



Voter

of Southwest Santa Clara Valley



Serving Los Gatos, Saratoga, Monte Sereno, & Campbell

March, 2016

League of Women Voters

LWV Southwest Santa Clara Valley
P.O. Box 2865
Saratoga, CA 95070-0865
Telephone: 408-lwv-1842
www.lwv-sw-santaclara-valley.org
lwv.swscv@gmail.com

Bay Area League of Women Voters

Telephone: 510 839-1608
Fax: 510 839-1610
<http://lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org>

League of Women Voters California

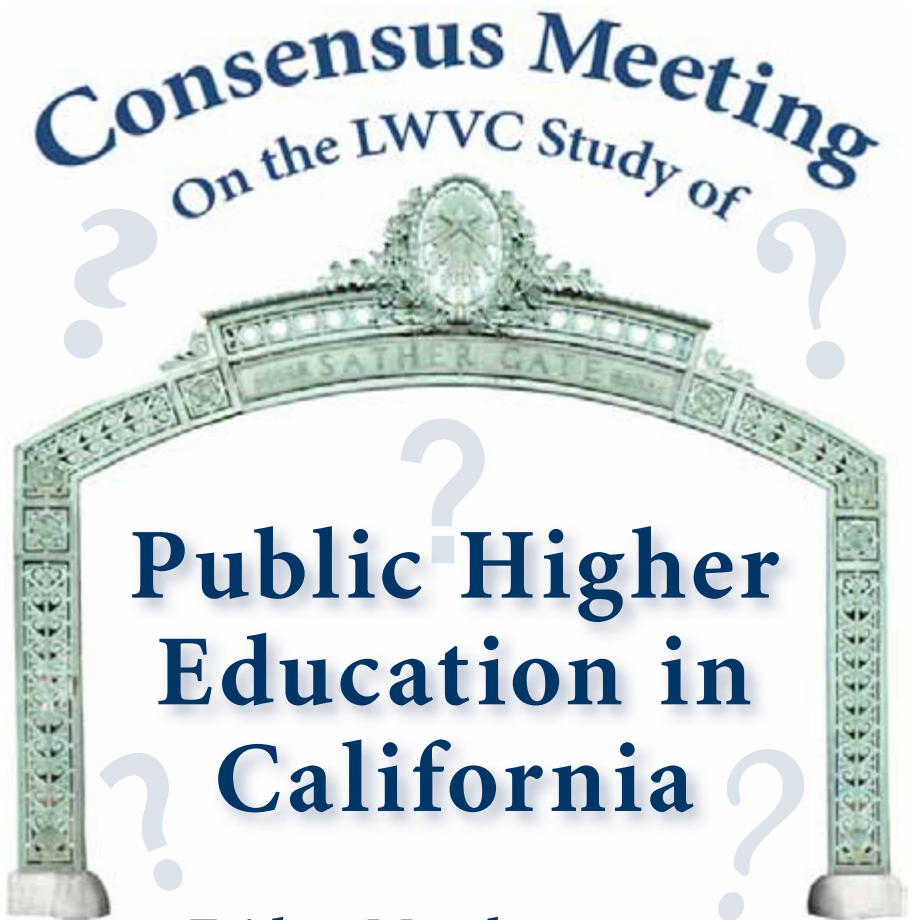
Phone: 916 442-7215
Fax: 916 442-7362
<http://ca.lwv.org>

League of Women Voters

Phone: 202-429-1965
Fax: 202-429-0854
<http://www.lwv.org>

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Friday, March 11, 2016
From 9:30 A.M.- 1:00 P.M.

**Arab American Cultural Center
of Silicon Valley**

Houge Park • Building 2
3952 Twilight Drive, San Jose

Refer to the article on page 4 for further details.



President's Letter

Dear members: Your membership gives us the political influence needed to build a voice for citizens and a force for change. I thank you for your continuous support and all your contributions. Our Financial Drive season has started. If you did not yet receive the letter from Dale Hill or if you have misplaced it, please call Dale and she'll be happy to send you another one. Your donation gives us the means to handle a broad spectrum of issues and concerns of the citizens.

I have had the opportunity to watch the Leaguers in action on a continuous basis. All Leaguers are remarkable people, putting all their efforts and brainpower together to present exceptionally great programs. The League is part of your lives. Your knowledge, dedication and effectiveness makes the League's voice heard in a way that makes a real difference. And special thanks to all those volunteers who help whenever they can—especially in this important election year. Your help in any task at any time is greatly appreciated and welcomed.

The June election, which is less than four months away, involves primaries for US Senator and Representative, California Senate and Assembly, and County offices and judgeships. For June and November

there will be pros and cons presentations for the ballot measures, voter registration, Candidate Forums to arrange and conduct, a Voter's Guide to publish and distribute, and updates to Voter's Edge, previously known as Smart Voter.

