



Beach Cities Voter

The League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities

serving El Segundo, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Manhattan Beach, and Redondo Beach

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS — FACTS

We are a grassroots organization, that encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government, and that influences public policy through education and advocacy. We grew out of the movement to give women the right to vote, following passage of the 19th amendment to the US Constitution in 1920. Visit our state website at www.ca.lwv.org (or our local website www.beachcities.ca.lwvnet.org) to learn more about our organization.

Who belongs to the League? Men and women of voting age are welcome to join. We have 74,000 members nationwide, 11,000 of which are here in California, and 130 of which are in one of the six beach cities.

Is the League really non-partisan? Yes — absolutely. The League will never support political parties or candidates.

What does the League do? We register millions to vote.....sponsor candidates debates and provide other valuable voter service tools (see page 3).....study issues, such as the presidential selection process (next column) — and develop positions on these issues.....advocate on positions that we’ve studied and that our members have approved.

Where do you fit in? We welcome new members (**men and women**), and we encourage diversity and pluralism. We have many volunteer opportunities — joining our Smart Voter team (see page 3), participating in studies of special issues, ranging from national studies on the presidential selection process to local studies on county government reform and on the appointment process to commissions in our six Beach Cities. But you needn’t be an active member — we are also grateful for those members who show their support by renewing their membership each year. See our Membership insert for more information.

Beach Cities to Study Presidential Selection Process

by Maggie Wilkinson and June Eicker

In the January-February 2004 issue of the National Voter, members are provided with a proposed new LWVUS (national) position on the Selection of the President along with a concurrence response form. National is seeking feedback directly from individual members rather than from league organizations, a process that was adopted at the 2002 LWVUS convention. To assist Beach City League members in forming their opinions, the issues addressed in this proposed new position on the Selection of the President will be discussed at our Membership meeting on January 26th.

This proposed updated position continues to support direct election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College. However, in the past 30 years,

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Program Planning *by June Eicker, Program Co-Chair*

At the December holiday and program planning meeting, the National positions were reviewed and discussed. Lively and thought-provoking comments and ideas from the members in attendance followed overviews of each of the positions and recommendations for continued support of, or updates on, current positions and new studies. Strong support was evidenced for emphasis on citizens rights, environmental protection, and health care. New studies were recommended for several issues, most notably agricultural policy and federal deficits. In addition to the recommendations on current positions, members voiced very great interest in having a League study and position on the Judiciary and on U.S. Relations With All Countries (an extension of the current position on "U.S. Relations With Developing Countries"). A more detailed breakdown of the members' votes on the individual positions will be provided later in the year when a summary is forward to the National League.

LA County League Program *by Maggie Wilkinson, Program Co-Chair*

At our December Holiday Party, we reviewed our National League Program and made recommendations for study and action for the coming two years (see above). However, there wasn't enough time to also consider LA County (LAC) League Program Planning as we had intended. Thus we are including this article in the Voter to give each member an opportunity to suggest issues for study and/or action at the LWV County level.

For the years 2002 to 2004, our LWV County program has been Health Care as an issue for action and emphasis and we studied County Government and how it should be structured. At our meetings in October and November we focused on the Board of Supervisors (BOS), its size, the issue of electing or appointing a chief executive officer, and the question of linking board expansion to the establishment of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). League members attending the November consensus meeting concluded that we support the existing League position that there should be a separation of the executive and legislative functions at the county level and that the LA County Charter should be amended to create an elected Chief Executive Officer. However, we were not able to reach consensus on whether the BOS should be enlarged. Members wanted to create an elected CEO first and then evaluate the issue of increasing the number of supervisors. We also agreed that any BOS expansion should include cost limits but we didn't have enough information to propose what the limits should be. In general we concluded that incremental improvements are needed to the structure of County Government starting with the creation of an elected CEO.

