



League of Women Voters Eden Area

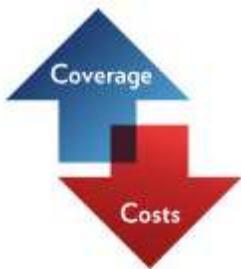
VOTER

Vol. 55 No. 2 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* Feb. 2012

JOIN US FOR A LUNCHEON FORUM
Co-Sponsored by **Eden Area League of Women Voters**
and **American Association of University Women**

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT FORUM

Speaker: **Alex Briscoe**,
Director, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency



On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act. The law put in place comprehensive health insurance reforms that will roll out over four years and beyond, with most changes taking place by 2014. Other changes have already begun. Law suits have been filed to overturn portions of the Act. Some politicians are talking about overturning the whole act. The cost of health insurance is still rising and millions of people are still without health insurance.

What effect will the Affordable Care Act have on my health care coverage? Will Medicare coverage be impacted? What does Basic Care cover?

March 2 (Friday)

San Lorenzo Village Homes Association, 377 Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo
11:30 – Registration and Welcome, 11:45 - Lunch
12:15 - Program Speaker, 1:15 – Q and A

This program is open to the public and there is no charge for people who would like to attend just the program, without lunch. However, RSVPs are requested and should be sent to lwvea@aol.com or call Nancy at 510-562-4473.



The cost of lunch is \$10 if **paid by February 28th**; otherwise cost for lunch will be \$15 at the door.

Name: _____ Phone _____

Guest: _____ Phone _____

_____ Yes, I am coming and just for the program, no lunch.

Enclosed is check for \$ _____ for # _____ lunch(s) payable to LWVEA and mailed to:
LWVEA Treasurer, P. O. Box 2234, Castro Valley, CA 94546.

President's Report

Nancy Van Huffel

Busy, busy, busy is how I would describe Board activities. In January, Suzanne Barba, and René Besold, led the discussion on National Program Priorities for the year. They were joined by LWVEA resource members Linda Slater, Evelyn Cormier, and Jewell Spalding. It was a stimulating discussion that helped inform participants on the issues: definitely a good use of time for those attending. Please see the results on page 3.

In February, our Youth Voter Registration Committee plans to finalize our "Importance of Voting" Power Point put together by René Besold and schedule presentations at our local high schools. We will do this in conjunction with the Registrar of Voters, who will conduct mock elections.

On Friday, March 2nd we will be hosting a luncheon forum on the Affordable Care Act. The bill was originally crafted by the United States House of Representatives in 2009 at the encouragement of the Obama administration. However, as originally drafted, it never became law. In 2010, the House abandoned its reform bill in favor of amending the Senate bill (via the reconciliation process) in the form of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010. Alex Briscoe, Director of Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, will be discussing the key provisions of this bill. Alex is an excellent speaker and is probably one of the few individuals that has read and understands the 974-page document.

Our League Board decided to participate in a Privatization Study being conducted by our National League. Shelia Young has agreed to spearhead the activities for this forum. The purpose of this study is to identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state, or local government services, assets, and/or functions to the private sector. It will review the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers, and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good.

There will be a general discussion meeting in late March or early April on the pros and cons of various approaches to privatization. Then we will move on to a session to arrive at consensus on the actual questions posed by the National League.

As League members, we want you to stay informed about issues that affect you and your community. I sincerely hope you will plan to participate in one or more of these events.

BOARD BRIEFS January 18, 2012

- AB1810 – Board reviewed a request for support of a bill to increase transparency of "Conflict of Interest" information filed by local elected officials. Recommended that the bill be forwarded to LWVC legislation committee for its opinion regarding support.
- Privatization Study – A tentative date of March 30 was selected for a forum on the LWVUS Privatization Study with a panel of experts on the topic. This would be followed by a meeting of those interested in the subject to come to consensus on the six multi-part questions furnished by LWVUS.
- Affordable Care Act – Board agreed to have the ACA forum on Friday, March 2 and ask Alex Briscoe, Director, AC Health Care Services Agency as a speaker.
- Hayward Honors Women Program – Linda Slater agreed to work on the program and look into how the LWVEA played a role in Hayward's history.
- Program Planning – Board received a report on the January 14 Program Planning meeting recommendations and approved forwarding the information to LWVUS.
- Youth Voter Registration Project – The power point presentation to be used in local high schools will be revised, local high schools and the Registrar of Voters contacted. The next meeting of the committee will be set soon in order to launch the project.

