



VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CUPERTINO-SUNNYVALE

April 2009

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EDUCATION FORUM "MAKING PUBLIC SCHOOLS WORK"

Date: Friday, April 24, 2009
Time: 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Place: Synopsis Corporation Headquarters, Building 2
 455 North Mary Avenue, Sunnyvale

Speakers and panelists will discuss the state of education in Santa Clara County and the state. See page 4 for agenda and registration.

EL CAMINO HOSPITAL ACQUISITION OF LOS GATOS FACILITY

Date: Monday, March 30, 2009
Time: 7:00 – 9:00 PM
Place: Los Altos Library, Community Room
 13 San Antonio Road, Los Altos

El Camino Hospital Board President David Reeder and EL Camino Hospital CEO Kenneth Graham will speak at a public forum on El Camino Hospital's acquisition of the property currently housing the Community Hospital of Los Gatos. The site will become a satellite facility of El Camino Hospital.

Sponsored by the Los Altos Library, El Camino Hospital Board and the Leagues of Women Voters of Los Altos-Mountain View, Southwest Santa Clara Valley and Cupertino-Sunnyvale

THE LEAGUE RECOMMENDS

Measure B – CUSD Parcel Tax	Yes
Proposition 1A	No
Proposition 1C	No
Proposition 1E	No
Proposition 1F	No

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This message is excerpts from a letter from state League president, Janis Hirohama, to local League presidents.

“...Over the past year-and-a-half the LWVC board has been engaged in a deep and searching process of self-examination. We began in mid-2007 with a grant for the Easy Voter Guide Project (EVGP) from the James Irvine Foundation that required the League to examine its organizational capacity to carry out the EVGP. As we started the grant work, we realized that this was a unique opportunity to look at our organization as a whole, and in a strategic way. With the help of consultants funded by the grant, the board participated in surveys, data collection, and intense facilitated discussions. We also reviewed the strategic work of past boards and other nonprofits, as well as trends affecting the nonprofit world and California's population and needs.

A key part of the work was reviewing the programs and services of both the LWVC and the LWVCEF. ...In the course of these months of intensive self-examination and strategy discussions, we were able to focus clearly on our strengths and the challenges facing us. We could see the strength of the League's mission and the tremendous value of the credibility, integrity, and respect that we command. We also considered the challenges facing us as an organization—including a long-term decline in our membership numbers, limited financial and human resources to do our work, and increased competition from other organizations for money, media attention, and public impact. We asked ourselves the crucial question: “**Does our current method of doing business allow us to effectively fulfill our mission?**” We concluded that we could do better—operate more efficiently, be more responsive to the needs of our members, serve a rapidly-changing California, and have more impact in both public policy and voter education. The state board concluded that if we are to successfully fulfill our League mission while remaining a vital, nimble organization with significant public visibility and impact, we need to focus our work in areas where we are clearly experts. We believe that **Democracy, Voting, and Civic Engagement** is a compelling description both of the League's strengths and how the public sees our organization. ...We are looking forward to it all coming together as we approach the LWVC Convention on May 15-17 in Long Beach.”

CUPERTINO-SUNNYVALE LEAGUE ENDORSES PARCEL TAX

The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Cupertino-Sunnyvale has agreed to support Measure B, the Cupertino Union School District's Parcel Tax.

A committee of five members, Don Burnett, Nancy Burnett, Roberta Hollimon, Sandy Howard and Barbara Sullivan, studied the measure and how it met the criteria in our Education Position. They met with school district officials to ask questions about the measure and about the school district administration. They came to the conclusion that the measure and the district meet the standards in our position.

The League of Women Voters believes that an education system should meet the needs of each individual student; challenge all students to reach their highest potential; and develop patterns of lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

Board Briefs

At its March meeting your board:

- Agreed to support the Cupertino Union School District Measure B Parcel Tax.
- Appointed a nominating committee.
- Planned to send a request for donations through a Community Appeal.
- Approved a donation to Smart Voter.

Membership News

Thank you for renewing your membership: Jo Loer.

Thank you for including a donation with your dues: Pete Botsford, and Sharon Jenks.

Welcome new members: Susan Josselyn and Mildred Kalish.

