



# VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CUPERTINO-SUNNYVALE

January 2013

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## PROGRAM PLANNING GRASSROOTS DAY

Saturday, January 12, 2013

10:00 - 11:30 AM

Hollimon's

11155 La Paloma Drive, Cupertino 95014

### What is Program Planning?

The League uses the program planning process as an opportunity to think strategically about the work of the League on the state level.

What do you want to see on the agenda for the League in California for the upcoming biennium?

As a valued member of this grassroots organization, you have the opportunity and the responsibility to indicate the issues on which you believe the state League and all local Leagues in California should focus their time, talent, money, and reputation.

Consider where there is the most need, where we will be most effective, and what activities best serve our mission. And consider the indirect impact of these choices, particularly on membership recruitment and retention, fundraising, and our reputation—all of which are crucial to the future of our League as well as that of the LWVC.

There is only so much we all can do with our limited human and financial resources. The state League is spread wide and far by the numerous policy positions we have and the many voter service and community education projects we undertake. We also deeply respect grassroots member interest in any issue. We believe in the will of the Convention to set priorities from both a policy and a budgetary standpoint.

### LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale Board of Directors

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### The Cupertino-Sunnyvale VOTER

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lwvcseditor@comcast.net  
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### Correction

The date for the Initiative and Referendum Update was reported incorrectly in the December VOTER. The date is Saturday February 9, 2013.

# INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM POSITION UPDATE

## WHY NOW?

Why is the LWVC doing an update study of the Initiative and referendum Process position now? What precipitated this study at this particular time?

The easy answer is that delegates to the LWVC convention in 2011 adopted this update study, and we are therefore conducting it. The more difficult question is: "Why did League members around the state ask for an update to this position, and why did this happen right now?"

The public presently pays significant attention to the initiative and referendum process in California, both because there seem to be more petitions than ever, and because there has been an increased number of proposals to change the system itself.

The League has been able to advocate on some of these proposals for change, but not all.

The Cupertino-Sunnyvale League, along with LWVs throughout the State have a joint opportunity to revisit and update the existing State League position on California's Initiative and Referendum policies. On February 9, 2013, our local Consensus meeting will be a great way for us to exercise one of Leagues' great strengths. Seven members of our local study committee have been actively preparing for this meeting for months. In February, 2013, our local membership will have the opportunity to participate in League's Statewide study via the typical grass-roots League way – local consensus meetings.

The matters of an initiative's or referendum's initial ballot qualification, signature collection, campaign funding, and ballot wording are gaining importance. The League has the opportunity to weigh in on some of these matters, plus others, as we update our current position, which will enable LWVC action leaders to help impact appropriate changes in the laws.

People have noted weaknesses in the way that the process is being used nowadays. As with so many things that government controls, perhaps the initial use of this democratic process has evolved in ways that may be contrary to its origin and present usefulness.

Did you know that the initiative process began as a result of actions by Governor of California Hiram A. Johnson, who, beginning in 1911, was instrumental in the narrow objective of kicking the Southern Pacific out of politics? Enabling organizations adopted a set of directives to allow the direct legislative tools of initiative, referendum, and recall, along with women's suffrage and workmen's compensation.

Although there is little distinguishing the letter of the initiative and referendum laws from their enactment over a century ago, their role in the actual governance of the State has grown exponentially.

Our study committee will tell consensus attendees more.

*Nancy Burnett*

## Board Briefs

The Board did not hold a meeting in December. Board Briefs will be back next month

## Membership News

Thank you for renewing your membership: Mary Boyle.

Thank you for including a donation with your membership renewal: Bruce Kendall and Norma Medlin.

Thank you for your donation to the Community Appeal: Ann Croll.

## BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY: WATER: CALIFORNIA'S GOLD 2013

**Saturday, February 2, 2013**

**9:00 a.m. – 2:10 p.m.**

**First Unitarian Church of Oakland  
685 14th Street at Castro,  
Oakland, CA 94612**

The League of Women Voters Bay Area presents a study of the importance of water in California. The keynote speaker will be **Matt Weiser**, journalist with the Sacramento Bee newspaper and an expert in the field of California water.

There will be three panels of experts on

- 1) California Water Background,
- 2) Governance, and
- 3) Water Conveyance, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and Tunnel Vision.

Cost in advance: \$30 (\$15 without lunch); at the door \$35 (\$20 without lunch). To register write a check payable to 'LWVBA' and mail, including your name and any guest names to LWVBA, 1611 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94612.