LWVEA Board meetings are open to the public and are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:45 at the Eden Area Multi-Service Center, Hayward.

PROGRAM PLANNING FINAL REPORT

Seventeen League members attended the January 14 Program Planning meeting. Based on a survey sent to all League members, the two LWVUS positions in each of four categories were selected for a comprehensive review in order to select three positions from the eight produced by the survey to recommend for “Educate and Advocate” at the LWVUS level.

The eight positions were: Campaign Finance, Voting Rights, Military Policy/Defense Spending, U.S. Relations with Developing Countries, Environmental Protection/Pollution Control, Energy, Health Care and Fiscal Policy/Tax Policy.

The three positions chosen for education and advocacy in 2012-2013 were: Fiscal Policy, Campaign Finance and Military Policy/.Defense Spending. In addition, the group came to consensus to retain all of the LWVUS positions

The group also submitted suggestions for language changes and areas for consideration along with our online form. The group suggested that Social Security should not be labeled an “entitlement” program since people pay into the system.

The other suggestion was that a new position be considered for Veterans’ Policy, which can be fashioned from other positions, which mention Veterans but do not cover the scope and importance of the topic which has recently surfaced as a major issue.

The group also reviewed a position developed by the District of Columbia and will be recommended for concurrence at the LWVUS convention on “Sentencing Reform Policy.”

Basically the position states that “the LWVUS believes alternatives to

imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime.” It also states that “LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.”

The LWVEA group unanimously voted in support of using concurrence to establish this position by the LWVUS and requested that the National League include references on “vocational and rehabilitative services” and that “these programs must meet best practices for accountability standards.”

The group reviewed the LWV Bay Area positions and its plans for continued work on regional issues. The LWVBA was commended for its continued good work on regional issues. The local positions were also reviewed and other than two minor typographical errors which will be corrected, the positions were approved as published.

The report was approved by the LWVEA board at its regular meeting on January 18 with the request that the report be put on our website.

CHECK THIS OUT

The Bay Area League Education Fund publishes a bimonthly review of regional issues—they are timely, thoughtful and well researched. Please take some time to read many or all of the articles in their February/March 2012 issue. The website is: www.bayareamonitor.org. The current issue contains articles on:

**Whither Affordable Housing
Regional Democratic Discourse
Power Plant Emissions Standards
Disabled Parking Policy
Delta Plan Debate**

YOUTH VOTER REGISTRATION

Thanks to Rene' Besold, with input from the Youth Voter Registration Committee members, the League now has a first-rate Power Point presentation, lesson plans to guide presenters, and interactive exercises to motivate local high school students on why it is important to be an educated voter and to vote.

League members are planning to work with the Registrar of Voters who conduct mock elections in schools, in contacting high schools principals and teachers who will want to integrate this important program in civic engagement into their classrooms.

The committee is recruiting additional presenters. In fact a "dry run" of the presentation will be held on Wednesday, February 8, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Hayward City Hall, Room 2A. Presenter training will be provided. If you are interested, contact Nancy who is chairing the committee at LWVEA@aol.com.

Welcome New Member Aisha Knowles

Aisha Knowles is the Public Information Officer for the Alameda County Fire Department. That means she's the point person for fires and other emergencies in the unincorporated areas, the cities of San Leandro, Dublin, Newark and Union City, and the Lawrence Berkeley and Lawrence Livermore laboratories. She writes press releases for print and electronic media, including the small newspapers and Patch email news services. She also writes updates for city managers and the Board of Supervisors, and uses Facebook and Twitter to get the word out.

The day we talked, Aisha had handled information on a fire at a hotel, caused by a pan of untended linguica. In addition to her demanding job, she enjoys family activities, sporting events, knitting, scrap booking, and travel. She spent time in Costa Rica in a Spanish immersion project focused on medical issues, and is going to

Honduras on a Rotary International project of building a school. She'll also go to Bangkok later this year for the international Rotary convention.

