



League of Women Voters Eden Area

VOTER

Vol. 55 No. 7 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* Sept. 2012

REMINDER **LUNCHEON FORUM** **PROS & CONS ON BALLOT** **MEASURES**

Some of the ten ballot measures are controversial and will cause voters a lot of frustration in trying to decide how to vote.

Others are “sneaky” in that they sound good, but when voters find out who is contributing millions to back that proposition, they may change their vote.

Voters may get confused by a referendum on the ballot where “yes means no and no means yes.” If you don’t want to the original proposition to be overturned, then the voter needs to vote “yes” even though it seems counter-intuitive.

The League has invited experts on Prop 30 and 38 to explain the two major tax proposals on the ballot. And, we will have speakers on the “con” side of the proposal, too.

The Forum is:
Friday, September 21
11:30 to 2 p.m.

San Lorenzo Village Community Hall

Lunch is \$10 if paid in advance and \$15 at the door. There is no cost for those coming just for the program and not eating lunch.

Registration - 11:30, Lunch - 11:45, Program - 12:15.

Make check payable to LWVEA and mail to LWVEA Treasurer, P. O. Box 2234, Castro Valley, CA 94546. Questions and to RSVP, call 538-9678 or email suzbarba@comcast.net.

CANDIDATE FORUMS, **PRO & CON PRESENTATIONS** **FILL SEPT/OCT CALENDAR**

The League is busily filling its September and October calendar with dates for candidate forums and ballot measure pro and con presentations.

Unfortunately, all the dates have not been set as this VOTER is being put together. We will send a separate email “blast” to all members letting you know when these events are scheduled.

The League urges you to attend these important candidate forums and get your questions answered. Many attendees have told us that they changed their mind about who to vote for after attending a candidate forum. We plan to videotape all forums and post on you tube for wider public viewing.

Candidate forums currently scheduled:
Sept 25--San Leandro Marina Community Center—18th Assembly District (6pm) and SL City Council Candidates (7-9pm)

Sept. 26 from 7 to 9 p.m. CV Library Castro Valley School Board

Oct. 3 --Hayward City Hall for-- 20th Assembly District (6pm) and Board of Supervisor race, District 2 (7-9pm).

The League is planning to have other candidate forums. The dates for these other *two* forums has not been set yet and depends on the availability of the candidates and the venue.

GUEST PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Each month LWVEA board members will write a column in place of the President's Report. Readers will get to know more about members of the League Board and their perspective about League goals. Victoria Del Rio is our newest Board member and a college student at Chabot)

Growing up with my grandfather always watching the news made me realize that being concerned about what was going on outside of our house was important. My grandfather was politically active and I admired him for that.

I wasn't as active then as I am now. I recently took a political science class before joining LWVEA and was soon asked to be the SmartVoter Coordinator. I help candidates get their campaign material on the League SmartVoter website. This is a free service provided by the League and is much appreciated by candidates and voters.

It's a great feeling to be in the political world and get to shake a candidate's hand. I got really interested in meeting and working with candidates. It is exciting, to me, BUT, not many people my age feel the same way. I believe they are not interested because they don't think they are affected by politics. Many are really busy doing their own thing and they don't want to make time for anything else.

I have a friend who is completely bored when it comes to this subject. I made her come with me to one of the forums at Hayward City Hall. She liked it but that was it. I think a way to encourage these people is to get in their lives via Internet. Youtube.com is the best social network that everyone has access to.

Victoria Del Rio, SmartVoter Coordinator

LEAGUE TO MODERATE DISCUSSION AFTER PRESIDENTIAL TV DEBATE

The Castro Valley Library is inviting the community to come to the library and view the presidential and vice presidential debates. They have also asked the League to moderate a discussion after attendees watch the three debates.

