests set out in the current position.

To complete the update study, our local League Study Group plans to send the consensus questions to the membership to encourage broader participation on this update study.

Education materials will be posted periodically on the League website. Our League plans to hold its first meeting on February 5 (Friday) from 10: to 1:30 at a venue to be determined.

Consensus reports from Leagues are due to LWVUS before its April 2016 national board meeting. Consensus reports and resulting updated position will then be approved and disseminated to local Leagues for "action" when needed.

More information on this update study and forum will be sent to members through the VOTER or by special email announcement. Information will also be posted on our webpage – www.LWVEA.org.

BOARD BRIEFS September 28, 2015

- **Make It Fair – Prop 13** - Everyone who was involved in volunteering to make the Forum on 9-25-15 a success, was thanked—especially Aiwa Zelinsky who is the Program Team Leader. It was reported that this was the largest crowd we have had for a forum—over 100 attended. A survey to attendees, with a 55% return rate, indicated 93% liked the format and the speakers for the forum.

- **Money in Politics & Constitutional Amendment Studies** – Discussed the need for a special meeting to suggest the dates and times for both studies and how the information will get out to members.

- **Orientation for New Members** – Gail Lundholm said she would have her "team" discuss when the next new member orientation event would be held.

- **Voter Service** – More than 30 volunteers registered 133 people at various locations on National Voter Registration Day 9-22-15. Locations included two BART stations, libraries, Chabot College and CSUEB. Joanne Young was cited for her exceptional effort in coordinating this successful drive. The Board agreed that registering voters at BART stations should be expanded to all four stations in the Eden Area.

- **Multimedia Team** - Penny Peck said our Facebook page was visited 300 times in the past month with 40 likes. We are now on Twitter as well and used MailChimp for publicity for the Prop 13 Forum.

- **Hayward Volunteer Recognition Dinner** - Our nominee is Jewell Hargelroad and the well-attended event will be October 6 at St. Rose Hospital in the Great White Tent.

LWVEA Board Meetings are open to the public and are held on the 4th Monday at 5:45 p.m
Contact lwvea@aol.com for agenda and venue.

HIGHER EDUCATION STUDY

Almost daily there are media reports about the need for reform in California public higher education in terms of access, adequate funding and affordability. Although the League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) has positions on education covering issues in pre-K-12 education and the California Community Colleges, it does not have a position on public higher education that includes the UC, CSU and CCC systems.

This lack of an inclusive position has prevented the LWVC from commenting on or advocating for or against proposed policies and legislation affecting higher education. This study was proposed to remedy this situation.

The scope of the study is to examine access to quality public higher education in California including funding, affordability, preparedness, equity and opportunities and barriers to student success.



“The persistence of inequity in higher education participation and attainment will reduce the proportion of college-educated adults, which in turn will have

detrimental effects on the state’s economy, workforce preparation and the quality of life of aging baby boomers, as well as to aspirations to be a society that provides equal opportunities regardless of race or socioeconomic status.” LWVC

Locally, two meetings were held in September to review the consensus questions sent by the LWVC. Each member of the Study Group had previously been sent documents and research information on the topic. *(These documents and the consensus questions are on our website: www.LWVEA.org.)*

The Study Groups discussed each of the 35 questions and came to consensus on all but one concerning whether to allow the CCC system to offer more BA/BS programs.

The final report from the Study Group will be sent to our Board for review and approval. It will then be sent to the State Study Committee where our input will be tallied with the information from other Leagues participating throughout California.

Study results and a draft position will then be forwarded to the LWV State Board for final review and approval. The new position on Higher Education will then be disseminated to all Leagues in the state for use as needed.

STATE LEAGUE AND PTA CALL FOR INCREASING CAP FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

California voters passed Proposition 2 last November to establish a statewide “rainy day” fund.

Unfortunately, a one-size-fits-all law, SB 858, also passed last year as part of the state budget process. SB 858 prevents school districts from saving adequately to prepare for their own rainy day by setting a maximum average “reserve cap” of 6 percent on school districts reserves.

SB 799 would increase the cap to a more manageable 17 percent. Equally important, it adds transparency by requiring each district’s superintendent to present an annual report to their school board.

For the lion’s share of school districts in California, this is only enough to cover a few days of payroll and nowhere near enough to plan for economic downturns, large expenses such as textbooks, classroom technology, new buses or unexpected repairs. Most small and medium sized school districts maintain an average savings of 25 percent.