Votersedge.org is a well-known voter information website. The site will maintain all the non-partisan features of information for voters that we are used to, including direct access by candidates to the public, via the information from candidates about themselves and their candidacies. In addition, Voter's Edge offers more—especially concerning campaign finance information for both candidates and ballot measures. Users will have easy reference to campaign finance data and financial contribution data, such as top contributors, geographic source of funds, and donations by industry.

Also, our website www.lwv-sw-santaclara-valley.org is a valuable tool to find important information such as the National and State studies; Local, County, State and National Positions; how to take Action; your public officials; how to register to vote; who is on the ballot in the next election; voter's edge (Smart Voter); and of course information about how to contact us, to make a donation, or to browse the Calendar of Events. You can also find this issue of the *Voter* Newsletter as well as several previously published issues. Our *Voter* is an exceptional newsletter of valuable articles contributed and prepared by League members and edited by Cherri Nelson. I am happy to hear that many members are enjoying the *Voter* including the newly added Climate Change articles by Dave Yick, the interesting summary articles of Clip 'n Come meeting conversations, and dates and topics of Great Decisions monthly meetings in the Calendar. You can also visit our Facebook page www.facebook.com/lwvswscv to get up-to-date information on many interesting political topics.

As you already know, we were involved in three Studies this year. We have finished the Constitutional Amendment and Money in Politics Studies. The third Study, the California Public Higher Education Study,

Continued on Next Page.

2015-2016 Board of Directors

Officers

President, Hana Itani

First VP—Administration
Barbara Lea, Ann Roberts

Secretary, Pat White

Treasurer, Danice Picraux

Action: State & National, Patty Weber

Education, Eleanor Yick

Finance Drive, Dale Hill

Natural Resources, Meg Giberson

Observers, Raquel Durand

Public Relations, Eileen Barnes

Voter Editor, Cherri Nelson

Voters Service Directors

Kathy Murtfeldt, Wendry Hendry

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Chair, Virginia Good

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Bay Area Representative, TBD

Clip n' Come, Dale Hill

Circulation, Natalie Heling

Database Manager, Zina Lou Dyer

Great Decisions, Terry Zaccone

Health Care, Barbara Lea

Hospitality, Judy Zaccone

Housing, Margaret Bard

Immigration, Patty Weber

Publications, Gail Pedersen

Smart Voter, Deborah Miller

Telephone Tree, Natalie Heling

Voters Service Assistants

Pros & Cons, Terry Zaccone
Registration, Jackie Costanzo

Web Page Co-Chairs

Barbara Lea, Cherri Nelson

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2013-2014 Elected Officials

United States

President Barack Obama
(202) 456-1414

www.whitehouse.gov

Senator Dianne Feinstein
(415) 393-0707

www.feinstein.senate.gov

Senator Barbara Boxer
(415) 403-0100

<http://boxer.senate.gov>

Rep. Anna Eshoo
(408) 245-2339

(650) 323-2984

<http://eshoo.house.gov>

California

Governor Jerry Brown
(916) 445-2841

<http://gov.ca.gov>

Senator Jim Beall, Jr.
(408) 558-1295

<http://sd15.senate.ca.gov>

Assemblyman Evan Low
(408) 446-2810

<http://asmcd.org/members/a28/>

Santa Clara County

Supervisor Joe Simitian
(408) 299-5050

supervisor.simitian@bos.sccgov.org

Supervisor Mike Wasserman
(408) 299-5010

mike.wasserman@bos.sccgov.org

Supervisor Ken Yeager
(408) 299-5040

supervisor.yeager@bos.sccgov.org

SCC Registrar of Voters

Locate your elected officials by your street address:

<http://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Pages/Registrar-of-Voters.aspx>



Board Byt

Board Meeting of
February 3, 2016

Treasurer's Report:

Danice reported the current major expense was PMP payments to LWVUS.

New Business: The Board voted to approve a request to nominate West Valley College President Davis as a Saratoga businessman of the year.

Programs: Bay Area League Day scheduled for February 6 will unfortunately be held at a distant and difficult-to-reach location. No one has volunteered to attend.

Organization for the presentation of LWV positions at the **Program Planning Meeting** was organized, with reminders to the Board on food contributions.

Higher Education Consensus will be on March 11 at the Arab American Cultural Center. It was suggested to include a map for this location in the upcoming *Voter* article as it is a venue new to our League.

Bay Area League Convention will be possibly scheduled for May 7, 2016. Watch for a confirmation.



Ideas for possible speakers and location for the **Annual Meeting** were suggested and discussed.

LWVUS Convention: President Itani will reserve two rooms at the hotel in Washington, DC for June 16-19, 2016. The Convention should be quite exciting as this is an election year.

