



League of Women Voters Eden Area

**V O T E R**

Vol. 56 No. 4 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* April 2013

**JOIN US**

**Friday, April 19, 2013**

5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Hayward City Hall, 777 B Street

## **Meet and Greet Your Elected Officials**

These are the men and women who have been elected to make decisions at the local, county and state office levels—decisions that have an impact on you and your community.

We have invited officials who represent the Eden Area: Congressional, State Senate and Assembly Districts; Alameda County Supervisors; Chabot Community College District; Hayward and San Leandro City Councils, School Board members from Castro Valley Hayward, San Lorenzo and San Leandro; AC Transit; BART: EBRPD; EBMUD; HARD and the Castro Valley and Oro Loma Sanitary District Board of Directors.

*We will also be honoring State Senate Majority Leader Ellen Corbett for her many years of service as an assemblywoman and state senator.*

Light refreshments will be available in the lobby outside the city council chambers. The program will be held in the city council chambers. This is a great time to find out what various agencies have done and what they plan to do for our community.

Although there is no charge, please rsvp to [LWVEA@aol.com](mailto:LWVEA@aol.com) or phone 510-538-9678



## President's Report Jennifer Ong

The League of Women Voters Eden Area is not slowing down one bit. A great attendance of knowledgeable and enthusiastic leaders in our community attended our March 22nd luncheon forum featuring the Hon. John Chiang. Our State Controller shared insights about our state budget from past to present identifying the factors leading to our state's ongoing budgetary challenges. More details are provided in an article summarized by our team so keep reading our VOTER. The take away message from the forum: investment in education and infrastructure is key to a growing viable sustainable economy.

We thank our Chief Fiscal Officer for making a trip to the Bay Area to meet with our community. Incidentally, please look for your name on [www.claimit.ca.gov](http://www.claimit.ca.gov). In 2007, John Chiang improved the notification process for people whose assets were about to be seized. The U.S. District Judge found that Chiang's successful attempt at providing "fair notice to the owner and public" was sufficient and lifted the ban for the State Controller's office to be able to seize unclaimed property (this would have meant the State would lose \$300 million per year in revenue!). Look up your name on the website because it is quite possible that there is a check awaiting you from, for example, a business that owed you money but failed to locate you. Your check is being held by our State Controller's office and he wants to return your money to you. Save our government the cost of notifying you by going to [www.claimit.ca.gov](http://www.claimit.ca.gov).

LWVEA keeps "March"-ing on! We thank Nancy Van Huffel for her extensive work in expanding our membership drive. We have numerous groups who have approached us for the possibility of collaborating on civic engagement projects. LWVEA was able to raise money counting and recounting ballots for the Palomares HOA elections with the joint effort of Connie Rusk, Marianne Dimmick, Suzanne Barba,

Cossette Sun, Liz Bathgate, Ursula Batz Nancy Van Huffel, Marian Handa and René Besold .

This April, we will finally have an online membership option on our website. April will feature our "Meet Your Electeds" event at Hayward City Hall where we will be recognizing Senator Ellen Corbett for her years of service to our communities. Please let us know how we can better serve you as our members. See you at our future events and bring a friend!

## BOARD BRIEFS March 2013

- Community Collaborations – Discussed working with City of Hayward on June 1 regarding boards and commissions; and voter registration at Hayward Street Parties this summer.
- Legislative Interviews – Recommended a policy be developed regarding how LWVC legislative interviews are handled locally.
- Homeowner Association Elections - LWVEA conducted the elections for the Palomares Hills Homeowner Association successfully on March 19. This project has proven to be the league's best fundraiser, allowing the league to keep its annual dues one of the lowest in the state.
- Forum on State Budget – Jo Loss, VP Program, led discussion on final plans for the forum on March 22 featuring State Controller John Chiang.
- Meet Your Elected Officials - Jo Loss reported that invitations have gone out and some responses already received. She distributed a checklist of things to be done to ensure that it is a successful activity.
- LWVC Convention – LWVEA is allowed two delegates plus the president, to attend as voting members to the convention, which will be in San Jose from May 17-19. Other members may attend but need to contact the board beforehand.