The debate viewings will be held at 6 p.m. at the Library on:

Wednesday, Oct. 3 - President
Thursday, Oct. 11 – Vice President
Tuesday, Oct. 16 – President
Monday, Oct. 22 - President

BOARD BRIEFS August 22, 2012 Meeting

- Discussed an RFP for Videographer to film candidate forums so they can be put on at the website and on You Tube.
- Request for letter of support for Hayward Area Planning Assoc. (HAPA) on appeal in a court matter. Jewell Spalding indicated we do not have enough information to write a letter of support. A motion passed that we take no action at this time and remain neutral with a caveat that should the State Supreme Court take up the case In the future, we will revisit the matter.
- Requests for Pro and Con presentations for other groups are coming in now. We have five so far including one from an instructor at CSUEB for her public speaking class.
- Training for Pro and Con Volunteer Presenters - Volunteers have been contacted and a date(s) for training to be selected.
- Reviewed candidate races and decided how they can be grouped at venues convenient for the constituents who would be voting for those candidates in those particular races.
- Castro Valley Library invited the League to moderate a discussion after the showing of three presidential and one vice presidential television debates in October.
- Approved a letter to LWVC strongly encouraging them to develop a high quality videotape of the state propositions that all local Leagues can use.

Next LWVEA Board Meeting on Wednesday, September 18 at 5:45 at the Eden Multi-Service Center in Hayward.

LEAGUE THANKS DONORS

Many members included a donation with their membership renewal dues. The League is very grateful and will use the funds to continue its important work of registering voters, educating high school and community college students about the importance of voting, conducting candidate forums and providing Pros and Cons on ballot issues.

DONORS INCLUDE:

**Liz Bathgate
Rene' Besold
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Marian Handa
Laython Landis
Jo Loss
Doris Marciel
Jo & Al Murdach
Dorothy Partridge
Bill Quirk
Nancy Schluntz
Alison & Sherman Lewis
Nancy Van Huffel
Joan Webber**

IN MEMORIUM

Margaret "Meg" Jurich died July 25, 2012. She was a League Board member from 1995 to 2001 and served as chair of the Local Action Committee. She could always be counted on to pitch in and help with the many programs that the League conducted whether it was writing letters, attending meetings or helping with decorating a hall for a League forum.

Meg is described by her friends as a woman with a bright smile and many talents. She spent over 30 years working with Alameda County Social Services as a social worker dedicated to helping and placing foster children. She retired in 1999. She was also dedicated to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Hayward where she was an active member, A memorial service was held at the church on August 25.

COUNTY BALLOT MEASURES ON NOVEMBER BALLOT

- **TRANSPORTATION &**
- **THE OAKLAND ZOO**

In addition to the ten state ballot propositions, there will be two county measures on which to vote. Each was reviewed by the local, county and Bay Area Leagues. The pros and cons of each are presented here.

Alameda County Measure A1 Parcel Tax - Requires 2/3 vote to pass.

OAKLAND ZOO HUMANE ANIMAL CARE/EDUCATION PROTECTION MEASURE.

The Way It Is Now

The Oakland Zoo has a total budget of approximately \$13 million. The money comes mostly what it charges people to visit the zoo and from sales of food and gifts at the zoo. Almost 9% of the money comes from public support -- the City of Oakland the East Bay Regional Park District. In the past, Oakland provided more money for the zoo, but has cut that money over the past several years.

The zoo has had support for capital improvements from a variety of tax measures (all bonds) over the years.

Oakland voters recently approved a transient occupancy tax, some of which supports the zoo. This money is included in the money received from the City of Oakland. About 65% of zoo visitors are from Alameda County other than Oakland, and 15% from Oakland.



The zoo presents educational programs to students from all over the Bay Area. Some come to the zoo, and others get visits from the zoomobile. Schools with a large number of poor students get these programs free; other schools pay for the programs. Last year, 47 school districts from 12 counties participated in zoo programs in some way; of these, 16 districts are in Alameda County.

What Proposition A1 Would Do

A parcel tax would be added to property taxes in Alameda County. Residential parcels would pay \$12 per year, and non-residential parcels would pay \$72 per year. This tax would go on for 25 years.

The money from this measure would be spent to repair existing zoo facilities, and to support on-going programs. In particular, the money would be used to keep the entrance fee low, to support educational programs, and to take care of the animals at the zoo. There would be a public oversight committee to ensure that the money is used correctly.

Fiscal Effects - Alameda County property taxes would be increased by \$24 per residential parcel and \$72 per non-residential parcel for 25 years. The zoo would get about \$6 million per year from Measure A1 for 25 years.