Voter: A \$20 charge for printed/mailed copies of the *Voter* was suggested to cover costs for those requesting it, along with an article in an issue of the *Voter*. The membership *Join Form* will also need to reflect the change.

Action: Patty Weber reported difficulty in scheduling and organizing the Legislative Interviews but it is being worked on.

Natural Resources: Status of the Delta Twin Tunnels Project (see page 6) was presented by Meg Giberson along with an overview of the *Groundwater Act*.

Membership: Barbara Lea reported on membership totals. A sample tote bag was ordered for possible sale to members at programs.

Pat White, Secretary

Thank You

Kudos to our Database Manager!

Do you know who sends your information to our National League Office? That's the easy part! Who learned all about the new database system National created without tearing her hair out or even screaming very much? It was not an easy task, but she conquered it! That's our wonderful Database Manager—Zina Lou Dyer!

President's Letter (Cont.)

is very important to our communities, and our Consensus Meeting will be conducted at the Arab American Cultural Center in San Jose, located in Houge Park, Building #2, corner of White Oaks Ave and 3952 Twilight Drive, close to Bascom Avenue & Highway 85.* Special thanks to each and every member on the Committee and to Eleanor Yick for chairing this State Study and moderating the meeting. I

am looking forward to seeing you all on Friday, March 11 at 9:30A.M. at our Higher Education Study Consensus Meeting.

*Just go to our Website www.lwv-sw-santaclara-valley.org and select the calendar page. Then click on the address for this event to find the map and directions to this location.

Hana Itani, President LWVSWSCV
408-lwv-1842, hana.lwv@gmail.com.

Consensus Meeting on Study of Public Higher Education in California



At the Arab American Cultural Center

Although the League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) had positions on education covering issues in preK-12 and the California Community Colleges (CCC), it did not have a position on public higher education in California inclusive of the CCC, the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC) systems. This lack of an inclusive position prevented the LWVC from commenting on or advocating for or against proposed policies and legislation affecting higher education. This study was proposed and approved at the 2013 LWVC Convention to remedy this situation.

A study committee was formed with 15 League members from across the state. The committee began its work in August 2014. The first task completed was a refinement of the scope of the study to “examining access to quality public higher education in California including funding, affordability, preparedness, equity, and opportunities and barriers to student success.”

The State Study Committee reorganized itself into five working research groups addressing each of the identified areas in the scope. Research was completed in March 2015. A smaller writing team of five study committee members synthesized

the more than 150 pages of research and drafted the *Study Guide* and *Consensus Questions*, which were approved by the LWVC Board in August 2015.

Our local League’s education committee (Wade Ellis, Barbara Lea, Ann Roberts, Lois Smallwood, Eleanor Yick) has been meeting since publication of the *Study Guide* and *Consensus Questions* to read and discuss these documents. Members have also written articles about the specific aspects of **access to public higher education California** and posted them in the last four Voters:

- *Update 1: Purpose, Access & Equity*
- *Update 2: Access: Funding & Affordability*
- *Update 3: Why a Focus on Preparedness?*
- *Update 4: Creating Access at Community Colleges!*

We hope all our members have been reading these shorter articles and are prepared to attend and participate in our upcoming Consensus Meeting. If you would like to read the **complete Study Guide**, it can be accessed at, <https://lwvc.org/sites/lwvc.org/files/downloads/studies/Higher-Education-Study-Guide-Complete.pdf>.

Another resource for a good overview of the study can be obtained by reading through the Powerpoint presentation

Bay Area Monitor

A 30-year regional publication by the LWV Bay Area’s Education Fund, this newsletter provides coverage of transportation, air and water quality, open space, and land use issues in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. In the 2016 Feb/Mar issue:

Energized by Renewables

Four counties—San Mateo (Peninsula Clean Energy), Santa Clara (Silicon Valley CCE Partnership), Alameda, and Contra Costa—are exploring the option to purchase and re-sell clean energy.

How Restoring Wetlands Will Prepare Us for Sea Level Rise

In coming decades, sea level rise will amplify the storm surges and ultra-high “king” tides that send waves crashing over levees.

To Protect Open Space, Stewards Focus On Photographic Technology

These days, photos are still boosting land stewardship in the Bay Area — although perhaps not in ways those photographic pioneers could have envisioned.

Ferries Plan Upgrades As Ridership Swells

Ferry ridership jumped during 2015 as commuters sought relief from roadway congestion and packed BART trains, based on figures from two regional operators.

The full articles can be found at <http://bayareamonitor.org/read>.

that can be accessed at, <https://lwvc.org/sites/lwvc.org/files/documents/LWVCEF-Pub-Hi-Ed-ppt-FINAL.pdf>.