She met League President Nancy Van Huffel 8 years ago. Nancy "gently tried to recruit" her new friend, and invited her to the League holiday parties. And now she is a member! "I want to learn and listen, and find out about legal issues and advocacy," Aisha said. Aisha grew up in Hayward and graduated from Mt. Eden High School and UC Berkeley. *By Connie Rusk*

A RECOMMENDATION FOR THE JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER FROM A LOCAL LEAGUE MEMBER

December 31, 2011

David Muhammad, Chief Probation Officer
Alameda County Probation Department

Re: Juvenile Hall Rewards Program

Dear Mr. Muhammad,

As a member of the Board of the League of Women Voters (Eden Area), I met and talked with you at the conclusion of our annual program when you spoke before our membership regarding your vision and volunteer needs.

Along with others from the League Board, I responded to your request for volunteers which ultimately brought all of us to a VIP orientation at the Juvenile Justice Center on December 21, 2011. At the conclusion of the program, we took a short tour of the housing area which led us to Unit 12.

While in Unit 12, Ms. Godfrey talked about not wanting the youth to feel like they were in "jail," but the surroundings gave a different impression. The walls, alone, were drab in color, cold in their indifference, and the metal doors, stairs and enclosed spaces with high ceilings all left little doubt that this was a mini-prison.

While there, I thought, “What can be done to these surroundings that would make the units less prison-like and also bring a sense of belongingness to the young offenders?” Then it hit me, a rewards program among the units wherein they would design their new surroundings and then paint the murals on the walls.

My thoughts went to getting a paint store or stores to donate the supplies for the projects. Then, the juveniles within their own units could come up with ideas for their new surroundings. Parameters would have to be set like telling the young people the types of settings from which they could choose; for instance, “nature settings” including such things as trees, water, birds, animals, etc. By setting the parameters, inappropriate or ill-advised scenes could be precluded. I would also put out a call to your staff and/or the community for people who would volunteer to draw the sketches on the walls so the young people could do the painting under supervision.

To bring a little friendly competition to the revitalization effort, each unit’s work could be evaluated in such a way that there would be no losers because “artistic performance awards” would be granted to everyone like “most creative.” I’m sure your staff could come up with enough categories so that every unit would feel the pride of winning.

What would be achieved by instituting such an idea? First and foremost, the resulting murals would truly reduce the prison stigma by making the units look less like a prison. The units would get newly painted at no cost because everything would be donated. The new surroundings would provide color and warmth for the youth and for the staff. Additionally, there could be a myriad of other beneficial by-products of the program for the young people; for example, it could bring about:

- a positive competitive environment among the units (wherein the

- juveniles would have something to plan, talk about and enjoy),
- camaraderie where seemingly none had been before (drawing youngsters together ...a team spirit could develop) a sense of purpose (giving the juvenile offenders something to do when the school day has ended),
- an opportunity for pride in something developed by the group (taking into account the input and participation of each in the unit while being realized by the whole),
- a program whereby everybody wins (all receive an “artistic performance award”),
- something tangible that they could say they earned (each unit member would receive a certificate) and finally
- a more palatable place in which to “live” after the program has been completed.

Of course there are no guarantees that this program would yield all of the above, but it is very likely because regardless of the background of people, young or old, rich or poor, educated or not, they all want to belong and live within an environment that nourishes them as opposed to punishing them.

Mr. Muhammad, you told all of us at the League meeting that you wanted to make a positive difference and I believe you have begun that work. This would be another idea with which the staff, the community and the youth could get behind and work on together. I think it is worth a try. What do you think?

Sincerely, M. René Besold

NOTE: Shortly thereafter, René heard from Mr. Muhammad indicating that he thought her suggestion was a good one and that he was forwarding it to the Deputy Chief Probation Officer for consideration and follow up.

Voting In The Primary Election



Presidential Primary

If you are registered to vote with a political party, you will be given a ballot for that party in a Presidential primary election.

If you are unaffiliated with any party (sometimes called “no party preference” or “decline to state”), you will be given a nonpartisan ballot, containing only the names of all candidates for nonpartisan offices and any ballot measures to be voted upon at the primary election.

Or, you may be able to request the ballot of one of the political parties at the polls or on your vote-by-mail ballot request form. Each political party has the option of allowing decline-to-state voters to vote in their Presidential primary.

California Statewide Primary

As of June 2012, California will start using the Top Two Candidate Open Primary system for statewide offices. All candidates for a given state or congressional office will be listed on a single Primary Election ballot. Voters can vote for the candidate of their choice for these offices. The top two candidates, as determined by the voters, will advance to the General Election in November.

