



VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CUPERTINO-SUNNYVALE

March 2016

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PROGRAM PLANNING

The LWVCS Program Planning Meeting on 2/6 started with a review of who we are and what we are about by looking at our Principles (see page 6). We should periodically be reminded of our beliefs in representative government, a government that depends on the informed and active participation of its citizens, government responsibilities, and the rights of every citizen.

These beliefs are the foundation of the LWV's 2014-2016 nationwide program "Key Structures in Democracy," which has included:

- Study of the process of amending the U.S. Constitution.
- Review and update of our Campaign Finance position.
- Review of congressional redistricting to develop action steps.

For 2016-2018, the LWVUS board proposes a "Making Democracy Work" program to keep our focus on core democracy issues. In addition to ongoing work to protect the vote and reform elections, the LWV would work to improve campaign finance regulation and redistricting.

We were asked if we like this focus, and our members' answer at the 2/6 meeting was a resounding "yes." Our voter service activities fit nicely under the "Making Democracy Work" banner. Our other local League work can also be seen as contributing to that broad goal.

We then moved on to consider what our local League should do in the next year. Our discussion of possible voter service and program activities revolved around these questions: Where should we focus our energy? What does the community need from us? Where can we have the greatest impact? How can we enhance our visibility and attract members? What services are we best equipped to offer? What resources/expertise do we have? What League-like services are offered by others to which we can bring value-added?

The group on 2/6 affirmed the importance of our League's voter service work and agreed on the following prioritized list for the November 2016 election:

- Ballot Measure education
- City Council contests in Cupertino & Sunnyvale
- State Assembly District 24 (Sunnyvale)
- Congressional District 17 (both cities)
- School board, special district, and judge contests

The group also pointed out that we need more workers to deliver these services: organizers and moderators for candidate forums; speakers and researchers for ballot measures.

(See **Program Planning** on p. 3)

LWV Cupertino-Sunnyvale Board of Directors

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| President | Roberta Hollimon |
| Vice President | Susan Hough |
| Secretary | Michael Lusk |
| Treasurer | Serge Rudaz |

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Off Board

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Pros and Cons Scheduling | Judi Pogue |
| Voter Registration | Suzanne Ford |

The Cupertino-Sunnyvale VOTER

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This newsletter is posted on our website: cs.ca.lwvnet.org.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This month we held a lively Program Planning discussion, ably led by Linda Davis. Linda took us through the suggestions made by LWVUS, LWV Bay Area and ideas for our local League. She helped us reach an agreement on where we want to place our focus this year. See the article on page 1 for the results of that discussion.

As part of the meeting we reviewed the League Principles. They are presented on page 5 for your perusal. Makes you proud to be a League member.

For those of us who participated in the Constitutional Amendment consensus, it is satisfying to see the final result of the consensus process in two new LWVUS positions. One position on Constitutional Conventions under Article V of the U.S. Constitution and the other on Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals. These are on page 4 of this VOTER.

Every spring we send out an appeal for donations to the community and members. When you receive yours, consider making a contribution to help our League.

We are planning an election related meeting for members and the public to be held in the Sunnyvale library on April 17th. Next month's VOTER will have will have details.

We used to have a column called "Looking Back." I was looking back through some old VOTERs and came across the article on page 3. Some things never change.

Roberta

Opportunities for Involvement

- Help register voters at the new citizen ceremonies on Thursday, March 24 and Tuesday, May, 24. Times are 10:30, 1:30 and 3:30 on both days. Respond to league@cs.ca.lwvnet.org to let us know when you would like to volunteer.
- Say yes when the nominating committee asks you to serve on the board or the nominating committee.

Board Briefs

At its February meeting your board:

- Heard the results of the Program Planning meeting and approved the results to be sent to LWVUS, LWV Bay Area and program for our local League.
- Learned that the Money in Politics Consensus report had been sent to LWVUS.
- Agreed to do a Community Appeal in the spring.
- Appointed Budget Committee Chair and members.
- Approved plans for a public meeting in Sunnyvale in April to address election issues.
- Agreed to continue to search for members of the nominating committee.

Memorial Donations

We appreciate the donations made in memory of Evelyn Lundstrom and LaVerne Prentice.

Member News

Welcome new member Virginia Merry. Virginia moved to Sunnyvale from New Jersey where she was a long-time member of the League.

LWV CALIFORNIA ADVOCACY UPDATE

Yes on Proposition 50

At the January 31st meeting the LWVC board voted to support Proposition 50 (SCA 17 of 2013-2014) on the June ballot. This measure will allow, but not require, legislators to forfeit salary, benefits, and privileges of office when suspended. Legislative accountability and combating corruption are both important parts of restoring public trust in government.

It is currently possible to suspend legislators with a two-thirds vote, but not to suspend their salary or benefits. This measure would allow, but not require, the Legislature to suspend a member and deem the salary and benefits forfeited.

Such actions are highly unusual: the three senators suspended in 2014 were the first suspended in the 164 years of the Legislature. 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.

It's Back: Parental Notification Initiative

A well-funded version of the Parental Notification Initiative (PNI) is collecting signatures for the November ballot. The LWVC, as it has in past attempts, has joined the effort to oppose this measure as a member of the steering committee. There are various opportunities to serve on committees to assist in this effort, and more will arise as the campaign takes shape. Members who would like to assist in this cause can contact advocacy@lwvc.org. This will be a continuing update until the election.