Our League’s Consensus Meeting will take place on Friday, **March 11 from 9:30 to 1:00 P.M.** It will be held at the **Arab American Cultural Center (AACC)** located off White Oaks Road, which is just past the Highway 85 and Bascom Avenue interchange (see map).

Copies of the *Consensus Questions* will be made available at the meeting but can also be accessed at, <https://lwvc.org/sites/lwvc.org/files/downloads/studies/Higher-Education-Study-Consensus-Questions.pdf>.

Eleanor Yick, LWVC Public Higher Education in California Committee Chair



City & Town Council Observers

Campbell: The Council voted unanimously to join nine neighboring cities in a partnership venture bringing green energy to residents and businesses. It is called the Silicon Valley Community Choice Energy Partnership and will provide the option to purchase energy from other providers besides PG&E. The energy offered aims to come from renewable sources, though it will still be delivered through PG&E.

Los Gatos: The Council voted 4-1 (Leonardis dissenting) to join the Silicon Valley Community Choice initiative that's being formed to buy clean energy on behalf of local residents and businesses. This Community Choice Energy public/private partnership allows municipalities to purchase renewable or low greenhouse gas-emitting energy at rates that are competitive with PG&E, but with the power delivery and billing still being handled by PG&E. The objective is to take local action to accelerate the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The Town approved joining the Joint Powers Authority, which will administer the partnership, and an appropriation of \$150,000 required as their share to support the initial costs of the Authority. The partnership anticipates being able to return these initial funds to the Town over the next few of years. (See the January *Voter* article, page 7.)

There was a unanimously approved vote for strengthening of the Town's medical marijuana ordinance by prohibiting its cultivation, delivery, and dispensing within town limits. The action was in response to the new state regulatory framework that allows municipalities to retain local control over medical marijuana if they act before March 1.

Awarding a bid from Vanguard Construction for the concrete reconstruction of Broadway and Bachman Avenues in the historic Almond Grove district was approved by the Council. The work is anticipated to begin

in May 2016, and to take approximately 6 months to complete.

The town staff was directed to continue meeting with several design professional services that have put forth proposals to design concrete reconstruction of the remaining eight streets in the Almond Grove Street Rehabilitation Project.

Town Council will hear results of vetting these companies at a future meeting. Reconstruction of these remaining streets will be phased in over years 2017-2019.

Story poles and architectural renderings will soon be going up on the southern half of the North 40 plan area (phase 1). They will remain up for 60 days for residents to view. Residents may give commentary to the town Planning Commission. An open house in town council chambers is planned for Feb 23, 2016, to showcase the plan. A scale model is being prepared for display at the council chambers lobby.

Lynda Jandron, Observer and Tom and Danice Picraux

Saratoga: January 20 – The City Council unanimously voted in favor of the new Silicon Valley Community Choice Energy program. It would give the consumer the opportunity to purchase clean energy, delivered to local homes and businesses by PG&E. Saratoga consumers will be offered low greenhouse gas-emitting energy at low competitive rates. This joint partnership program with PG&E is also offered to the rest of the cities in Santa Clara County—Sunnyvale, Cupertino, Morgan Hill, and Mountain View. Saratoga is also determined to take this option. Saratoga's initial share of the cost will be \$150,000. Further details at svcleanenergy.org.

Raquel Durand, Observer Chair



What's Being Discussed at Clip 'n Come?

In February, our Clip 'n Come meeting was held at Anne Stewart's home where we enjoyed a delicious pot luck lunch and discussed the following news topics:

- Accomplishments of the Obama Administration
- A letter from Layne Hackett to Hana about ways to improve our relationships by being decent human beings
- The Hispanic vote and how Rubio and Cruz are more concerned with jobs and the economy than immigration
- The fact that ISIS is also doing some good things, such as repairing infrastructure.
- Ted Danson's Letter to the Editor against getting rid of the coastal official.
- Brain injuries of football players.
- Kasich's education legislation in Ohio favoring charter schools to the detriment of inner city schools.
- University and college administrative vs. faculty salaries
- Putin and Trump and the concept that only angry outsiders can be trusted
- The failure of the media and the habit of recognizing fame for fame's sake

These lunches are always so much fun and also so enriching—we hope you will join us this month!

Barbara Lea, Membership



Clip N' Come gathering at the home of Anne Stewart

Climate Change Update: Great Decisions Course Highlights Climate Geopolitics

Many of our local LWV members are enrolled in the Great Decisions Class. This course's Study Guide, Chapter 7 - Climate Geopolitics, starts off with an overview of President Obama's visit to Alaska late in August 2015.

Here are some interesting facts about Alaska:

- Warming has been twice as great in Alaska as in the contiguous U.S., during the last 60 years.
- It has the highest erosion rates in the world.
- Wildfire season is a month longer than it was in 1950.
- In the Arctic sea ice covers 40% less water than in 1970.

