



# League of Women Voters Eden Area

# VOTER

Vol. 58 No 3 *Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation* March 2016

## REMINDER

### MENTAL HEALTH & LAURA'S LAW FORUM

Date: March 18 (Friday)  
Time: 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Place: San Lorenzo Library  
395 Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo

11:30 – Registration  
Noon – Lunch  
12:30 - Program Speakers

Lunch is \$12 for those who RSVP before March 14. No charge for those who want to come to the program without ordering lunch.

However, you must RSVP to [suzbarba@comcast.net](mailto:suzbarba@comcast.net) or phone 510-538-9678 if you plan to attend.

If you would like to pay by PayPal, send request to [lwvea@aol.com](mailto:lwvea@aol.com)

If you prefer to mail in a check, please make it out to: LWVEA and mail to Treasurer, LWVEA, PO Box 2234, Castro Valley, CA 94546.



## IMPORTANT DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

The LWVEA has a busy few months ahead before the June 7<sup>th</sup> elections. There are a variety of local, regional, state and national issues coming up. The League will be holding candidate and issue forums to help the voters make decisions on how they will vote.

**March 30** – Candidate Forum for Hayward City Council Election, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Hayward City Hall.

**April 13** – District 4 Board of Supervisors Candidate Forum, Castro Valley Library, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**April 20** – Pro and Con Forum on changing the date of Hayward City Council elections from June to November AND Hayward Utility User’s Tax – 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Hayward City Hall.

## ANOTHER DATE FOR YOUR CALENDAR



Although this is not a League sponsored event, we encourage you to attend “Daughters of Freedom Summer” with Freddye Davis and Carol Ruth Silver at the Chabot College Event Center on March 8 at noon.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Nancy Van Huffel

Twenty years ago the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, the Alameda County Health Care Foundation, and the Alameda County Commission on the Status of Women established a permanent Woman's Hall of Fame to honor outstanding local women for their contributions to our community.

Each year they seek out women who have made a difference and have improved the overall quality in our community. Given that criteria our Board did not hesitate to nominate Suzanne Barba who was selected from over 100 nominees.



Suzanne Barba has always been devoted to causes that seek to make her hometown of Castro Valley, and the broader Alameda County community, better places to live. Suzanne is a longtime board member with the League of Women Voters, Eden Area, and has served two terms as the group's president. Over the years, her activism has supported many important causes including good schools, healthy neighborhoods, and educational opportunities for minority students and first-rate health care in the Eden Area.

Suzanne retired from the Alameda County Office of Education, where she served as Public Information Officer for 14 years. She also was elected and served on the Eden Hospital District Board of Directors for 16 years, and has been a board member with the Hispanic Community Affairs Council for more than 30 years. With HCAC, Suzanne has devoted her efforts to provide scholarships to Hispanic students to further their education. Over the years, Suzanne's tireless community activism has been an energizing force that has inspired many to give back to their community. It also led to her being named Woman of the Year for California's 18th Assembly District in 2003.

Suzanne is enthusiastic, very organized and continues to be an invaluable asset to our League. Suzanne represents all that the League stands for: service to others; education of voters; conscientious thought about and analysis of the issues; dedication to transparency and an open and inclusive process; and personal ethics. In summary, Suzanne is the most amazing volunteer I have had the pleasure of working with in my lifetime. Kudos for a job well done Suzanne!

## BOARD BRIEFS

Feb. 22, 2016

- Mental Health Forum – Venue and speakers have been confirmed. Caterer and food choice to be decided by Program Team.
- Annual Meeting - Speaker will be Assemblymember Rob Bonta at the San Leandro Library, Karp Room.
- League Social Event - There will be a wine tasting at Doc's Wine Shop in Hayward on Sunday, Feb. 28 for new and potential members.
- Voter Service Events:
  - Candidate Forum for Board of Supervisors (District 4) Wed., April 13 at 6:30 in the CV Library.
  - Candidate Forum for Hayward City Council, Wed., March 30 at 6:30, Hayward City Hall.
  - Castro Valley MAC Forum, Mon., Feb. 29 at Canyon Middle School discussing whether or not the MAC should be elected or appointed.
- Hayward Election Change of Date ballot measure was discussed. Consensus was that LWVEA will not submit a ballot statement on the issue.
- Local Positions Review Team – First meeting was held on Feb. 17 and divided up the local positions for a first round of updates.
- High School Voter Education Program – Heard a presentation from Olivia Sally on how to reach middle and high school students about the importance of voting.

*LWVEA Board meetings are open to the public and are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday at 5:45 p.m. Contact [LWVEA@aol.com](mailto:LWVEA@aol.com) for agenda.*



## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members who joined the LWVEA in the past few months. We hope they become active members and that we will see them at many of the scheduled League forums and events.