On March 27th the LAC League will have its biannual convention where our delegates will vote on the LAC League Program for 2004-2006. Program changes to our existing County Government position as a result of the county wide league study will be voted on at that time. Delegates will also be determining what our County League program focus will be for the coming two years. So that members can have an opportunity to recommend an area for possible study or update and issues for emphasis (education and action), we have been asked to recommend "Lively Issues" that we would like to focus on at the county level for the coming two years. To get an overview of what positions the LWV LAC currently is supporting, you can go to the league website at lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org under "About League" in the section on action and advocacy where they summarize the existing positions on Government, Natural Resources and Social Policy.

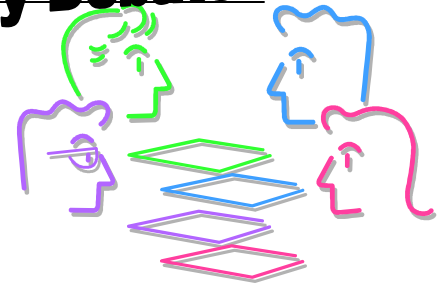
So the question is do we want another study and if so, on what topic, and/or do we want to LAC LWV to do education and action on certain specific areas? Some "Lively Issues" have been suggested which you might want to consider. 1) Should we continue to look at County Government? A part of our 1978 position that was not addressed in the recent update is the Leagues support for the elimination of unincorporated areas. 2) Our Land Use position dates from 1974. An update to that position could cover issues related to urban sprawl, building in heavily wooded areas with the fire danger and the need for adequate water supplies. *(continued on page 4)*

The League provides non-partisan education and information to voters through its Education Fund, a non-profit (501c3) entity to which contributions are tax deductible. Some of the League's many voter services include registration of voters, publication of outreach materials and meetings on the "pros and cons" of ballot measures, sponsorship of candidates forums at all levels of government, and on-line information at www.SmartVoter.org.

Democratic Presidential Primary Debate

February 22nd, from 5:00 to 6:00

Museum of Tolerance, Los Angeles



The League of Women Voters will sponsor a televised live debate among leading Democratic candidates for President of the United States. The program will be broadcast on KNBC as well as MSNBC and Telemundo. Paul Moyer, anchor for KNBC news, will moderate the debate, and leading journalists will pose questions of the candidates. Tickets are limited—contact Jan Nathanson by January 21st to inquire about availability. This live debate will start promptly at 5:00 — so be sure to arrive early to park, to mingle, and to be seated. Or watch KNBC at 5:00 on Sunday, February 22nd.

Join the Smart Voter team! *By Frances Talbott-White. As the Southern California liaison for Smart Voter, Frances Talbott-White may be reached at ca-south@smartvoter.org, or at (310) 397-4970.*

News of the October recall election preoccupied reporters and pundits to such an extent that many local candidates in the November elections — most of whom were planning their campaigns long before the October 7th election was set — were obscured by the dust raised over the recall. At the same time, I am pleased that the League can do something about this situation, by inviting local candidates to post their campaign information on-line at www.SmartVoter.org, an on-line voter service project of the League of Women Voters of California. Candidates can post a virtually unlimited amount of positive campaign material on Smart Voter for free. This permits voters to access candidate information—tailored for their personalized ballots — at any time of the day or night. In a world where more and more voters are looking for information on-line, Smart Voter offers a valuable commodity — a playing field that's lush as well as level — to candidates in all economic brackets.



Although Smart Voter is a State League project, it is implemented by volunteers at the local level. Most of the work done by these volunteers involves contact with candidates and does not require any special knowledge beyond how to use a telephone or address an envelope. It is also work that brings a tremendous PR benefit for League at all levels.

With Smart Voter having been active on LA County since 1999, more and more local office holders have used Smart Voter in their campaigns, and more and more voters have learned to rely on Smart Voter as a source of election information.

The March election is rapidly approaching, and volunteers are needed—now! If you would like to become involved in this effective and enjoyable voter service project, please e-mail me at ca-south@smartvoter.org, or call (310) 397-4970.

See our calendar and flyer (insert) for more information.