After reading these facts, I was inspired to see what new information was available and found the following White House announcement:

Fact Sheet: President Obama Proposes New Funding to Build Resilience of Alaska's Communities and Combat Climate Change

When the President visited Alaska in August, he described the urgent and growing threat of a changing climate as "a challenge that will define the contours of this century more dramatically than any other." Last year broke the record set by 2014 as the warmest year on record. Climate change is already disrupting our agriculture and ecosystems, our water and food supplies, our energy, our infrastructure, and our health and safety. In no place is this truer than in Alaska. The Arctic is warming twice as fast as the rest of the world and is experiencing the consequences. Higher average temperatures are diminishing the range of winter sea ice, allowing heavy storm surges to batter the Alaskan coastline, and interrupting

the winter hunting season for Alaska Natives, many of whom rely on subsistence to feed themselves and their families.

The President believes we must invest in Alaska's long-term economic and environmental well-being in a way that transcends his time in office. This priority, as well as the President's broader commitment to conservation and climate action – and the economic growth they bring – is evident throughout the President's 2017 Budget..."

There seems to be a lot of information on Climate Change everywhere. I often attend lectures at Stanford and every week there seems to be at least several events on this topic. I hope that many of you take the opportunity to learn more about this important subject...and that you encourage your family and friends to do so also!

Dave Yick, LWV Climate Change Committee

Water: 14 million acre-feet of it – what's not to like?

The State Water Project (SWP) only delivers about **2.3 million acre-feet** of water in an average year, although it supplies some water to about two-thirds of Californians.

Yet the amounts of water that California's water projects currently deliver would not increase—amounts would only be maintained—if the Twin Tunnels Delta Project, now called WaterFix, were built. That was the conclusion reported by the California Department of Water Resources Director, speaking to the Santa Clara Valley Water District Board in January this year. Climate change and ten years of analysis, he said, suggest that the water contractors' original expectations of extra water would not be met, despite the twin tunnels' \$15 billion price tag.

Up to **14 million acre-feet/year** (maf/y), however, could be available sustainably from conservation and various efficiencies, according to an analysis released by the Pacific Institute and the Natural Resources Defense Council. That is more than is used by all of California cities in a year.

Agricultural efficiency alone could yield 5.6 to 6.6 maf/y; urban efficiency might produce 2.9 to 5.2 maf/y; water reuse up to 1.8 maf/y; and stormwater capture up to 630,000 afy.

Our County only uses about **300,000** to 330,000 acre-feet of water a year, according to the Santa Clara Valley Water District. Last year our imported water use was only about 170,000 acre-feet, yet we **pour about 200,000 acre-feet a year** into the San Francisco Bay from South Bay wastewater treatment plants.

A combination of the urban, reuse, and stormwater capture efficiencies described above could dramatically and reliably improve our local water supplies, all the while retaining local control over this valuable resource.

The LWVC supports conservation by all categories of water users, and encourages the reuse of reclaimed water — especially wastewater reclamation to minimize reliance on water exported through and around the Delta. For those and many

other reasons, the LWVC has determined, it cannot support the Twin Tunnels "WaterFix" plan. Let's move forward with sustainable, League-approved alternatives.

Meg Giberson, Natural Resources Director

LWV
Palo Alto & San Mateo

A Safer Bay Forum

**On The Effects
Of Sea-Level Rise**

Wednesday • April 6 • 7 P.M.

Facebook • Building 10
1 Hacker Way, Menlo Park

Presentations by
Len Materman
Executive Director of the JPA

Justin Murphy
Public Works Director, City of Menlo Park

Read More in LWVPA March Voter pg 4
www.lwvpaloalto.org/VOTER.html



The Nominating Process for the 2017-2019 Slate The Nominating Committee invites and encourages every League member to consider serving on the LWVC Board of Directors. The deadline for nominations is Monday, October 3, 2016. Elections will be held at the LWVC Convention in May.



Kathy Souza, Chair
Placer County



Jeanne Brown
San Diego



Robbie Davis
Pasadena



An Havlik
San Luis Obispo



Gloria Chun Hoo
San Jose/Santa Clara

Why Serve at the State Level? Time and expertise given at the state level is an extension of all the good work League members contribute to their local and regional Leagues. From our beginnings we have been a grassroots organization, and our success depends on a large grassroots base.

- Would a State Board member be adding time to her/his already generous hours of public service? Yes.
- Will it be worth it to her/him? Definitely, yes!
- Can you nominate yourself, as well as others? Yes!

How Can I Nominate Myself or Someone Else? You may request a nomination form or additional information by emailing the Nominating Committee at nominating@lwvc.org. You may also access the PDF version of the form at: http://archive.lwvc.org/lwvonly/forms/nomination_form.pdf.