Supporters Say

- The Oakland Zoo is an important public resource. We should support it and help it maintain its current high standard of care for animals and exceptional educational programs.

Opponents Say

- The zoo already has multiple sources of public funds: general fund and hotel tax revenues from Oakland, bond money and income from the East Bay Regional Park District's general fund, and a grant from State Parks. We can't afford higher taxes.

Supporters: East Bay Zoological Society,
www.oaklandzoo.org/East_Bay_Zoological_Society.php

Opponents: Save Knowland Park,
www.saveknowland.org

MEASURE B: Transportation Sales Tax for Alameda County

THE QUESTION - Should the voters of Alameda County approve a 1/2 cent sales tax increase for transportation that will be extended in perpetuity to help fund transportation projects and programs in the county?

THE SITUATION - In 1986 and 2000 Alameda County voters approved Measure B, a 1/2-cent sales tax dedicated to transportation that is currently due to expire in 2022. The funds are administered by the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC). The tax has funded improvements for transit, streets and roads, highways and freeways, and bicyclists and pedestrians. But in recent years, funding from state and federal sources has declined, and the economic downturn has reduced tax revenues. As a result, transit services have been cut, fares have increased and local streets and roads have deteriorated because maintenance has been deferred. However, the majority of capital projects under Measure B have been able to be completed ahead of schedule.

FISCAL EFFECTS – If this measure is approved, Alameda County voters would continue to pay the current 1/2-cent sales tax plus an additional 1/2-cent tax. The resulting 1-cent tax would not expire; it would continue in perpetuity. Between 2013 and 2043 the tax is expected to raise almost \$7.8 billion for transportation purposes. No funds can be taken by the State.

WHAT THIS MEASURE WOULD DO – More than three-fourths of the revenues would be dedicated to improvements in three categories: transit, including paratransit; local streets and roads; and bicycle and pedestrian projects. Smaller amounts would go to improve and extend freeways and highways, to encourage transit-oriented development, to improve freight transportation, and to develop a transit pass program for local students in middle and high schools

Comprehensive updates to the plans for spending the sales tax revenues will be submitted for voter approval at least once by 2043 and every 20 years afterward. If more projects are identified before 2043, ACTC can submit a plan to the voters for approval. This transportation tax requires a 2/3 vote to pass. Updates to the expenditure plans will require a majority vote.

SUPPORTERS SAY:

• Transportation sales taxes are critical to maintaining and upgrading our transportation infrastructure and services.

• These needs will go on forever.

• This sales tax measure would do the following:

- Reinstate many bus services to 2009 levels to improve their availability and accessibility, and approximately double the funding available for paratransit to serve seniors and people with disabilities.
- Upgrade and improve key highway interchanges to relieve bottlenecks and improve safety
- Prevent further deterioration in the condition of many local streets and roads.
- Expand lanes, trails, and walkways and improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Link transportation and land use investments.
- Provide funds to develop a transit pass program for local middle and high school students that, if successful, will be expanded, and that is expected to reduce driving to and from schools, reduce harmful emissions from automobiles near schools, and teach young people to use transit.
- Continue an Independent Watchdog Committee to monitor expenditures.



- Offer little or no relief from rush-hour congestion on most highways in the County.
- Provide for the construction of new highway lanes that would encourage more vehicle travel and add to the greenhouse gas emissions that worsen climate change.
- Provide incentives for new higher-density residential developments without requiring that low-income housing be included or that current residents be protected from displacement.
- Fail to give voters clear, quantified information before voting that would enable them judge the cost-effectiveness of the proposals and to know with certainty whether their most important transportation needs are being effectively addressed.

For more information, see:

www.alamedactc.org/app_pages/view/7046

ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION IS HERE

(Excerpted from Bay City News 8-27-12)

Registering to vote is catching up to the 21st century with new software to create an online registration system making its way to county election offices statewide Friday.

The software to set up a link on election homepages was sent to county offices Friday and online access is expected to be available by early September, in time for the Oct. 22 registration deadline for the Nov. 6 presidential election. The online registration system was put into place following passage of a bill last fall. The law now mandates that the state recognize online registration as a legal method of registering to vote.