The Cupertino-Sunnyvale VOTER

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LEAGUE ANNOUNCES OPPOSITION TO MAY BALLOT MEASURES

The League of Women Voters of California announced its opposition to Propositions 1A, 1C, 1D and 1E on the May 19 Special Election ballot and urged voters to reject them.

“We oppose these measures because they are NOT the solution to our long term financial crisis, with the continuing structural deficit in the state budget and flawed budget process,” said Janis R. Hirohama, president of the League. “We make this decision with regret. We would support real reform to make the state budget process more accountable and give the Legislature and Governor effective tools to advance state priorities. However, these hurriedly drafted propositions, produced at the end of a flawed process that kept both the public and most legislators in the dark, will only make our fiscal situation worse.”

Proposition 1A is touted by its proponents as the way to bring stability to the budget process. But what it will *really* do is tie the hands of the Legislature and Governor as they face changing needs for state and local government services. It will keep them from taking into account the state’s changing demographics and growth in the actual cost of important services like health care.

“Although some claim there is an urgency to pass Prop. 1A to resolve our state’s budget problems, we disagree,” said Hirohama. “Most of its provisions will not take effect for two years—two years that we should spend hammering out *real* solutions to our budget and fiscal challenges.”

The League believes elected officials should be allowed to carry out their responsibilities with flexibility. Years of “ballot-box budgeting” and formulas for auto-pilot spending have greatly eroded that flexibility. Prop. 1A, however, adds to the problem. For example, it dictates how half the funds that must be transferred to the “Budget Stabilization Fund” are to be used; it removes the Governor’s ability to suspend transfers to the fund in difficult years; and it imposes new formulas for calculating “unanticipated revenues” and specifies how they can be used in good years. And, after the deep cuts made during these strapped times, it could lock in a reduced level of services by failing to properly take account of increased caseloads and program costs. If Prop. 1A passes, the Governor would be given new power to make mid-year cuts and suspend COLAs in state programs without legislative oversight. The League believes that midyear budget adjustments should require joint action of the legislative and executive branches so that checks and balances are maintained.

Proposition 1C. This proposal attempts to raise money for the short term by selling bonds that would be paid off by future lottery revenue. In light of California’s poor credit rating and the state of the economy, those bonds would have to be sold at very unfavorable interest rates, if they can be sold at all. The Legislative Analyst says that in the long term, lottery profits probably would not be enough to cover the higher payments to education required by Prop. 1C. We criticized this proposal as irresponsible last fall, and if anything, that criticism applies more than ever now.

Propositions 1D and 1E. On May 19, voters will also be asked to approve the temporary taking of funds from early childhood and mental health programs that were established by two previous initiatives. These are illusory, stopgap measures, and the League opposes these propositions as part of this objectionable package. It is ironic that these initiatives, which did what many consider “the right thing” by providing a source of funding, now face reductions.

The League is neutral on **Proposition 1B.** State responsibility for the funding of public education is essential, and we appreciate the need to pay back the devastating cuts that our schools and community colleges have sustained. On the other hand, the Legislature will have the ability to restore school funding without Prop. 1B, and it is not needed in this package of propositions. Since the League has no position on setting salaries for public officials, we take no position on **Proposition 1F**, which would prevent pay raises for legislators and statewide constitutional officers during budget deficit years.

The League of Women Voters recognizes that California is facing the worst budget crisis in its history, with the worldwide recession severely affecting state revenues and the need for state services. Moreover, our budget system is broken and in desperate need of reform. This year illustrates the need to abandon the two-thirds vote requirement for passing budgets and raising revenues, and we must also look at other budget reforms. In the meantime, a new tax commission is considering ways to broaden or stabilize our revenues. “There is much that needs to be done,” Hirohama stated, “but we are certain that the propositions on the May 19 ballot are not the answer.”



Leagues of Women Voters of Santa Clara County
LWV San Jose/Santa Clara, LWV Cupertino/Sunnyvale, LWV Southwest
Santa Clara Valley, LWV Los Altos/Mt. View, LWV Palo Alto

MAKING PUBLIC SCHOOLS WORK

Friday, April 24, 2009

8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Synopsys, Inc.