STUDY ON THE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS *(continued from page 1)*

much has changed in the presidential selection process and we need to define and measure our values against other factors that appear to have dramatically altered the process. Today the process of selecting the president is dominated by questions of campaign strategy and campaign finance, the role of the parties in the primaries and the caucuses leading up to the convention, the role of the media and the effect of developing technologies. If the League's concerns include encouraging the best candidates and promoting the highest participation by informed voter, we need to understand the impact of the process on those values.

We are being asked whether we strongly support, accept or do not accept the proposed position. To help prepare for the discussion on the 26th, we recommend rereading the articles on the presidential selection process in the May/June and Sept./Oct 2003 National Voters along with the information provided in the Jan/Feb 2004 Voter. This information is also available on the LWVUS website in the Position Update section.

JOIN US ON JANUARY 26TH FOR A LIVELY DISCUSSION ON THE SELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT!

County Program *(continued from page 2)*

3) Water policy could be an area for education and action – where does our water come from and are we going to have an adequate long term supply? 4) Housing could be an area for either study or education and action. 5) Our health care crisis has not been solved and we might want to take another look at ways to continue to work in that area. **SPECIFICALLY**, LAC has requested that each League provide **BY JANUARY 15** its first, second and third choices of "Lively Issues in Los Angeles County." **To meet this deadline we would greatly appreciate your input before the evening of January 12.** Please submit your top three to June Eicker at: jeicker@socal.rr.com or (310) 329-2020.

Alternative Choices in Education

Rob Jacobsen, Consultant

Los Angeles County Office of Education

Wednesday, January 21, 2004

11:30 to 1:00

Brown Bag Lunch, with complementary coffee
and cookies

Refer to flyer (insert)

BYLAWS ANNOUNCEMENT

A committee of the Board is now reviewing the bylaws for the League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities. Your proposals for amendments should be submitted in writing to the Board no later than January 12, 2004, to:

Doris Rosenberg

1817 11th Street, Unit A

Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization open to all citizens, men and women, of voting age. The League's mission is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. The League never supports or opposes any political candidate. The League advocates on issues that members have studied and on which members have reached consensus.

Beach Cities Voter

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The year 2003 ended on a high note with our annual program planning meeting and holiday luncheon. Ann Martin's lovely home, decorated early for the holidays, was the setting for review of National program. Maggie Wilkinson and June Eicker, program co-vice presidents, led us in discussion of LWVUS positions. Enthusiastic participation resulted in consensus on current positions and recommendation of a new study of the judicial system.

The Board approved the consensus report on County government which appears elsewhere in this Voter. We are asking members to give suggestions for a new County study, or update and/or emphasis on current County positions, prior to the January 12th Board meeting.

Information on Selection of the President will occupy our January 26th member meeting, a timely topic in this election year. Watch for your National Voter and attend the meeting for more in-depth coverage. If you cannot attend, be sure to send in your reply to the National Board.

A Democratic Candidates' debate will be held in Los Angeles on February 22nd. See page 3 for ticket information, or watch the debate on NBC. It's exciting that the League will be offering a national debate once again.

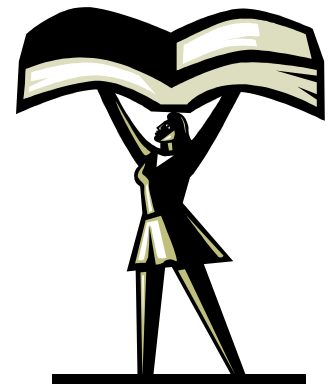
Action will be foremost on our agenda before the March primary election. LWVC supports Proposition 55 (Bonds) and 56 (State Budget Accountability Act). We shall remain neutral on Proposition 57 (the Economic Recovery Bond Act) and Proposition 58 (the California Balanced Budget Act). But all four measures will be covered by the League's voter service materials.

Please contact your Assembly member if you favor universal health care, regarding SB 921, which is awaiting a hearing in the Assembly Health Committee, probably in March. Your new LWV Beach Cities directory lists names and contact numbers. Once again, the membership team, headed by Valma Evans and Susan Grebe, have provided us with a useful tool, filled with general citizen information as well as listing names of our members.

