



# VOTER

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CUPERTINO-SUNNYVALE

March 2014

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### UNDERSTANDING THE BAY DELTA CONSERVATION PLAN

Saturday March 1, 2014 - 1 PM to 3 PM  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Main Meeting Room  
150 E. San Fernando St., San Jose, CA

The proposed Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) is a complex, fifty-year, \$25 billion program (in 2012 dollars) to restore the ecosystem of the fragile Sacramento Delta, protect endangered species, assure State water system reliability, protect Delta communities from levee failure and more. Much of Santa Clara County relies on water from the Delta and will be affected by the outcome of the planning process as will all Californians.

Join the Leagues of Women Voters of Santa Clara County on March 1 to hear the points-of-view about the BDCP, understand the elements of the plan, how it will be implemented, how much it will cost, who will pay and whether or not it is the right solution to the Delta puzzle.

### Speakers



- Deirdre Des Jardins, Sierra Club of California Water Committee, California Water Research Institute



- Joan Maher, Deputy Operating Officer for Water Supply, Santa Clara Valley Water District



- Doug Obegi, Staff Attorney, Water Program, Natural Resources Defense Council



- Richard Roos-Collins, Principal, Water and Power Law Group



- Curt Schmutte, Civil Engineer, Water Resources and Environmental Engineering Consultant

### LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale Board of Directors

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VOTER Mailing LaVerne Prentice

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More event info at <http://www.sclaraco.ca.lwvnet.org/calendar.html>

# MESSAGE FROM LWV CALIFORNIA

LWVC News - February 11, 2014

## ADVOCACY

### Civil Rights

We Charge the State with Illegally Denying 60,000 the Right to Vote

We joined the ACLU of California and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area in a lawsuit charging the state with **unconstitutionally stripping tens of thousands of people of their right to vote**, disproportionately impacting people of color.

We believe the Secretary of State's Office violated state law by issuing a directive to local elections officials asserting that people are ineligible to vote if they are on post-release community supervision or mandatory supervision. These are two new and innovative forms of community-based supervision created under California's Criminal Justice Realignment Act for people recently incarcerated for low-level, non-violent, non-serious crimes.

### Money in Politics Bills

We expect floor votes soon on our important campaign disclosure bills so sign up now to receive our Action Alerts on these reform bills:

- SB 27 (Correa) closes the "dark money" loophole that allows nonprofits to contribute huge sums in California elections without disclosure
- AB 800 (Gordon) gives the Fair Political Practices Commission important tools to investigate suspected violations
- SB 2 (Lieu and Yee) increases transparency by toughening slate mailer disclosure, requiring state candidates to "Stand by Your Ad" as federal candidates do, and strengthening enforcement.

### Our Bills Will Make California's Initiative Process Work

Californians strongly support the initiative process but also find the current process confusing and obscure. The LWVC was part of a yearlong process looking at potential reforms to the initiative process. This process included a broad and diverse set of civic and advocacy groups.

As a result, the League is working with California Common Cause to introduce a bill addressing the three major priorities for change:

- clarity
- transparency
- accountability

Many of the groups from the discussion process are expected to join the coalition supporting the bill this month.

To receive updates on this bill, sign up for LWVC action alerts.

*LWVC News, February 2014*

## Board Briefs

At its February meeting your board:

- Discussed taking positions on the Cupertino School District Parcel Tax and the MidPeninsula Open Space District Bond Measure.
- Adopted a draft of a policy on inviting candidates to forums.
- Discussed holding candidate forums for one or more of the following offices: Assembly District 28, District Attorney and/or County Sheriff, Superior Court Judges.
- Heard a report on a proposal for express lanes on Route 85.

## Member News

Thank you for renewing your membership: Marieann Shovlin, Jason Spiller, Katharine and Terry Turner, and Joan and Albert Wehde.

Thank you for including a donation with your membership renewal: Joyce Bartlett, Peter Botsford, Delores Carson, Michael Lusk, and Dianne and Regis McKenna.

## In Memoriam

We sadly report the death of long-time member Barbara Beyda.

## Opportunities for Involvement

- The Nominating Committee is putting together a slate of candidates for the next board of your organization. We need a member to help with this process.
- Do you have two hours to help with the Community Appeal by stuffing, sealing, and stamping envelopes in March?