For more details, please call (510) 839-1608 or email [editor@ayareamonitor.org](mailto:editor@ayareamonitor.org).

## LEAGUE NEWS

**National** – The League joined with coalition partners to again call on President Obama to fix the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The FEC is currently operating with five commissioners serving expired terms and three commissioners that refuse to uphold campaign finance laws that they disagree with.

The League joined with coalition partners in sending a letter to Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi asking them to maintain the office of Congressional Ethics (OCE). The OCE was formed in 2009 and supplements the work of the House Ethics Committee.

**County** – EXCESS & HUBRIS : How Money is Killing Democracy, a forum planned by the LWVs of Santa Clara County, was awarded a grant from LWV Californi. to address the impact of money on elections. The dinner forum will be held Wednesday, March 13, 2013, 6:30 to 9:30 PM, Los Gatos Lodge. This is a “kick off” for further actions that our individual Leagues can pursue.

## 44% WATER COMPANY RATE INCREASE? IT IS NOT TOO LATE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

On December 6<sup>th</sup> 2012 over 100 residents, business owners and city officials had the opportunity to discuss the proposed San Jose Water Company 44% rate increase at a public Town Hall Meeting held at San Jose City Hall. This meeting was sponsored by the League of Women Voters, The Sierra Club and San Jose City Council member Don Rocha. Attendees heard the key issues involved in this request for significant increase by the Water Company.

At the meeting the Division of Ratepayer Advocates of the California Public Utility Commission presented findings from their recent review of the requested increase. The Division of Ratepayer Advocates has a mandate by law to represent the interests of rate payers in virtually all Commission proceedings. After extensive review and investigation of the justification presented by the San Jose Water Company to support the water company’s increase, the DRA concluded that a more modest 10% increase over a three year period was more appropriate.

This matter is now before the Commission for final resolution. There is still time for the public to comment on this matter. Feedback can be sent to:

public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov

or

Public Advisor's Office, Room 2103  
California Public Utilities Commission  
505 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

The League of Women Voters and the Sierra Club urge all ratepayers to contact the CPUC and comment on this critical decision. More information on this issue can be found on the LWV San Jose-Santa Clara website: <http://sjsc.ca.lwvnet.org/WaterRateMeeting.html>

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LWV San Jose-Santa Clara VOTER*

## 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 payable to LWVCS to LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale, P.O. Box 2923, Sunnyvale, CA 94087.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$60 Individual member

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$90 Two members in a household

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$30 Student

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Membership checks are made out to “LWVCS” and are not tax-deductible. Donations to “LWVCS” are also non-deductible.

To make a tax-deductible donation, write a separate check to “LWVCS Education Fund.”

## CALENDAR

### January

- Sat 12 10:00 am **Program Planning**  
Hollimon's  
11155 La Paloma Drive, Cupertino 95014
- Wed 9 1:00 pm **Initiative and Referendum Study Committee**  
Burnett's  
729 Stendhal Lane, Cupertino 95014
- Mon 14 7:00 pm **Board Meeting**  
Burnett's  
729 Stendhal Lane, Cupertino 95014

### February

- Sat 2 9:00 am-2:30 pm **Bay Area League Day**  
**Water: Bay Area's Gold 2013**  
First Unitarian Church of Oakland  
685 14th Street at Castro, Oakland 94612
- Sat 9 9 am - 1:30 pm **Consensus Meeting**  
**Initiative and Referendum Position Update**  
Location TBD
- Mon 11 7:00 pm **Board Meeting**  
Burnett's  
729 Stendhal Lane, Cupertino 95014

## WHO REPRESENTS YOU

### UNITED STATES

- President Barack Obama** 202-456-1414  
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- Senator Barbara Boxer** 415-403-0100  
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- Senator Dianne Feinstein** 415-393-0707  
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- Rep. Anna Eshoo** 650-323-2984  
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- Assemblyman Rich Gordon** 916-319-2051  
[assemblyman.gordon@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblyman.gordon@assembly.ca.gov)

### SANTA CLARA COUNTY

- Supervisor Dave Cortese** 408-299-5030  
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- Supervisor Liz Kniss**  
[liz.kniss@bos.sccgov.org](mailto:liz.kniss@bos.sccgov.org)

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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  
of Cupertino-Sunnyvale  
P.O. Box 2923  
Sunnyvale, CA 94087

**FIRST CLASS**