A one-size-fits-all approach to local decision making erodes the ability of school boards to work with our communities and parents to make locally sound fiscal

decisions. This is inconsistent with the principle of local control over resource allocation.

Further, it has a disproportional impact on schools serving student from low-income families, English learners and foster youth — the very students that the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) was intended to provide additional support to. LCFF gives local communities an opportunity to engage in healthy conversations about what our students need, including what a prudent fiscal reserve should be. Taking away that decision from local communities is a step in the wrong direction. **The “reserve cap” must be fixed.**

Fortunately, Senator Jerry Hill introduced SB 799, which changes the restrictive cap and makes it workable for every school district in California. SB 799 would increase the cap to a more manageable 17 percent.

Equally important, it adds transparency by requiring each district’s superintendent to present an annual report to their school board on the district’s reserve and fund balances. School boards are to then adopt a policy on fund balances and provide an opportunity for public input.

This is a bipartisan bill. There is widespread support for fixing the reserve cap that includes children’s advocacy associations, civic rights groups and school boards. The respected nonpartisan Legislative Analyst’s Office has agreed the budget reserve cap is bad policy and has urged the legislature to repeal the law.

Credit rating agencies such as Standard & Poor’s and Fitch have stated that the current reserve cap will likely negatively affect school districts across the state. And, numerous newspaper editorial boards in California have also called for a fix to allow school districts to save for a rainy day.

School districts are as distinct as each of their students and communities. What one district needs, another may not. That’s why local decision-

making is so important and why it makes sense for each school district, in collaboration with those in their community, to determine what level of savings for a rainy day is sensible.

California State PTA and the League of Women Voters of California call on legislators to pass and Governor Brown to sign SB 799.

Justine Fischer is president of the California State PTA. Helen L. Hutchison is president of the California League of Women Voters.

VOTER REGISTRATION – ACTION NEEDED



Although our local league did a tremendous job on National Voter Registration Day in September—there is more that can be done. The State League urges members to take the following **ACTION**.

Urge Governor Brown to sign [AB 1461](#), the California New Motor Voter Program sponsored by [Secretary of State Alex Padilla](#), and to require that automated voter registration at the DMV be in place in time for the 2016 elections.

The LWVC has been working for full implementation of the [National Voter Registration Act \(NVRA\)](#) in state agencies including Covered California and, currently, at the Department of Motor Vehicles. As a result of our efforts, the current year’s budget includes funding for the DMV to implement online voter registration during driver’s license transactions. The momentum to implement an automated system must not be lost!

League members should call on the Governor to sign AB 1461 and ensure the DMV will implement efficient, streamlined voter registration BEFORE the June 2016 primary.

For many Californians, [registering to vote](#) is a significant barrier to participation in our democracy. The League of Women Voters stands firmly behind efforts to make registration easy and accessible to all eligible citizens.

California ranks 38th among the states in voter registration, a dismal record that must be improved. AB 1461 could potentially bring the 6.6 million eligible, but unregistered, voters in our state—who are predominantly Latino, African American and Asian-Pacific Islanders—into the electoral process.

Bringing as many eligible Californians into our election process as possible has great rewards for our democracy. We urge Governor Brown to sign this historic bill to improve the civic life of all Californians.



Some Memberships are Past Due

League dues for 2015-16 were due this past June. Several members have not sent in their membership checks yet. Please take a moment now and write/send that check.

LWVEA 2015-16
Membership Dues are \$50

Please send to: LWVEA, P.O. Box 2234,
Castro Valley, CA 94546

We are always pleased to accept donations. Donations are used to keep our dues at a minimum, to enrich our programs and to support an Angel Fund which allows those with limited financial resources to continue to enjoy membership in the Eden Area League of Women Voters.

Gail Lundholm, Membership Chair

FROM LWVUS – TAKE ACTION

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed the first-ever methane pollution standard for new and modified oil and gas facilities. This is a big deal – right now, the oil and gas industry is leaking millions of tons of methane and other toxic chemicals into the air. The proposed rule would help rein them in.



Tell the EPA's administrator, Gina McCarthy, you support the regulation to mitigate climate change and protect the air we breathe by cutting methane emissions.

This regulation is a critical part of President Obama's Climate Action Plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 40 percent by 2025. Throughout the country, methane and other harmful substances are released and allowed to leak from wells, compressors and pipelines, among other sources throughout the oil and gas sector. Methane emissions from the oil and gas sector are substantial – about one-third of total U.S. methane emissions.