History of California Statewide Primary Elections

The closed primary system in California was amended in 2000 when Senate Bill 28 implemented a “modified” closed primary system, which permitted voters who declined to register with any political party to vote for a party’s candidates in a primary election if authorized by that party’s rules and duly noticed by the Secretary of State.

Current Statewide Primary Rules

On June 8, 2010, California voters approved Proposition 14, which created the Top Two Candidates Open Primary. This system is used in primary elections for state constitutional, U.S. Congressional, and state legislative offices, but not for U.S. President or the parties’ county central committee offices. Under the Top Two Primary system, all candidates running in a primary election, regardless of their party preference, will appear on a single Primary Election ballot and voters can vote for any candidate. Only the top two overall vote-getters, regardless of party affiliation, will advance to the General Election.

The Secretary of State has posted a useful comparison of the new Top-Two system with the former “modified closed primary” system, including the change to “voter-nominated” offices rather than party nominated offices and the elimination of write-in candidates in general elections. For the complete list of comparisons, please go to [this link](#). The Alameda County Registrar of Voters has useful information about the elective offices that are affected by the Top Two Primary system [here](#).

California DISCLOSE Act Falls Two Votes Short, But Sets Stage for Future Victory

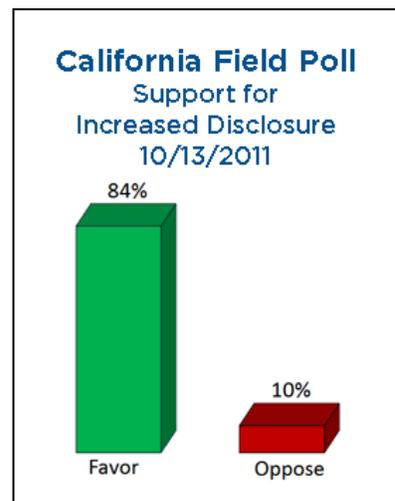
SACRAMENTO - Earlier today, AB 1148, the California DISCLOSE Act, fell two votes short of the two-thirds supermajority that it required for passage. But it showed bipartisan support for real disclosure, with Republican Assemblymember Nathan Fletcher of San Diego voting for it, along with every Democrat in the Assembly except one. The final vote tally was 52-26.

"People have the right to know who is funding political campaigns and where the true support or opposition comes from. It is time to move California to the forefront in campaign disclosure," said Assemblymember Nathan Fletcher (R-San Diego). *"It is disappointing that Sacramento failed today. It is my plan to bring this measure back."*

AB 1148, the *California DISCLOSE Act*, authored by Assemblymember Julia Brownley (D-Santa Monica) and sponsored by the *California Clean Money Campaign*, would have changed the political game by completely replacing current misleading fine print disclosures in political ads with clear and prominent disclosures of their three largest funders, be they unions, corporations, or wealthy individuals.

AB 1148 was endorsed by groups like the *League of Women Voters of California*, the *California Alliance for Retired Americans*, *California Common Cause*, *California Church IMPACT*, *CALPIRG*, the *Greenlining Institute*, the *Green Chamber of Commerce*, the *Planning and Conservation League*, *Sierra Club California*, Bob Stern, co-author of the Political Reform Act of 1974, and taxpayer advocate Ted Costa, CEO of the *People's Advocate*.

The public's interest in real disclosure has exploded since the Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision said that there could be no limits on independent expenditures. Nearly 300 local organizations and leaders endorsed the *California DISCLOSE Act* as a way of at least making sure that voters knew who was behind those ads. Over 20,000 people signed petitions for the bill, many of whom went on to help generate over 4,000 phone calls to constituents of key Assemblymembers asking them to call for Yes votes.



"The fact that 52 Assemblymembers voted yes despite intense pressure from special interests that would rather keep the public in the dark shows the power of the grassroots support for real disclosure," said Trent Lange, President of the *California Clean Money Campaign*, the sponsor of AB 1148. *"But we'll be back with an even stronger bill and even greater active involvement from the public for real reform."*

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The California Clean Money Campaign is a non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to lessening the unfair influence of Big Money on election campaigns. For further information, visit www.CAclean.org.



CALENDAR REMINDERS

February 4 , 9 to 2 p.m. Bay Area League Day Housing and the Bay Area's Future

First Unitarian Church of Oakland, 685 14th Street at Clay. David Rosen, a leading expert in the field of affordable housing, finance, policy, land use, lending and investment, and strategic planning will be the keynote speaker. Three panels will look into the problems facing housing today, including: implementation of SB 175; sources and uses of public money; and difficulties of community support. In addition there will be panels of experts on: meeting regional housing needs in light of the sustainable communities' strategy, difficulties of financing affordable housing; and how to serve the hardest to house.