LOOKING BACK

From LWVCS Voter, January 2004

TRACKING CALIFORNIA'S HIGH SPEED RAIL INTO SILICON VALLEY

High Speed Rail Experts will present new details on the proposed construction of a high-speed rail line between Los Angeles and San Francisco via Silicon Valley.

Topics include alignment options for the train route into Silicon Valley, the location and number of stations. And Caltrain system improvements that would result from the new rail service sharing Caltrain's right of way.

Program Planning (continued from p. 1)

The discussion of possible local program touched upon the topics of local development, local campaign finance, and the traditional "Know Your City" study, although no definite proposal surfaced. The group kept returning to our needs to expand our membership and engage more people in League work. The board will be considering the many ideas expressed by members on 2/6 in developing a recommended plan for next year. That plan will be presented in the Annual Meeting Kit, which will be mailed to members in May. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 4.

LWVUS ANNOUNCES TWO NEW POSITIONS

Following their January 29-31 meeting, the League of Women Voters board announced a new position calling for **safeguards to govern the constitutional convention process** and a position 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. 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.

Position on Constitutional Conventions under Article V of the U.S. Constitution

Adopted January 2016

The League is concerned that there are many unresolved questions about the powers and processes of an Article V Constitutional Convention. The League believes such a convention should be called only if the following conditions are in place:

- a) The Constitutional Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret. The public has a right to know what is being debated and voted on;
- b) Representation at the Constitutional Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote, and delegates should be elected rather than appointed. The delegates represent citizens, should be elected by them, and must be distributed by U.S. population;
- c) Voting at the Constitutional Convention must be by delegate, not by state. Delegates from one state can have varying views and should be able to express them by individual votes;
- d) The Constitutional Convention must be limited to a specific topic. It is important to guard against a “runaway convention” which considers multiple issues or topics that were not initiated by the states;
- e) Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Constitutional Convention should be called. Counting state requests by topic ensures that there is sufficient interest in a particular subject to call a Convention and enhances citizen interest and participation in the process; and
- f) The validity of state calls for an Article V Constitutional Convention must be determined by the most recent action of the state. If a state has enacted a rescission of its call, that rescission must be respected by Congress.

Considerations for Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals

Adopted January 2016

The League will only support a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution if it advances and conforms to an LWVUS position.

In addition, the League believes the following should be considered in identifying an appropriate and well-crafted constitutional amendment:

- a) Whether the public policy objective addresses matters of such acute and abiding importance that the fundamental charter of our nation must be changed. Amendments are changes to a document that provides stability to our system and should be undertaken to address extreme problems or long-term needs.
- b) Whether the amendment as written would be effective in achieving its policy objective. Amendments that may be unenforceable, miss the objective, or have unintended consequences may not achieve the policy objective.
- c) Whether the amendment would either make our political system more democratic or protect individual rights. Most adopted amendments have sought to make our system more representative or to protect the rights of minorities.
- d) Whether the public policy objective can be achieved by a legislative or political approach that is less difficult than a constitutional amendment. In order to expend resources wisely, it is important to consider whether legislation or political action is more likely to succeed than an amendment.
- e) Whether the public policy objective is more suited to a constitutional and general approach than to a statutory and detailed approach. It is important to consider whether the goal can best be achieved by an overall value statement, which will be interpreted by the courts, or with specific statutory detail to resolve important issues and reduce ambiguity.

LEAGUE NEWS

National – The League of Women Voters of the U.S., joined by the Alabama, Georgia and Kansas Leagues, filed suit in federal district court to stop the recent illegal action by the Executive Director of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) that allows these states to restrict voter registration. The Executive Director, Brian Newby, recently unilaterally approved requests from Alabama, Georgia and Kansas to require documentary proof of citizenship when an applicant uses the federal mail voter registration application form. The Help America Vote Act of 2002 requires the full commission itself to vote on any changes, but Mr. Newby ignored that obligation.

Bay Area - The Bay Area League is monitoring the proposed merger of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

LEAGUE PRINCIPLES

Principles are concepts of government, supported by the League as a whole, which constitute the authorization for adoption of national, state and local program.

The League of Women Voters believes...

- in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.
- that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.
- that responsible government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems.
- that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.
- that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.
- that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

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 "LWVC Education Fund."

CALENDAR

March

Mon 7 7:30 p.m.

Board Meeting
Burnetts'
729 Stendhal Ln, Cupertino 95014

April

Thu 14 7:30 p.m.

Board Meeting
Burnetts'
729 Stendhal Ln, Cupertino 95014

Sun 17 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Election Preview
Sunnyvale Library
665 W Olive Ave, Sunnyvale, CA 94086

WHO REPRESENTS YOU

UNITED STATES

President Barack Obama 202-456-1414
comments@whitehouse.gov
Senator Barbara Boxer 415-403-0100
senator@boxer.senate.gov
Senator Dianne Feinstein 415-393-0707
senator@feinstein.senate.gov
Rep. Mike Honda 408-436-2720
mike.honda@mail.house.gov

CALIFORNIA

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governor@governor.ca.gov
Senator Jim Beall 408-286-8318
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Senator Jerry Hill 650-212-3313
senator.hill@senate.ca.gov
Assemblyman Evan Low 408-371-2802
assemblyman.low@assembly.ca.gov
Assemblyman Rich Gordon 650-691-2121
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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.

FIRST CLASS

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