Tightly regulating this methane is absolutely critical to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting public health. And cutting methane emissions will save energy since escaping natural gas is composed mainly of methane.

Curbing methane is a “win-win-win-win” that can save fuel, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and improve pipeline safety. Doing so is a critical near-term step toward implementation of the Climate Action Plan and continued U.S. leadership on climate protection and healthier air.

The EPA is accepting public comments on this proposal. As the oil and gas industry prepare an army of lobbyists and lawyers to oppose the rule, we have to make sure pro-environment voices are heard, loud and clear at the EPA.

Join the League of Women Voters and thank Administrator McCarthy for protecting public health and our environment, and tell the EPA that you support a strong methane pollution standard.

Elizabeth MacNamara, LWVUS President

'Right to Know' initiative would improve process

(The following article was excerpted from the Daily Review Editorial of 9-29-15)

Years of U.S. Supreme Court decisions have eliminated key avenues for restricting campaign funds. Independent committees can spend limitlessly, including contributions from corporations.

Wealthy people can give unrestricted sums to their own campaigns. And contributions to, and spending by, ballot measure committees cannot be capped.

The best way remaining to cleanse the political system is sunshine. That's why Bob Stern, a principal co-author of the 1974 Political Reform Act, and Gary Winuk, formerly chief enforcement officer of the Fair Political Practices Commission, drafted an initiative that would strengthen California's campaign disclosure laws.

Backers recently submitted it to state Attorney General Kamala Harris for required review before signature-gathering begins. When it does, registered voters should seriously consider signing the initiative petition to put the "Voters Right to Know Act" on the November 2016 ballot.



The measure would close loopholes that allow wealthy donors to remain anonymous when laundering money through a series of shell committees. Those who give more than \$10,000 would be outed no matter how many groups act as go-betweens.

It would require a major upgrade of the state's computer-accessible database to allow easy tracking of political money. While Secretary of State Alex Padilla, in his freshman year, deserves credit for some

badly needed changes, the state's campaign finance system needs much improvement.

The initiative would allocate money needed for those upgrades, money that state lawmakers, who really don't want disclosure, have resisted providing. And it would require coordination with computerized records for local campaigns, creating a statewide resource.

The initiative would also make it easier for voters to discern the major sources of funding for the campaign ads they receive; prohibit elected state officials from returning as lobbyists for two years, rather than the current limit of one; and prohibit gifts to lawmakers from lobbyists and those who employ them.

None of this can overturn the U.S. Supreme Court rulings. But, if passed, the initiative would create a state constitutional right to know the sources of political money, sending a message to the courts of the weight voters place on this information.

The initiative steering committee, led by Silicon Valley tech entrepreneur Jim Heerwagen, includes venture capitalists and executives of Google and Facebook, signaling access to needed funds for a successful campaign.

The campaign also has advisers who understand the complexities of campaign finance, including Dan Schnur, director of University of Southern California's, Jesse M. Unruh Institute of Politics; Daniel Newman, CEO of Maplight, an online resource for campaign finance data; and Tony Miller, former acting secretary of state.

In other words, they have the money and the knowledge base for a successful campaign.

SAVE THE DATE –

The LWVEA will hold its annual Holiday Party on Friday, December 11 at the San Lorenzo Village Homeowner Assoc. Meeting Hall.



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, and San Lorenzo

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,
 2nd member same Household \$25,
 Student \$20

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS—Eden Area League of Women Voters 2015-2016

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CALENDAR

DATE	TIME	EVENT
Oct. 3	11 am	Groundbreaking Ceremony for new Hayward Library corner of C Street & Mission Blvd. Open to Public
Oct. 6	6 pm	Hayward Volunteer Recognition & Award Dinner @ St. Rose
Oct. 10	9:30 am	LWV Alameda County Council Meeting @ Nate Miley’s Office
Oct. 14	12 noon	Webcast by Public Policy Institute CA on Higher Ed & CA Economic Future – contact Kelly Holt (415) 291-4498
Oct. 17	11 to 2 pm	Town Hall on Guns as Toys by AC Consumers Affairs Com. @ REACH Ashland Youth Center, 166335 E. 14 th Street, San Leandro RSVP 510-208-9672
Oct. 21	1 pm	League Presentation for CV Women’s Club
Oct. 26	5:45 pm	LWVEA Board Meeting, Hayward Area Historical Society
Nov. 7	10:30-2 pm	Constitutional Amendment Study (see page 1)

**For up-to-date info and specific details on events,
 email: lwvea@aol.com or check out www.LWVEA.org**