The online system, which will be coordinated through the California Secretary of State's office, expects to offer less paper printing and less time transferring voter information into the system for election staffers.

Human errors, many stemming from messy handwriting, will no longer be an issue, and hopefully will ameliorate registration problems on Election Day. Online registration is also expected to save election offices money.

OPPONENTS SAY: Sales taxes are regressive because low-income households pay a larger share of their income in sales taxes than do higher-income households.

The sales tax would do the following:

- Be extended in perpetuity, without giving voters regular opportunities to affirm or deny their support for it.
- Provide only enough funding to maintain most local streets and roads in their current state of disrepair.
- Not provide sufficient funding to expand bus transit to meet the needs of a growing population.

The proposals in this measure do the following:

OBSTRUCTION OF OPEN-MEETING LAW – BROWN ACT

(The following editorial excerpt from the Daily Review on 7-28-12, is reprinted here because it touches on a subject that is a cornerstone of the League's effort to support good government practices and transparency—the Brown Act—Open Meeting Law)

We'd like to trust that all elected officials always will act transparently and in the best interest of the public. We really would. But history tells us otherwise.

So it was unnerving last month to see the Legislature and Gov. Jerry Brown suspend two key provisions of the local government open-meeting law. That's why the Assembly should stop sitting on a bill that would let voters decide whether to permanently reinstate the rules.

In a quirk of law, the state saves money by lifting the requirements that local governments -- city councils, county supervisors, special district boards -- post their agendas at least 72 hours before meetings and announce the topics and outcomes of closed sessions.

Local officials are tripping over each other to declare that they'll continue complying with the old rules. But it's only a matter of time before something inconvenient or embarrassing leads some council or board to slip in a last-minute agenda item or to keep something secret. When it happens, the public will have no legal recourse.

If officials could be trusted to be fully transparent, we wouldn't have the Brown Act. But they can't. In 1953, after an eye-opening series of San Francisco Chronicle articles about local governments taking action in secret, Assemblyman Ralph Brown authored the state's premier open-meeting law. It has been repeatedly amended, sometimes to improve it and sometimes to carve out exceptions for special interests.

Then, in 1979, voters passed a constitutional amendment that, among other provisions, required the state to reimburse local governments for the costs of new mandates. The Brown Act amendments on posting agendas and reporting on closed sessions came after that, so

the state had to pay the costs of carrying them out.

Some cities and counties tried to turn it into a cash cow. In fiscal year 2005-06, for example, Santa Barbara County submitted a bill for \$78,000. That's just for posting an agenda it would have prepared anyhow and for telling the public about closed-session topics. A few years back, as the budget picture worsened, the state stopped paying those bills. This fiscal year, the governor estimates they would have cost \$96 million. It was unconscionable. So finally, the governor and Legislature agreed to suspend the requirements for most local governments, although not schools.

In 2011 legislation was introduced to put this narrow issue before voters so they could make the disclosure rules permanent and end the state reimbursements. The state Senate unanimously passed SCA 7 nearly a year ago, but the Assembly has stalled.

The governor's tax measure on the November ballot contains similar provisions, and it appears the Assembly wants people to think it has to approve the tax in order to restore open government. Open government should be a given, not something voters have to buy.

LWV BAY AREA MONITOR DOES IT AGAIN

We hope you followed our advice in previous issues of the VOTER and checked out the amazing and important articles that appear in the LWV Bay Area Monitor.

This month the focus is on Aging Infrastructure because infrastructure supports everything we do. This issue highlights the problems that arise as infrastructure ages—in water systems, bridges, transportation, parks, and railroad engines. The articles are well researched and provide lots of nourishing food for thought.

The Monitor has been published for nearly 40 years as a project of the League of Women voters of the Bay Area education Fund. It covers transportation, air quality, water quality, open space, and land use issues in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, and engaged citizens. To read current and/or archived articles, go to www.bayareamonitor.org

Voter ID Laws = Voter Suppression

By Helen Hutchison, LWVC Second Vice President for Program and Advocacy

The League of Women Voters is all about voting: encouraging voting, educating voters, helping people make their voices heard by voting. We educate and advocate about voting.