Vote with the League - Yes on Prop 50!

We support Proposition 50 for the June 7 ballot!

- This constitutional amendment would give each Legislature house clear authority to suspend, with a two-thirds vote, a member and withhold pay and benefits.
- A straightforward way for lawmakers to hold their own colleagues accountable for breaching the public's trust.
- Such actions are highly unusual. Over the years, five senators have been expelled, and several senators accused of corruption resigned in 1985. The Assembly has never suspended or expelled a member.

Read more about how the League takes a position on a ballot measure.

Concern for Coastal Commission Activity

At the January meeting, the Board also agreed to send a letter to the Coastal Commission reflecting our continuing support for their protection of our coastline. The full letter is here: <https://lwvc.org/statement/2016/feb/coastal-commissions-executive-director>.

Get ready for new League legislative action!

Last month, League members and supporters urged their Assembly Members to support AB 350 (Alejo) which will improve the California Voting Rights Act. This bill passed the Assembly 50-25 and is starting its progress through the Senate. Be sure you're prepared to advocate as we act on both "two-year bills" and newly-introduced legislation.

- Keep an eye on the LWVC Bill Status Report to follow bills we are working on.
- Sign up for action alerts to advocate on the issues you care about.

It's Back: Parental Notification Initiative

LWVC, as it has in past attempts, has joined the effort to oppose another well-funded version of the Parental Notification Initiative (PNI) measure. Members who would like to assist in this cause can contact advocacy@lwvc.org. This will be a continuing update until the election.

LWVC Bill Status Reports

Based on our positions, LWVC periodically reviews bills before the California State Legislature and makes recommendations.

Bill Status Report: Bills on which the LWVC has taken a position and recommends action: <http://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/public/publish.aspx?session=15&id=efb5b39d-6b0e-4edf-a0af-c0f69e9c1e6f>.

Bills sent to the Governor: LWVC recommends for Governor's signature: <http://ctweb.capitoltrack.com/public/publish.aspx?session=15&id=a77cc6a1-b24e-4dfb-9973-bcfd8588640d>,

Need help with legislative terms? Try this useful glossary, www.legislature.ca.gov/quicklinks/glossary.html.

League of Women Voters U.S. Updates

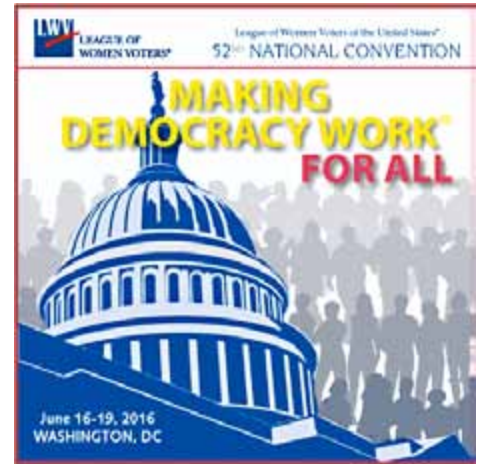
Two New Positions

Following their January 29-31 meeting, the League of Women Voters board announced a new position, <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-position-adopted-constitutional-conventions-under-article-v-us-const>, calling for safeguards to govern the constitutional convention process and a position, <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/league-position-adopted-considerations-evaluating-constitutional-amendment>, outlining considerations for evaluating constitutional amendment proposals. The positions were based on consensus reached by 246 local and state Leagues and ILOs who participated in the Constitutional Amendment Process study. Thanks to the Leagues from 46 states that participated in the study and a special thanks to the Constitutional Amendment Process Study Committee headed by Pat Donath of the LWVUS Board, <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/about-constitutional-amendment-committee>. The positions can be used by state Leagues to address the ongoing debates in many legislatures regarding constitutional conventions, in particular as they relate to the Balanced Budget Amendment.

Convention 2016; Making Democracy Work® For All

Join Us in Washington, DC, June 16-19 at the League's **National Convention** to experience the collective power of our mission, messages, and actions to build a more perfect democracy.

- **Lobby Day.** Be a part of advancing the League's legislative priorities when you go to Capitol Hill for meetings with your elected representatives in the U.S. Congress.
- **Pre-Convention Welcome Activities.** Attend Key Structures of Democracy sessions—on money in politics, redistricting, constitutional amendment safeguards – to learn the powerful ways you can bring these issues home for action. A first-time convention-goers event and Convention orientations will connect “newbies” and veterans in learning how to make the most of Convention.
- **Daily Caucuses and Workshops.** Participate in a range of League issues and skills building gatherings—in election services, voter protection, advocacy, civic engagement, social media, fundraising and more.
- **Plenary Sessions.** Learn from experts in politics and communications about where the League can focus its impact in the



coming biennium, engage in proceedings around League positions, and look ahead to strategies for success as our centennial year approaches.