- Letter to California Energy Commission – Using the League’s positions on Air Quality and Energy, Director Jewel Hargelroad explained the need for a letter citing RCEC for non-compliance with several issues in their attempt to amend sections of their certification measure having to do with landscaping the power plant property and the planting of trees.

- Initiative and Referendum Update Study - Rene’ Besold presented the results of the consensus meeting on the I & R study and the board approved sending the report to the LWVC.

*Board meetings are open to the public and are usually held on the third Wednesday at 5:45 p.m. at the Eden Area Multi-Service Center in Hayward.*



**SUMMARY  
REPORT –  
FORUM WITH  
STATE  
CONTROLLER  
JOHN CHIANG**

– by René Besold,  
LWVEA Director

On March 22, our League was proud to host State Controller John Chiang at a luncheon forum to discuss the long-range Implications of Proposition 30 and the obstacles facing California’s return to successful productivity. Controller Chiang began by reviewing the history of California’s budget woes from 2007 to the present day.

On July 13, 2007, California was the 9<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world and then one crisis after another hit: foreclosure, failure of huge financial institutions and unprecedented unemployment which grew to 12.5% (1.34 million people lost their jobs). It was devastating to the workers personally and to the State. When our workers can’t produce, they don’t earn money; they don’t pay income taxes or property taxes; they

can’t buy commodities, homes or cars; resulting in lower sales tax revenue.

The State is then forced to borrow money to stay afloat. It is a vicious cycle. Additionally, when the State has to operate on borrowed funds, then its infrastructure suffers and so does education which is vital to the State’s overall fiscal wellness. The bottom line is that when the State can’t pay its bills, then it must borrow, and it takes income to pay off that debt, a major detractor from our fiscal wellness.

In 2009, California had \$2.7 billion left in its checkbook but \$10 billion worth of bills! Controller Chiang had to hold back tax refunds for 23 days so that the State’s economy wouldn’t collapse! By February of 2009, the projected revenues were missed by \$2 billion. In July of 2009, Controller Chiang had to issue IOU’s instead of paychecks to some workers to keep California afloat!

Who has paid the most during this time of crises? Education. counties and cities have been hit hardest. School districts have not received the funding due them through Proposition 98, resulting in 188 school districts that have negative budgets.

Proposition 30 is meant to provide a balanced approach to eliminating California’s deficit that includes \$8 billion in cuts and \$6 billion in new revenues over a 7-year period. In this 7-year window, California has to pay down its debt.

Controller Chiang said that California has to have an honest conversation and debate about our long-term debt (retirement/pension costs, health care costs, interest on debt) and how to bring back jobs to California. Of the 1.34 million people who lost their jobs, he said that 1/3 of them will be recovered, 1/3 of them have been lost to other countries and 1/3 will never be recovered. That is why it is crucial that we continue to upgrade the skill sets of our workers and get our debt under control, said Controller Chiang.

## LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW WITH ASSEMBLYMEMBER BILL QUIRK

Each year, the State League asks local leagues to interview one or more legislators who represent their area. This year Eden Area was assigned to interview recently elected Assemblyman Bill Quirk.

LWVEA members Nancy Schluntz and Delmo Della-Dora met with the assemblyman on March 9, 2013. The following is a summary and excerpts from that interview.



### 1. CALIFORNIA'S BUDGET

Q.1.a. What measures would you support to continue the progress that Proposition 30 represents?

A.1.a. *With the passage of Prop. 25 allowing for a majority vote budget, and the passage of Prop 30, the legislature is now capable of dealing with balancing and passing a budget although it still will be a difficult task.*

Q.1.b. What measures would you support to change the budget process?