Then why do we protest so loudly about voter ID laws? Because these laws are a form of voter suppression; they are a solution to a problem that doesn't exist.

Supporters of voter ID laws point to charges of voter impersonation or voter fraud. The facts simply do not support these charges. Despite many allegations and frequent careful examinations of voting records and patterns, little or no evidence of voter fraud has been found.

When studies are done, they consistently point at vote by mail (absentee) voting as the place where most voter fraud might occur. Voter ID laws deal only with voters at the polls, and not vote by mail voting. What has been shown, repeatedly, is that voter ID laws reduce access to voting and do this disproportionately among the elderly, students, women, people with disabilities, low income people, and people of color.

In a study commissioned by the Brennan Center for Justice, eleven percent of those surveyed did not have a government-issued ID that would be required for voting. Using census data, this means approximately

21 million otherwise qualified voters who would be turned away at the polls. Of these 21 million:

- more than 70 percent are women
- over one-third are seniors
- approximately 20 percent are between 18 and 24 years old.

Even among those with a government-issued ID, many do not have an ID that shows their current address. This is even more likely among those who earn lower incomes and young people, regardless of income level, because they tend to move more frequently than average.

These same groups of people—women,

the elderly, students, people with disabilities, low income people, and people of color—also are more likely to have difficulty obtaining the required photo ID to be able to vote.

They may not have the required back-up documents, and they may have more difficulty taking time off work during business hours, getting transportation to the government offices that issue the IDs, and finding the money to pay the application fees.

Voting is a fundamental right. The League of Women Voters stands with those who protect access to voting rather than those who would disenfranchise eligible voters. The impact of voter ID laws is to restrict voting, especially among certain groups of voters.

We **do not** need to protect ourselves against a problem that doesn't exist. We **do** need to ensure that the greatest number of people possible is offered the chance to exercise their right to vote.

For a graphic version of this article, see www.craigconnects.org/voter-protection-infographic

For more information on voter ID laws:

Project Vote: www.projectvote.org

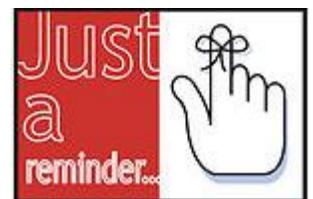
The Brennan Center for Justice:

www.brennancenter.org

LWV Minnesota: www.lwvmn.org The Web site includes a series of videos produced by the LWV Minnesota.

REMINDER—YOUR DUES ARE DUE

Have you sent your membership check in yet? Do you know Eden Area has the lowest dues in the entire SF Bay Area for League membership?



If you misplaced your invoice or can't remember whether you have paid send an email to LWVEA@aol.com

Otherwise, please send your \$50 check for membership in as soon as possible.

Jo Murdach, Membership, 510-581-6794
Jo71Murdach@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
 and unincorporated areas of Ashland, Castro Valley,
 Cherryland, Fairview, and San Lorenzo

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Dues: Regular \$50,
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*The League of Women Voters, a
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 encourages the informed and active
 participation of the public in
 government and influences public
 policy through education and advocacy.*

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DATE/TIME	LWVEA EVENTS
Sept. 5 @ 6-8 p.m.	Pro & Con Training , 5787 Highwood Rd, Castro Valley 538-9678
Sept. 11 @11:30-1 p.m.	Pro & Con Presentation, Retired Employees Assoc., Denny's, Hayward
Sept 19 @ 5:45 p.m.	LWVEA Board Meeting, Eden Area Multi-Service Center, Hayward
Sept. 19 @ 7 p.m.	Pro & Con Presentation, Greater Hayward Demos, Hayward
Sept 25 @6-9p.m.	Candidate Forum Assembly District 18 and San Leandro City Council Marina Community Center, San Leandro
Sept. 26, @ 7-9 p.m.	Candidate Forum, CV School Brd, CV Library
Oct. 3 @ 6-9 p.m.	Candidate Forum Assembly District 20 and Board of Supvrs District 4, Hayward City Hall
Oct. 3 @ 6 p.m.	TV Presidential Debate w/discussion, CV Library

**For up to date info on November 2012 Election forums
 check out our calendar at LWVEA.org**