- **Connect through Engagement.** Take part in the Engagement Zone, Wares Market, Banquet and Discussion Roundtables. Attend the renowned Capitol Steps comedy performance and enjoy their hilarious take on national politics.

Ready to take action? Visit the [Convention 2016 Information Page](#) NOW for details. Questions? Please send an e-mail to membership@lwv.org.



League Files Suit

Against Election Assistance Commission

The League of Women Voters of the U.S., joined by the Alabama, Georgia and Kansas Leagues, filed suit, http://lwv.org/files/LWV.v.EAC_complaint.pdf, in federal district court to stop the recent illegal action by the Executive Director, Brian Newby, of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) that allows these states to restrict voter registration. Please see the League's press release, <http://lwv.org/press-releases/lawsuit-challenges-voter-registration-restriction-0>.

Letter to U.S. Senate

On S. 1176

The League sent a letter to the U.S. Senate in support of Senator Udall's Empower Act, S. 1176, legislation to repair the presidential public financing system, “doing so by putting small donors at the center of campaign financing. The presidential system is broken today. It needs to be repaired and updated to deal with the new world of campaign finance ...” Members of the LWVUS Lobby Corps will be visiting with select Senate offices regarding this legislation. Read the full letter at, <http://lwv.org/content/league-sends-letter-us-senate-s-1176>.

League Files Brief

In Wittman vs. Personhuballah

The League filed an amicus brief, http://lwv.org/files/Redistricting.VA_amicus.pdf, in the case of Wittman v. Personhuballah, which will be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court on March 21, 2016. In the brief, the League argues that a redistricting plan intentionally gerrymandered on the basis of race cannot be legalized by using the explanation that it was a political gerrymander.

Legislative Interview with Senator Beall, District 15

Friday, February 20, 2016

Voting and Elections

California experienced historically low voter turnout in the 2014 primary and general elections. Many bills were introduced in 2015 to address voter turnout and engagement; a number were passed by the Legislature and signed into law, while some remain on the agenda for 2016.

What legislative proposals would you support to improve the number of California citizens who register and turn out to vote? Are there other steps that government should take to engage more California residents in elections?

“We must focus on education and outreach to raise voter turnout. This dual approach would also increase participation in low propensity voting communities that are often overlooked,” Beall said. He agreed there needs to be a greater emphasis on the use of technology. Senator Beall is open to the idea of exploring on-line voting, but only if it employs state-of-the-art security systems to prevent breaches by hackers. He is confident in Secretary of State Alex Padilla’s plans to modernize outreach programs, as well as the balloting process, from the casting of votes to their collection and accurate tabulation.

Housing

Increasing the supply of housing for people of modest means is a vexing problem in California. Underlying the problem is the clash of market economics (when housing is scarce, rents skyrocket) with the strong bonds people form with their homes and neighborhoods. Even if a family doesn’t own their home, they form practical and emotional attachments to what they call home because it impacts every aspect of life—from employment opportunities and friendships to access to good public education and health care.

What will you do to ensure that your constituents are not displaced from their homes, and what steps would you take to increase the supply of housing—especially housing that is affordable to people of modest means? Do you agree this would require a stable and dedicated source of funding?

As Chairman of the Transportation and Housing Committee for the State Senate, Senator Beall is currently working to ensure those who work hard and save should be able to afford a home. In January, he introduced Senate Bill 879, a proposal to spur more affordable housing construction by authorizing the issuance of bonds whose proceeds would be used to finance housing-related programs that serve the homeless and extremely low-income and very low-income Californians.

Last year, Senator Beall introduced Senate Bill 377, which called for modifying the state low-income housing tax credit to increase the value of state tax credits by 40 percent at no additional cost to the state. The bill would have given developers and investors a greater incentive to construct more affordable housing. The bill was passed by the Legislature but vetoed by the Governor, who killed other bills relating to affordable housing.

Climate Change

Climate change was a major issue in the first year of the 2015-2016 legislative session. The legislature passed SB350, which requires the expansion of the state’s renewable energy portfolio to 50% by 2030 and an increase in energy efficiency of buildings by 50% by 2030. Similar reductions in petroleum use in vehicles were removed from the bill. SB32, which would have established a target of 80% reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the 1990 level by 2050, was amended to require only a 40% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 and to weaken the authority of the California Air Resources Board; it was held over as a two-year bill.

What are your priorities for state legislation and policies on climate change? Are there other related issues that you feel need to be addressed?