A.1.b. *The State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) and the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) are now underfunded and the legislature must deal with the STRS deficit in 2013 and the PERS deficit in 2014 to ensure that this legal requirement is met. We must be careful not to overspend, but we must also assure that the promises made to retirees and current employees are kept.*

### 2. ELECTION REFORM – MONEY IN POLITICS

Q.2.a. There was an unprecedented amount of money spent in this election in California. What measures would you support to address the problem of money in politics?

What improvements are needed to disclosure rules in California?

A.2.a. *The biggest problem is in the actions of independent committees. For example, they don't have to report the name of donors or amounts donated at the time that attack mailings go out. They make those reports after the campaigns are over. Laws should require that the public know the amount of money and the percentage of the funding that particular donors, including corporations, have contributed to each particular activity at the time that activity is going on. Carefully written legislation must prevent money laundering, such as occurred in the last election from an Arizona contribution. We need full disclosure while campaigns are going on.*

### 3. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

Q.3.a. During the last legislative session, unsuccessful efforts were made to change CEQA significantly. What is your view of CEQA? What changes do you think it needs, if any?

A.3.a. *This is one of our most important laws and not too difficult to deal with now especially for small projects but for larger projects it is more difficult. One of the major problems is that some groups have tried to make use of its provisions when the issues are not about the environment but about other problems. One example is the Industrial Light and Magic project lawsuit in Marin County which did not go forward when George Lucas became frustrated by a CEQA lawsuit. Support for the project was virtually universal; however, a small number of neighbors who didn't want increased traffic in the area filed a CEQA suit, and George Lucas who had already spent years getting approvals just gave up out of frustration with the process.*

*Two ways that Bill Quirk is examining as means to make the processes speedier involve the possible use of electronic record keeping in place of paper tracking and*

perhaps allowing for judges to use a prima facie (“on its face”) initial review to see if the evidence warrants considering the case as a true environmental quality issue or as just a ruse to delay or stop the projects. He would like to avoid undue lawsuits such as SLAPP suits where large corporations sue people basically to keep them quiet.

He’s talking with a variety of groups like the building trades, the Environmental Defense Fund, and eminent environmental quality legal experts to see how they think the processes can be simplified or otherwise made easier to move along more rapidly, yet retain all its significant features intact.

#### **Q.4. WHAT OTHER5 MAJOR ISSUES DO YOU THINK THE LEGISLATURE MUST DEAL WITH IN 2013? WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL PRIORITIES?**

A.4. Assemblyman Quirk cited three major issues: budget, gun legislation and energy.

**Budget** -. Long-term issues continue to be preserving appropriate funding for schools, health, and welfare, and tackling needed funding for pension funds.

**Gun Legislation** - Guns in the home continue to be the source of more deaths among family members (up to 10 times greater) than on intruders into the home. Legislation could encourage insurance companies to consider lowering premiums on home owner policies if the owner of the home agrees to take certain safety measures such as safety locks on the guns and whether they are stored in a safe manner. Legislation could regulate magazine sizes, types of rapid-fire weapons permitted, and other measures -- while assuring that we preserve all Second Amendment rights for our citizens.

**Energy** - Quirk was doing research on global warming in the 1970s and is very concerned that California still does not have an energy **policy**. It has instead a variety of separate energy **programs**. He feels we need to look at **systems of energy production** rather

than picking favorite individual energy producing sources.

We particularly need to look at specific targets in terms of energy cost, environmental goals and then have the industry and regulators determine what specific **combination of sources in a system** is most likely to achieve the goals established. However no single energy source should be considered by itself. He will be introducing two bills, one of which is designed to examine energy systems for near term use in our state and the other bill to examine a longer-term system of energy production. In short, we have to have energy production that is both science based and systems based.

#### **STATE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE REJECTS MOVING ADULT ED TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES**



By Susan Frey, Ed Source – March 13, 2013

In a clear message to Gov. Jerry Brown, an Assembly subcommittee voted unanimously

to reject his proposal to shift responsibility for adult education programs from K-12 districts to community colleges. The bipartisan 4-0 vote, with one subcommittee member absent, followed a flurry of pink slips issued by school districts to adult educators recently.