Cost at the door is \$35 which includes lunch or \$20 without lunch. For more details call 510-839-1608 or email editor@bayareamonitor.org.

February 8, 2 to 4 p.m., "Dress rehearsal" for presenters participating in the Youth Voter Registration Program which will later be use in local high schools to educate students on the importance of voting, resources, and registering to vote. The "dress rehearsal" will take place at Hayward City Hall, Room 2A (second floor). If you are interested in learning more about being a presenter in the future and/or offer constructive critiques of the program, contact Nancy Van Huffel for more information at lwvea@aol.com.

February 15, 5:45 to 7:30 p.m.. Regularly scheduled LWVEA Board meeting at the Eden Multi-Service Center, 24100 Amador Street, 3rd floor, Hayward (off Winton).

February 25, 9 to 3 p.m. State League Regional Workshop. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, 150 E. San Fernando Ave., San Jose. This regional workshop will include speakers on: Te California State Budget—It's Broken—What the League and the Public Can Do to Fix the Problem; The Rules Have Changed: The 2012 Elections; Privatization—Growing Trend in Government: Let's Take a Closer Look from Two Perspectives. Cost is \$30 with lunch if paid after 2-8 and \$15 if you attend and don't order a lunch (bring your own). For more information call Shelly Saini (408) 460-0320 or email her at shellyksaini@gmail.com.

February 27, 9 to 10:30 a.m. - Health Reform in Alameda County: A Year-long Conversation Series hosted by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors Health Committee monthly at the Board of Supervisors Chambers in Downtown Oakland. The February session is on Health Reform and Specialty Care Access and Utilization. For more information contact Ryan Kawamoto at ryan.kawamogto@acgov.org.

March 2 from 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. Affordable Care Act Forum featuring Alex Briscoe, Director, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency. It will be held at the San Lorenzo Village Homes Association, 377 Paseo Grande. The cost of lunch is \$10 if paid by Feb. 28 or \$15 after that date. The public may attend just for the program with no lunch, at no cost. For more information, contact Nancy at lwvea@aol.com.

PRIVATIZATION STUDY

What is it? Why is the League studying it? How does it impact me?

Federal, state and local governments own extensive assets and are major employers. governments often consider selling assets, and outsourcing some functions and services to the private sector, including “core” government services such as for profit prisons, charter schools and major military contracts for services that the military used to do.

Privatization of these government assets, services and functions has been occurring for decades at all levels of government. The consequences of {privatizing” a government service or function, in particular, may enhance the function or service. alternatively, it may reduce or alter functions and services. Government revenues may be reduced or lost and jobs may be cut. In some instances, this may have a detrimental effect on the “common good” or public well being.

Privatization is a worldwide phenomenon. In recent years all levels of government, seeking to reduce costs, have begun turning to the private sector to provide some of the services that are ordinarily provided by government. The spread of the privatization movement is grounded in the fundamental belief that market competition in the private sector is a more efficient way to provide these services and allows for greater citizen choice

We are also seeing legislation to sell government resources to the for profit sector such as public lands, natural resources and utilities in an effort to balance budgets.

The purpose of the Privatization study is to identify policies and parameters that should be considered when any governmental entity is planning to undertake some type of privatization process.

For example, one of the multi-part consensus questions is:

• *As a matter of good government policy, which of the following criteria should be applied when making decisions to transfer government services, assets and functions to the private sector? Rank as High Priority, Low Priority, Not a Priority or No consensus.*

- a. *Transparency and Accountability*
- b. *Public Well-being*
- c. *Cost and Quality*
- d. *Environmental and Natural Resources*
- e. *Contracts and Sales of Public Assets*
- f. *Economic Impact*
- g. *Government Recovery of Services and Assets*

PRIVATIZATION STUDY LUNCHEON FORUM

A Privatization Study Luncheon Forum is planned for late March or early April as soon as a venue can be secured. Watch for flyers and/or the next VOTER for when and where the Forum will be held.

If you are interested in joining the Privatization Study Consensus Committee which will have just one meeting some time shortly after the Forum, then contact Shelia Young, chair of this study. Her email is MayorYoung@yahoo.com.

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
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*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.*

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