“I was a co-author of Senate Bill 350 and voted for it in its original form in the State Senate,” Beall said. The bill, introduced by Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León, called for a 50 percent reduction in petroleum use in cars and trucks; a 50 percent increase in energy efficiency in buildings; and a goal of half of the

state’s power generated from renewable energy by 2030. After amendments in the Assembly, due to pressure from the petroleum companies, SB 350 bill was amended to eliminate the call for a 50% reduction in petroleum.

In Silicon Valley, Beall has focused on bringing BART through San Jose to the city of Santa Clara. He also fought for funding to electrify Caltrain to reduce headways, meet future ridership demands, increase safety, reduce pollution, and to run quieter trains. Beall supports using some of the state’s Cap and Trade dollars to finance large mass transit projects with the potential to slash voluminous amounts of greenhouse gas emissions.

Local Issue – BART Funding

What does Senator Beall see happening with state funding for BART to San Jose?

Possible follow up: Would SB9 Cap and Trade funds be available?

Funding for transportation projects such as BART is very competitive. I’ve been vigilant to ensure BART to Santa Clara gets its fair share of state funds. Last year, I advocated for and voted for an additional \$675 million for the project through Cap and Trade program funds. By 2025, Phase 2 of the BART project would reduce GHG emissions reduction 29,171 metric tons per year.

“We need to get more cars off the road and the way to do that is having a smart, effective transportation plan. We need transit that focuses on connectivity, speed and safety,” Beall said. There needs to be a focus on transit, walking and biking – and exploiting the ways we can tie them together—in order to reduce the vehicle miles traveled,” said Beall. “We have to concentrate on ways to weave public transportation into the heart of communities. Better access to transportation has been shown to improve the lives of poor families because it widens their opportunities for employment, education, and health care. By using Cap and Trade funding we are investing in a long-term solution for transportation.”

Continued on Next Page.

Legislative Interview with Senator Beall, District 15 (Cont.)

Last year, Beall’s Senate Bill 9 was signed into law; the bill infuses practicality and speed into the process of building environmentally friendly mass transit projects, such as BART to San Jose. The bill guarantees long-term funding from the Cap and Trade program for eligible projects, eliminating the necessity to apply for financing in phases and the commissioning of repetitive planning studies for each stage.

SB 9 will ensure that Cap and Trade funding is invested responsibly in projects that maximize GHG reductions and meet the goals of AB 32.

Priorities

What major issues do you think the legislature must deal with in 2016? What are your personal priorities?

“I agree with the Governor that the top priority is balancing the budget and having a rainy day reserve,” said Beall. “That does not mean that we can ignore other issues that need immediate attention. The Department of Developmental Services is in a crisis. Homes are being closed, transportation for people with disabilities is being stopped, and beds for the disabled are being removed. Currently, there are 300,000 people with disabilities in the state. We need to address this issue quickly

to help our most vulnerable people. With smart and careful planning, I believe we can balance the budget, make deposits in the rainy day reserve, and begin restoring funding for people with disabilities.”

Local question–Workmen’s Compensation
What are you doing to bring justice for injured workers as a result of the workers’ comp reform of 2012, since it eliminated due process for injured workers?

“The workers compensation needs reforms, but I couldn’t support Senate Bill 863

because it was overly complex and rushed through the Legislature,” said Beall. “There should have been more focus on the treatment for injured workers and less on overhead. Medical conditions that are chronic are becoming acute and treatments such as chiropractic and acupuncture were not considered. For example, this has affected policemen and firemen who legally cannot go to work if they are taking painkillers. Even if they want to work, they often retire, which is a more expensive option.”



Participants in the LWV legislative interview, L-R: Trudy LaFrance, Dave Yick, Margaret Bard, Senator Beall, President Hana Itani, Leslie Hallenbeck, Helen Hayashi.

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🌀 Event Calendar 🌀

- Mar 2 Wed **Board Meeting**, 10:00 A.M. Saratoga Fire Station
- Mar 3 Thu **Great Decisions (3) The Future of Kurdistan**, 1:00-3:00 P.M.
Guests, please call Terry Zaccone (408) 257-6575 for details.
- Mar 10 Thu **Clip 'n Come**, Noon, Bring salad/food & clipping to share.
Home of Dale Hill, 105 Robin Way, Los Gatos
Call (408) 356-7679 **Please let hostess know you will be coming.**
- Mar 11 Fri **Public Higher Education Study Consensus Meeting**,
9:30 A.M. – 1 P.M. Arab American Cultural Center
Multipurpose Room Bldg 2, 3952 Twilight Drive, San Jose
- Mar 17 Wed **Great Decisions (4) International Migration**, 1:00-3:00 P.M.
Guests, please call Terry Zaccone (408) 257-6575 for details.

Mission Statement: The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League neither supports nor opposes political candidates and parties, but does take action on issues. League membership is open to all women and men who are U.S. Citizens and of voting age.