To help contact the League at [league@cs.ca.lwvnet.org](mailto:league@cs.ca.lwvnet.org).



## JUNE 3<sup>RD</sup> PRIMARY ELECTION

The June ballot will be relatively heavy with candidates but light with ballot measures.

For the first time this year Californians will elect their Governor and six other state-level executive offices under the top-two primary system that voters approved in 2010. Cupertino and Sunnyvale voters will also be electing their representatives to the State Assembly and U.S. Congress under the new primary system. (Our State Senators and U.S. Senators are not up for election this year.)

Under the top-two primary rules, voters of all party affiliations will get June ballots with the same list of candidates for state and federal offices, including candidates with different party preferences. For each office, the two candidates that get the most votes in June will move on to the November ballot. This means voters will be selecting from more candidates in June (compared to the old partisan primary system) but only two candidates per office in November (compared to one candidate from each party under the old system).

Santa Clara County voters will also be electing several county executive offices (Assessor, District Attorney, and Sheriff) and several seats on the Superior Court. (The County Supervisors that serve Cupertino and Sunnyvale are not up for election this year.) For each nonpartisan county office, a winner is determined in June if a candidate garners more than 50% of the vote. Otherwise, there is a run-off election in November between the two top candidates.

Cupertino and Sunnyvale voters do not have any offices on their June ballots for their city, school districts, or special districts. Those elections will happen in November.

The June ballot will have just two state propositions, both placed on the ballot by the State Legislature. One is a veterans housing bond, and the other is a state constitutional amendment about public records of local governments. There are no state initiatives or referenda on the June ballot, because current state law disallows voter-initiated propositions in a primary election. The November ballot

will include proposals from the Legislature, initiatives, and at least one referendum.

At present, no local measures are slated for the June ballot for Santa Clara County voters, although something could be added through March 7<sup>th</sup>. However, voters in the Cupertino Union School District will be getting vote-by-mail ballots for a special election on May 6<sup>th</sup> for a parcel tax extension.

After close of the candidate filing period in March, the LWVCS board will decide about candidate forums this spring. Watch future VOTERS for details of forums to be held in May. If your group would like a presentation on the propositions this spring, please contact Judi Pogue: [judipogue@comcast.net](mailto:judipogue@comcast.net).

*Linda Davis*

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please contact [league@cs.ca.lwvnet.org](mailto:league@cs.ca.lwvnet.org) to discuss how you can help.

**Candidate Forums in May** – Although the exact dates and offices are yet to be determined, we will need moderators, timers, and other helpers during forums. We also need people to do forum organizing and candidate communications.

**Publicizing Voter Service** – Prior to the June election, we'll need to get the word out to the general public about [SmartVoter.org](http://SmartVoter.org), candidate forums, and opportunities for learning about ballot measures. We can use writing and graphics talent or people willing to help with communications via email and newspapers. We also need help to reach out via social media.



## ASK BEFORE YOU SIGN - OR THINK BEFORE YOU INK

The League of Women Voters of California encourages its members and the public to be cautious during this period of circulation of initiative and referendum petitions.

Voters are often asked to sign a petition “just to get it on the ballot so people can vote on it.” The League says to voters, “**Your signature is valuable**, perhaps even more valuable than your vote. Why? Because far fewer signatures are required to qualify a measure for the ballot than votes needed to pass it once it’s on the ballot. Only sign a petition for an initiative or referendum that you believe belongs on the ballot.”

The LWVC suggests six questions voters should ask themselves to help determine whether or not to sign an initiative petition:

1. **Is it complex?** Some issues can be decided by a simple yes or no vote. More complex issues may be better handled by thorough examination and debate in a legislative arena.
2. **Is it confusing?** Some initiatives are not well written or contain conflicts that may require court resolution or interpretation.
3. **Does it belong in the Constitution?** If an initiative amends the Constitution, consider whether it really belongs there. Is it a fundamental law that should be protected from change? Correcting a constitutional amendment later would also require amending the Constitution, is cumbersome and costly, and requires another vote of the people.
4. **How will it be funded?** Is it an “unfunded mandate” that would require the legislature to take funds from other essential programs? Consider the effect on the overall flexibility of a government budget with already limited revenue. An initiative should generally define its own revenue source, and not earmark, restrict, or obligate a specific percentage of the General Fund revenues.
5. **Before you sign, ask about who is circulating the petition.** Many initiative campaigns use paid signature gatherers. The only requirement in California is that the petition itself have a disclaimer that it may be circulated by a paid signature gatherer. You can ask whether the person requesting your signature is paid, and if so, how much.
6. **Who is behind it?** It can be difficult to find out who the real sponsors and opponents of a petition are. Sometimes there are news reports, or a Web site that can help you. Contribution and expenditure reports of committees organized for action on ballot measures are available through Cal-Access, the automated lobbying and campaign disclosure system sponsored by the California Secretary of State’s office. Go to this site—[www.cal-access.ss.ca.gov](http://www.cal-access.ss.ca.gov)—to read the financial reports of campaign committees.

The League of Women Voters is a trusted, nonpartisan political organization. Our members do the hands-on work that safeguards democracy and leads to civic improvement. More information about the League, including membership information, can be found on the League’s Web site, [www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org).

## LEAGUE NEWS

**National** – LWVUS submitted comments to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on their Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for 501(c)(4) organizations. The League believes that the IRS proposal is a tremendous opportunity to rein in the secret “dark money” that has been polluting our elections since the Supreme Court’s terrible decision in Citizens United . At the same time, the current proposal would significantly undermine the League’s ability to conduct truly nonpartisan voter service activities across the country – and this must be changed.

**State** - The state League Legislation Committee voted to support SB 837, a bill that calls for expanding transitional kindergarten so that all 4-year-olds will be able to go to preschool.

**Bay Area** - Videos of the Speakers on *A New Vision for Open Space*, Bay Area League Day 2014, are available at the following website:  
[http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2IWP8TL8HSI8cYLYjo6GKw/videos?view=0&sort=dd&live\\_view=500&flow=grid](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2IWP8TL8HSI8cYLYjo6GKw/videos?view=0&sort=dd&live_view=500&flow=grid)

## MODERATOR TRAINING A HIT

“That was by far the best training I’ve ever received thru LWV. So well organized...so well managed!” A sample of responses from those attending the moderator training.

Our League was well represented at the moderator training session sponsored by the Leagues of Santa Clara County. Five of our members joined 30 others to learn the ins and outs, and ups and downs, of moderating a candidate forum. Participants learned how to prepare for a forum and what to expect during a forum. A packet of material covering all aspects of moderating was distributed to attendees. All the material is available on the member page of the County League website. If you would like to access it, send a request to [league@cs.ca.lwvnet.org](mailto:league@cs.ca.lwvnet.org) for the url.

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## OUR WEBSITE NOW AVAILABLE ON SMALL-SCREEN DEVICES

Did you know that our League’s website now looks great on your smart phone or tablet? In the middle of October, our webhost League Easy Web, a product of the League of Women Voters of California, made an overnight upgrade which reformatted the content of our pages so they are now easy to read on small-screen devices.

Try it now! Open a browser on your smart phone or tablet and enter our website name [cs.ca.lwvnet.org](http://cs.ca.lwvnet.org). This is just another way the League is helping you engage, educate and empower on-the-go!

## 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

### March

- Sat 1 1:00 PM- 3:00 PM **Understanding the Bay Delta Conservation Plan**  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library  
Main Meeting Room  
150 E San Fernando St, San Jose, CA 95112
- Mon 10 7:30 PM **Board Meeting**  
Contact [league@cs.ca.lwv.net](mailto:league@cs.ca.lwv.net) for location

## WHO REPRESENTS YOU

### UNITED STATES

- President Barack Obama** 202-456-1414  
[comments@whitehouse.gov](mailto:comments@whitehouse.gov)  
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**Senator Jerry Hill** 650-212-1313  
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### SANTA CLARA COUNTY

- Supervisor Dave Cortese** 408-299-5030  
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**Supervisor Joe Simitian** 408-299-5050  
[joe.simitian@bos.sccgov.org](mailto:joe.simitian@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.

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