The vote was also meant as a message to school districts considering abandoning their adult ed schools that the Assembly supports current district programs and that there will be funding for those programs.

**To read the full report go to:**

<http://www.edsource.org/today/2013/assembly-committee-rejects-moving-adult-ed-to-community-colleges/28810#.UVZ5WzFMeSE.email>

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We have been successful in recruiting many new members to our League and would like to introduce them to you. We hope that each will be an active League member and work on the issue or issues that are their “passion.”

### Linda Morine

I came to the San Francisco Bay area after graduate school (Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, UT Austin). I am originally from Arizona. I have worked in public administration for the last twenty-five years and have lived in San Leandro since 2002. I currently work for the City of Concord's Community and Economic Development Department. Of my various work positions, I feel most fortunate to have contributed to water quality improvements both as a Contra Costa County employee and in other counties as a consultant at a small Oakland environmental firm (EOA, Inc). My professional affiliations include Municipal Management Association of Northern CA.

I am active in a local Presbyterian church (choir member) and April Showers, a city wide, interfaith organization, where I provide direct services to the homeless. In the past, I chaired church committees and represented local churches on regional and national church denominational bodies. I have been supportive, but not particularly active in numerous social service and environmental organizations, including such local favorites as Bay Area Community Services (mental health), Greenbelt Alliance and Friends of San Leandro Creek.

In my mind, the League seeks to provide the civil, objective discussion of facts and policy necessary for good governance and for the encouragement of long-term, rather than short term solutions to public problems. In fact, unlike many other organizations, the League appears most dedicated to increasing overall civic education, rather than furthering a particular agenda. In the past, I might have wanted to work only for some favorite policy area.

I decided to join the League because I want to be one of those members of my community who is working, or at least supporting efforts, to improve civic life. Rather than lament ignorance and apathy, perhaps I can help educate and hopefully increase a healthy interest in the body politic.

### Congressman Eric Swalwell

Congressman Eric Swalwell was raised in Dublin and was elected to the Dublin City Council in 2010. From 2006 - 2012, he served as a prosecutor for the Alameda County District Attorney's Office where he served as the lead prosecutor on hate crimes and prosecuted more than 1,000 cases including human-trafficking, domestic violence, murder, and fraud. In 2009, Eric won a community service award from Mothers Against Drunk Driving for his work to successfully prosecute drunk drivers.



Eric worked his way through college and law school and interned on Capitol Hill for then-Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher. He

was elected to Congress in November 2012 representing the 15<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. He recently introduced two bills that will improve our economy, create incentives for the creation of jobs in our local communities and support U.S. companies that break into a new and growing industry:

In the House of Representatives, Eric serves on the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and the Subcommittee on Energy, which oversees the Department of Energy's civilian research, development, and demonstration programs. He also serves on the Committee on Homeland Security.

Eric joined the League of Women Voters because he believes the organization provides a vital public service to educate citizens on issues and make democracy work. This is a mission he shares in his work in Congress.

## Aisha Knowles



I was born and raised in Hayward and currently a homeowner in Ashland. I attended Hayward public schools my entire life, went

to Cal and have also studied Spanish abroad in the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica. I work for the Alameda County Fire Department as the Public Information Officer and Community Outreach Coordinator.

This past June, I was elected to the Alameda County Board of Education and serve as the Trustee for Area 4 (San Lorenzo, Castro Valley, Fairview, Ashland, Cherryland and the city of San Leandro).

My community involvement includes: Secretary of the Board of Directors for Building Futures for Women and Children, a member of the San Leandro Rotary Club (and also am a member of the BoD) where I serve as the Crab Feed Chair. I also serve as a Commissioner on the Alameda County Commission for the Status of Women, a member of the Deputy Sheriffs Activities League Soccer Advisory Board and a member of the Board of Directors for the San Leandro Boys and Girls Club.

I was first exposed to the League by Nancy Van Huffel. After years of asking me to join (she was determined!) I finally made the decision to listen to what Nancy was trying to share with me all along and become a member.