<b>Parvin Ahmadi</b>	<b>Stan Dobbs</b>
<b>Deirdre Fenessey</b>	<b>Lydia Foster</b>
<b>Olivia Sally</b>	<b>Mark Salinas</b>
<b>Lety Salinas</b>	<b>Ursula Seifert</b>
<b>Helen Sowers</b>	<b>Linda Tangren</b>
<b>Karen Taylor</b>	<b>Matt Turner</b>
<b>Richard Valle</b>	

## PROPOSITION 50 ON THE JUNE 2016 BALLOT.

The Secretary of State's office has assigned a ballot number to the only statewide measure in California's June primary election.

Proposition 50 would allow either house of the state legislature to suspend members — with or without pay — by a two-thirds vote.

It comes in response to the cases of three state senators who faced legal troubles in 2014. Two of them were indicted facing various corruption charges. A third was convicted of perjury and voter fraud for lying about whether he lived inside his state Senate district or not.

The Senate voted to suspend the three Democratic lawmakers that year even though the California constitution only explicitly allows for the expulsion of a lawmaker. The constitution does not currently allow a lawmaker to be stripped of salary and benefits, so the Legislature placed Proposition 50 on the June 2016 ballot to ask voters for the power to suspend their members and dock paychecks.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PAC AND A SUPERPAC?

Recently, this question was asked at a forum. Although many had heard both terms used, many did not know the difference. So here's what we learned:

The most important difference between a super PAC and traditional candidate PAC is in who can contribute, and in how much they can give.

Candidates and traditional candidate committees can accept \$2,500 from individuals per election. That means they can take in \$5,000 a year - half in the primary, and half in the general election. They are prohibited from accepting money from corporations, unions and associations. Federal election code prohibits those entities from contributing directly to candidates or candidate committees.

94% of all individual donations to super-PACs in the 2012 cycle came from just 1,082 people.



Sources: Demos and US FRG analysis of Federal Election Commission and Sur  
WOTHEKJONES.COM

Super PACs, though, have no limitations on who contributes or how much they contribute. They can raise as much money from corporations, unions and associations as they please and spend unlimited amounts on advocating for the election or defeat of the candidates of their choice.

*Are there any restrictions on super PACs?* Yes. The most important restriction prohibits super PACs from working in conjunction with the candidates they're supporting.

According to the Federal Election Commission, super PACs cannot spend money "in concert or cooperation with, or at the request or suggestion of, a candidate, the candidate's campaign or a political party."

## ABAG & MTC – MERGER STUDY

*Excerpted from Bay Area Monitor*

Recently, officials from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments heard a presentation about a potential merger. The two agencies are jointly responsible for preparing Plan Bay Area, the long-range plan for integrating transportation, housing, and land use in the nine-county region. The meeting in February continues a process formally initiated in December with MTC and ABAG's agreement to hire Management Partners as consultants in charge of studying merger possibilities.

The impetus for the study relates back to MTC's June 24, 2015 vote to extend funding to ABAG for half of the fiscal year starting July 1, 2015, instead of the expected full fiscal year. ABAG officials responded with a memo addressing the financial implications this decision could have on their agency, and followed up on that document in greater detail with a white paper. After some discussion, the two agencies adopted resolutions (MTC's 4210 and ABAG's 12-15) in October outlining a path forward that included conducting an institutional merger study.

Management Partners consultants explained in their presentation that they have been gathering information from both staff members and elected representatives of each agency, as well as from other comparable regional entities across the state.

They have also interviewed a variety of regional stakeholders (including the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area, four of whose board members met with the consultants last week), and in March will hold open forums to further engage the community.

Management Partners will present stakeholder feedback to MTC and ABAG in a meeting on March 25 — if time permits. Priority items for this meeting will be financial forecasts for MTC and ABAG, as

well as “alternative models/options for consideration by the respective committees and analysis criteria.” The likely time and venue for this public meeting is 9 a.m. in the MetroCenter Auditorium at 101 Eighth Street in Oakland. Interested parties can check [www.mtcabagmergerstudy.com](http://www.mtcabagmergerstudy.com) for updates and additional information.

Those interested in additional history on the origins of Bay Area governance and how the region arrived at this current crossroads are encouraged to read “ABAG: A Concise History” by Revan Tranter, a former ABAG executive director

## LWV BAY AREA Supports Bay Restoration Authority Measure AA on June, 2016 Ballot

LWV of the Bay Area has endorsed Measure AA, the \$12 per parcel tax that will be on the June, 2016 ballot in all nine Bay Area counties. This measure needs 2/3 voter approval total within the region to pass.