Headquarters, Building 2 - 455 North Mary Avenue, Sunnyvale, California

- 8:30 Registration, Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 Welcome: Moderator: *Ginny Lear*, Chair LWV Santa Clara County
Keynote Speaker: *Joe Simitian*, California State Senator; Member, Education Committee and Subcommittee on Higher Education; Chair, Select Committee on California's Master Plan for Education - **"The Role of the Legislature in Education: Constraints and Opportunities"**
Q&A
- 10:00 Panel Presentations: **"Innovations that Work"**
Moderator: *Laura Casas Frier*, Member, Foothill/DeAnza Community College Board of Trustees
Dr. Maurice Ghysels, Superintendent, Mountain View-Whisman School District - **"A time audit for math minutes using a Quality approach"**
Kathryn S. Hanson, Founder and President of ALearn - **"MAP—Stepping Stones to Success"**
Dr. John Porter, Superintendent, Franklin-McKinley School District, San Jose - **"College Connection Academy - Preparing Global Learners and Leaders"**
Q&A
- 11:30 Speaker: *Dr. Charles Weis*, Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools - **"Overview of Education in Santa Clara County"**
Q&A
- 12:15 Speaker: *Dede Alpert*, former California State Senator; Chair, Joint Committee to Develop a Master Plan for Education; and Co-Chair of the Governor's Committee on Education Excellence - **"How Do We Get from Here to There?"**
Q&A
- 1:00 Adjourn
The League of Women Voters of California supports a comprehensive pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade public education system that meets the needs of each individual student, challenges all students to reach their highest potential, and develops patterns of lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

The League thanks the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Synopsys, Inc. for making this forum possible

Cosponsors:

AAUW Palo Alto Chapter, ALearn, Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI), Children Now, Kids in Common, Joint Venture Silicon Valley Network, LWV South San Mateo County, Mesa de la Comunidad, Santa Clara County School Boards Association, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Silicon Valley Education Foundation, 6th District PTAs

Please register by April 22 at: <http://makingpublicschoolswork.eventbrite.com>
or by leaving a phone message at the League of Women Voters Palo Alto office: (650) 327-9148

LEAGUE NEWS

National – During SUNSHINE WEEK, President Obama solicited League Feedback on Transparency. Executive Director Nancy Tate participated in a dialogue on the new administration’s “Transparency Directive” convened by The White House. The League, along with other organizations, stressed the importance of freedom of information and citizen participation in government.

State – The LWVC established an Election Information page on the members only Website. As information about the election becomes available, it will posted there. Keep up-to-date by visiting this site. For the url, write to lwvcseditor@comcast.net.

League Websites

National www.lwv.org
State www.ca.lwv.org
Bay Area www.lwyba-ca.org
County www.scc.ca.lwvnet.org
Local www.cs.ca.lwvnet.org

PROS AND CONS PRESENTATIONS

With the special election coming up very quickly May 19, our Voter Service team has been scrambling to analyze the propositions and put together Pro Con talks to help people understand the issues. There are not many propositions on the ballot this time; nevertheless for a couple of them it’s going to be challenging to decide what exactly is being changed and what the costs and benefits will be. As of this writing, the only confirmed Pro Con date open to the public is 7 pm April 28th at Sunnyvale Library, but we will try to get word out as more opportunities become available. These propositions arose out of the legislature’s budget-balancing endeavors, so if you have any concerns about the state budget, they deserve your attention. (If you have no concerns about the state budget, we need to talk...)

Get in touch with me at susan@mathinspired.com if you would like to have the Pro Con team at your social or professional group, or if you would like to help out at any of the presentations.

Susan

Join the League of Women Voters

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Send your check to LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale, P.O. Box 2923, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.

___ \$60 Individual member Name: _____

___ \$90 Two members in a household Address: _____

___ \$15 Student

___ Contribution \$ _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Checks made out to LWVCS are not tax deductible.

To make a tax-deductible donation, write a separate check to LWVCS EdFund.

CALENDAR

March

Mon 30 7:00 pm **El Camino Hospital Acquisition**
Los Altos Library, Community Room
13 San Antonio Road, Los Altos

April

Mon 6 7:00 pm **Board Meeting**
Meyering Office
19925 Stevens Creek Blvd. Cupertino

Fri 24 8:30 am **Education Forum**
Making Public Schools Work
Synopsis Corporation
Headquarters, Building 2
455 North Mary Avenue, Sunnyvale

May

Fri – Sun 15-17 **LWVC Convention**
Long Beach

WHO REPRESENTS YOU

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters
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FIRST CLASS