The issues of greatest interest and concern to me that the League is focusing on are voting rights. I'm particularly interested in ensuring our local youth understand their voting rights and receive information on registering to vote!

## STATE BUDGET PLANS TO SHIFT ADULT SCHOOL FUNDING TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES Some see shift as disastrous

By Carla Rivera, Los Angeles Times - 3-16-2013

*The State League has a position on Education which states, "Support a system of public education funding which is adequate, flexible, equitable, reliable and sustainable.....to support access and equitable opportunities for all students." The following article excerpted from the Los Angeles Times refers to the inadequate funding in the state budget for adult education.*

Gov. Jerry Brown's budget proposal shifts all responsibility for adult schools to community colleges. Under that plan, adult programs would be funded with a new grant of about \$300 million in the 2013-14 budget. But the governor's approach is causing great concern among many adult-education providers and college administrators and angst among many students who fear losing convenient access and affordability.

School districts from Oakland to Long Beach say they intend to cut their adult programs or severely curtail them. The crisis in adult education accelerated in 2008-09 when the Legislature gave school districts temporary flexibility to shift funds earmarked for those courses to other uses.

A 2012 Little Hoover Commission report found that overall enrollment in adult-school programs fell by a third, from about 1.2 million students to nearly 777,000, from 2006 to 2010, largely due to the change in funding.

In 2007-08, a high of \$750 million was earmarked for adult programs. Under the governor's plan, the \$300 million in funding would be used for core programs such as vocational education, English as a Second Language, basic skills and citizenship. For other classes, students would be required to pay the full cost of instruction.

Community colleges would be able to contract with K-12 districts to continue to offer adult programs. And school districts could still choose to fund their own adult

programs. Such realignment would be more efficient and require cooperation, officials said.

"Right now it's a bifurcated system," said H.D. Palmer, a spokesman for the state Department of Finance. "But adult education is one of the core missions for community colleges. We don't believe that by proposing this structure the fears are going to be realized." The plan must still be approved by the Legislature.

Some adult-education providers believe they are being led over a cliff. The proposed shift would take effect this fall, and many colleges may not be ready, officials said.

"Our overriding concern is that we have this enormous program that impacts the lives of thousands and thousands of Californians and we frankly are worried about trying to pull off something of this magnitude between now and July," said community colleges Chancellor Brice Harris. "We've been trying to find a way to have a meaningful and careful conversation, to transition this in a reasonable period of time. It puts K-12 and us in an awkward spot. We need clarity on what the funding will be and what responsibilities are expected." The lack of details has put many colleges in limbo.

## **LWVEA LETTER TO CEC COMPLIANCE MGR RE POWER PLANT IN HAYWARD**

Recently, the LWVEA sent a letter to the California Energy Commission Compliance Manager regarding proposed amendments to the certification of the construction (which is now being done) of the Russell City Energy Center (Power Plant) on the Hayward shoreline.

The letter stated that it opposed the RCEC amendment which asked for more time to landscape the area around the power plant, modify the kind of trees to be planted, and extend the testing time before the plant opens.

The League has positions on standards for air quality and the protection of the public health and welfare. The letter opposed the RCEC amendments because no staff analysis has been published on any of the proposals to show if they will have an additional impact on air quality in the area.

The letter also supports the Hayward Area Recreation District (HARD) in pointing out that RCEC agreed to install new trailside amenities in the Hayward Regional Shoreline **prior** to commercial operation. HARD is objecting to the "inadequacies of the mitigation" of this large industrial complex which detrimentally impacts its entire shoreline.

To read the full letter, go to the League website at [lwvea.org](http://lwvea.org).

## **Bill by Senators Lieu and Yee Seeks to Shine Light into Campaign Financing**

Senators Ted W. Lieu of Torrance and Leland Yee of San Francisco announced language to Senate Bill 2 – part of their two-bill package to strengthen the California Political Reform Act.