Our Bay Area positions support conservation and development of the SF Bay, and also enhancement and preservation of the Bay and its shorelines. LWVUS policies on climate change also support adaptation activities related to climate change, such as sea level rise.

This measure will generate funding for restoration of San Francisco Bay wetlands, benefitting people, wildlife, and the Bay Area economy. More wetlands will improve the bay by filtering out pollution for cleaner water; increasing habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife.

The measure will expand Bay trails and shoreline access; and protect low-lying communities and infrastructure from floods. LWVBA has asked the SF Bay Restoration Authority to develop improved procedures for project selection and oversight. LWVBA will be preparing Pros and Cons as soon as ballot arguments are filed.

## STATE LEAGUE LETTER RE CA COASTAL COMMISSION ACTION

(Re: Status of Executive Director Charles Lester)

Dear Chairman Kinsey and Members of the Commission:

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of California, I wish to express our concerns about the policy implications of your February 10 agenda item #8, Consideration of Dismissal of the Executive Director.

We recognize that the League is not privy to confidential personnel matters related to the Executive Director, Dr. Lester. However, we can see evidence of the growing pressure exerted by pro-development interests on the Commission, and we urge you to place the public interest uppermost as you make this critical staffing decision. The League feels strongly that the public is best served by an effective, *independent* Commission staff.

The League supported the 1972 initiative creating the Coastal Commission. Over the intervening four decades, the Commission has proven itself a most valuable steward of California's treasured one-thousand-mile coastline. It has protected wildlife habitat, ensured equitable coastal access, and overseen sustainable development of coastal communities.

Californians are grateful for the Commission's work to promote the wise management of our precious resources, preserving California's coast and ocean and the right of the public to access the coastline while still preserving the rights of property owners consistent with the intent of the Coastal Act.

Among the advances made under Dr. Lester's professional leadership, the Commission has obtained new administrative penalty authority to remedy public-access violations, established communications programs including better

online access to information on projects, and completed a significant guidance document to help local governments plan for and adapt to sea level rise and the impacts of climate change. Local Coastal Plans for 24 cities and counties across the state are being updated.

The efforts of your entire staff have helped make the Coastal Commission a global leader in coastal protection. We join thousands of other Californians in urging you to consider the long-term protection of our coast and to make the best decision for a Commission that is accountable to the public and not to any narrow interests.

Helen L. Hutchison  
LWVC President

A graphic with the text "We love our VOLUNTEERS!". "We love our" is in red, and "VOLUNTEERS!" is in large, blue, bubbly letters. A red heart is positioned between "love" and "our".

Congratulations to Team Leader, Joanne Young who led a group of volunteers to register voters at all of our local BART Stations on February 24<sup>th</sup>.

We registered 20 new voters and handed out 78 registrations forms for individuals to complete at home. One volunteer reported: We spoke to a middle aged man who is recently off parole, and excited to vote for the very first time. He thanked us for being there--how cool is that? Another volunteer indicated that a young man had just turned 18 and was very enthusiastic about registering to vote.

### Volunteers included:

Dolly Adams	Veronica Alder
Carolyn Darcey	Marian Handa
Judy Harrison	Ron Moore
Marilee Simons	Nancy Van Huffel
Joanne Young	Aiwa Zelinsky



## Community Choice Energy (CCE) in Alameda County

### What is Community Choice Energy?

A Community Choice energy program enables cities and counties to procure electricity and reduce energy consumption for residents and local businesses. In this way, communities decide where their electricity will come from: whether to purchase electricity on the market, or more importantly, to build local renewable energy resources in the community. Under a Community Choice energy program, the utility company (PG&E) continues to deliver and service the electricity.

### What would be the main benefits of a Community Choice energy program?

Community Choice energy is a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the impact of climate change by cutting energy consumption, switching to renewable energy sources, and building local renewable electricity generation. By developing local clean energy resources, Community Choice programs can spur local economic development in the community, provide good local clean energy jobs, offer competitive electric utility bills and price stability, reduce pollution, and provide other community benefits. It can serve as a significant step towards a more resilient and sustainable economy.

## LOCAL POSITION UPDATE By Jewell Spalding

The Committee updating our local positions met for their first meeting in February. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 23, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the San Lorenzo Village Homes Association small conference room. The Committee will be spending the next five months updating our local positions on land use, boards and commissions,

unincorporated areas, parks and recreation and social issues, including mental health. If you are interested in participating or have some thoughts on issues to address, make sure to make it to the next meeting, or email [jewellspalding@mac.com](mailto:jewellspalding@mac.com) to let the committee know your thoughts.

## SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW WITH ASSEMBLY MEMBER ROB BONTA

### *What legislative proposals would you support to improve voter turnout?*

Assembly member Bonta favors:

- 1) Automatic voter registration for all students
- 2) Vote by mail (only)
- 3) Holiday on the official election day
- 4) Vote up to two weeks in advance of election day at numerous official locations
- 5) A resolution to allow voters at age 16 to vote for school board members
- 6) Promote the motor voter law

### *What is being done to ensure affordable housing?*

- 1) One time money from Prop 63 to provide additional money this year
- 2) More robust affordable housing tax credits
- 3) He is working on a proposal where cities or the county may fund a bond to support affordable housing. Boomerang funds would be new property tax revenues to the general fund that came out of the elimination of Redevelopment funds.
- 4) Working on a county-wide bond to support affordable housing: A program to support those who support a particular community but can't afford to live there such as teachers.

### *Priorities and policies on climate change?*

- 1) California can and should continue its leadership on climate change (AB 32, SB 35 and SB 350)
- 2) Co-authored a deal with Senator de Leon in which Calpers divest from coal.
- 3) He does not support coal moving through the Port of Oakland, even though he believes that the Port of Oakland has a legal right to allow coal to be shipped through the Port.

**Bonta's top priorities:** Human trafficking, early childhood education, gun violence.

## Constitutional Convention Needs Safeguards

### *League of Women Voters Announces New Position*

The League of Women Voters today announced [a new position](#) calling for safeguards to govern the constitutional convention process of proposing amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

“The League believes that procedural safeguards must be put in place to protect democratic values and ensure that any proposed amendments reflect the concerns of citizens,” said Elisabeth MacNamara, president of the League of Women Voters of the United States.



“We cannot afford to have a chaotic or unrepresentative process for amending the Constitution. We can’t afford to let special interests dominate a constitutional convention,” MacNamara continued.

There are many current proposals for constitutional amendments, from both the right and the political left, from a Balanced Budget Amendment to one curbing the rights of corporations. “Everyone should be concerned what a runaway, topsy-turvy Constitutional Convention might do.

Before we head into uncharted territory that could affect our basic principles of government and our individual rights, we need to make sure some basic rules are in place,” according to MacNamara.

The League supports these safeguards for a Constitutional Convention:

1) The Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret;

2) Representation at the Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote; and delegates should be elected rather than appointed;

3) Voting at the Convention must be by delegate, not by state;

4) The Convention must be limited to a specific topic;

5) Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Convention should be called; and

6) The validity of state calls for an Article V Constitutional Convention should be determined by the most recent action of the state.

The new League position is especially relevant because the Balanced Budget Amendment is close to achieving the number of states needed to require Congress to call a convention. “The states that have called for a convention on the Balanced Budget Amendment have not provided for the safeguards that are necessary. Any calls for a constitutional convention must have built-in protections to ensure it is not hijacked by a small minority,” MacNamara said.

Article 5 of the U.S. Constitution provides for two ways to amend the constitution. Congress can initiate an amendment or, if two-thirds of the states petition Congress to do so, a Constitutional Convention can be called to propose amendments. Under either mechanism, proposed amendments must be ratified by three-fourths of the states in order to take effect. There has never been a constitutional convention called under the U.S. Constitution.

“There are many unresolved questions about the powers and processes of an Article V Constitutional Convention. These problems must be solved before America embarks on a dangerous journey,” MacNamara concluded.

**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,  
 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**

DATE	EVENT	PLACE
March 23 5-7 pm	LWVEA Position Review Team	San Lorenzo Village Homes Association 377 Paseo Grande
March 25 9 am	ABAG & MTC Proposed Merger Study (see article in VOTER)	Metro Center Auditorium, Oakland
March 28 5:45 pm	LWVEA Board Meeting	HAHS, Hayward
March 30 6:30-8:30pm	Candidate Forum for Hayward City Council	Hayward City Hall
April 13 6:30-8:30pm	District 4 Board of Supvr. Candidate Forum	Castro Valley Library
April 20	Pro and Con Forum on Changing Hayward Election Date & UUTax`	Hayward City Hall
April 23	Impact of Women’s Repro Rights on Climate Change – Sierra Club S.Alameda	Hayward City Hall Email <a href="mailto:lwvea@aol.com">lwvea@aol.com</a> for FLYER
April 25 5:45 pm	LWVEA Board Meeting	HAHS, Hayward

**For up-to-date info and specific details on events, email:  
[lwvea@aol.com](mailto:lwvea@aol.com) or check out [www.LWVEA.org](http://www.LWVEA.org)**