"These changes would provide voters with more information about who's funding the increasing amount of political ads and mailers," Lieu said about SBs 2 and 3, known as the Sunshine in Campaigns Act.

"Californians should know who is truly behind the political ads attempting to influence their vote. SB 2 will help stop unscrupulous campaigning and provide the disclosure that voters deserve," said Yee.

Specifically, SB 2 would:

- Require candidates to "stand by your ad" and verbally approve each candidate-funded broadcast advertisement. This reform seeks to increase accountability for ads and allow voters to better identify candidate ads from independent ads.

- Require the top four funders of a ballot measure or independent expenditure committee to be disclosed in all broadcast and print advertisements.
- Increase the number of campaign disclosures and improve the timeliness of information by enacting quarterly and monthly filing requirements.
- Improve disclosures of slate mailers to require notices to voters to be in the same language as the mailer and provide more disclosures of who's paying for the mailers.
- Increase penalties for failing to disclose campaign contributions.

#### LWVC Leader Update

### SUMMARY REPORT ON LWVC INITIATIVE & REFERENDUM UPDATE STUDY

*By Rene' Besold, Recorder for Study Group*

The overall question asked by the State League was “**Should California retain the Citizens’ Initiative and Referendum Process?**” The local league study panel came to consensus -- “**YES**” but was also adamant that the process be modified in such a way to ensure that all safeguards for the sanctity of the process be implemented and that bias be reduced as much as possible. Below are examples on which the study group came to consensus:

- A **Pre-Review Process** should be implemented wherein initiative sponsors should be required to submit draft proposals to an official authority for an opinion on clarity/language, constitutionality/legality or single subject.
- The **Pre-Review Process** should be performed by unbiased reviewers like the Legislative Analyst’s Office.
- The **Pre-Review Process** should be mandatory.
- The results of the **Pre-Review Process** should be reported back to

the originator (non-publicly) with a Go or No-Go Decision on the initiative.

- The title and summary of ballot measures should be written by the Legislative Analyst’s Office to lessen bias.
- Signature requirements including number of signatures to qualify and number of days for signature gathering should remain intact.

Additionally, the study group was asked to determine whether or not changes needed to be made in the various stages of the initiative and referendum process including: drafting, qualifying, campaigning, disclosure, election, post-election and legal ramifications.

A great deal of discussion ensued regarding the Legislature’s authority in terms of altering legislation that had already been passed by the voters. The study group believed strongly that there should be limitations on the Legislature’s authority and that they can only: make changes “in the spirit of” the original initiative, that a super majority vote be required, that changes not be made outside of the language in the original initiative.

### STATE LEAGUE CONVENTION

The 64<sup>th</sup> State Convention of the League of Women Voters of California will be held May 17 through 19 with special pre-convention events on May 16. It will be held at the Hayes Mansion, San Jose. Attendance at convention is open to everyone.

The theme is **myLeague: Leading the Charge for Change**. There are workshops and speakers on the state budget, grassroots advocacy, social media, fundraising, health care and more.

Read more about speakers, workshops, special activities at <http://lwvc.wordepres.com>. The hotel’s special room rate of \$119 per night is good through April 15. If you are interested, please contact Jennifer Ong at [drjenniferong@gmail.com](mailto:drjenniferong@gmail.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

Just cut out and mail this coupon with your check to:  
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**Dues:** Regular \$50,  
 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.*

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**CALENDAR**

April 17 LWVEA Board Meeting  
 5:45-7:30 Eden Multi-Service Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Hayward

**April 19 Meet & Greet Elected Officials (see page 1)**  
**5:30-7:30 Hayward City Hall, Lobby & Council Chambers, 777 B Street, Hayward**

May 15 LWVEA Board Meeting  
 5:45-7:30 Eden Multi Service Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Hayward

May 17-19 LWVC Convention  
 Hayes Mansion, San Jose

June 15 LWVEA Annual Business Meeting  
 10:30-1:00 Program Speaker: Congressman Eric Swalwell

[www.lwvea.org](http://www.lwvea.org) for up to date info