Recent discussions in the media about bias in reporting and greater polarization, remind me of the value of League's non-partisanship and impartial approach to issues. The County League's recent program on Proposition 13, 25 Years After, was a good example of excellent speakers presenting different points of view.

Please join us in 2004 as we continue to learn and be stimulated.

Jan



In 1920, the League adopted a non-partisan policy when it decided to neither support nor oppose any political party or candidate. At the same time, the League does engage in a political—but non-partisan— process when it investigates and studies a topic or issue and develops a League position. Only after this formal, deliberative process, which includes approval of a position by the general membership, will the League take a stand on a particular issue such as a ballot measure or a bill in the Legislature.

Election March 2, 2004 The League of Women Voters of CA recommends:

Support Proposition 55 — The Kindergarten-University Public Education Facilities Bond Act of 2004. This \$12.3 billion bond measure is the second phase of a school construction and repair plan to meet expanding state needs. The first part passed overwhelmingly as Proposition 47 in 2002. This measure includes \$1.0 billion for K-12 school facilities, with about half for new construction and a quarter each for modernization and critically overcrowded schools. There is also \$2.3 billion for higher education (community colleges and the CSU and UC systems) that has been hard hit by the state budget crisis.

The state treasurer confirms that in these hard economic times, it is important to continue our long-term investment in education facilities. Prop. 55 will provide state matching funds for locally approved school bonds. It will create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and stimulate the local economy, while holding to strict accountability standards. California's total school population is projected to increase by one million in the next decade; higher education expects 700,000 additional students. Prop. 55 will provide our kids the safe, clean learning environment essential to improving student achievement.

For more information: www.yes55.com

Support Proposition 56 — The Budget Accountability Act.

This measure is designed to end the legislative gridlock which has prevented the state from dealing responsibly with the challenges of passing a budget. It holds legislators accountable by requiring them to pass the budget on time or face real consequences. They would have to stay in session and work only on the budget, and would forfeit both their salary and expenses until the job was done. Voters could learn how legislators voted on the budget from an easy-to-use Web site, and the Voter Information Guide (ballot pamphlet) would contain a summary of how the state's money is spent. This constitutional amendment would end partisan gridlock by reducing the vote required to pass the state budget and related bills, including tax measures, from two-thirds to 55 percent. Only two other states routinely require a two-thirds vote to pass a budget. This high threshold has given a handful of California legislators the ability to demand concessions, such as spending on projects in their districts or tax breaks for special interests, to get their support for a budget. Under Prop. 56, the state would build up a "rainy day" reserve fund when revenues are greater than needed to fund existing services, and use the fund to maintain service levels in bad times. Late, irresponsible budgets hurt all the people of California.

Proposition 56 will bring real reform of the budget process now. For more information:
www.budgetaccountabilitynow.org

Proposition 57 (Economic Recovery Bond Act) and Proposition 58 (California Balanced Budget Act). On December 12th, the Governor and Legislature acted to add two ballot measures, Props 57 and 58, to the March 2004 ballot. The board of the League of Women Voters of California has recently voted to remain neutral on these two measures.

Harriet Chase on Social Policy *Harriet Chase, our columnist and chair for social policy, is a recipient of a special award from the LA County Board of Supervisors for her volunteer work as an advocate for children.*



- **SB 921: Health Care for All Californians Act.** Healthcare is a major “issue for emphasis” at both the state and LA County levels of League. In the 2003 legislative session, the senate passed Senator Kuehl’s SB 921, which will next be heard by the Assembly Health Committee in the 2004 session. Senator Kuehl is holding an informational meeting to formally kick-off the 2004 campaign in Sacramento on February 2. She will address how SB 921 will create a publicly financed system of universal health benefits for every resident in California, along with a comprehensive benefit package. It contains costs through administrative savings, bulk purchasing, global budgets and accountability built into the system. It would reduce the heavy dependence on the expensive emergency room care of last resort.
- **Parental Notification Initiative Filed** — A Parental Notification initiative has been filed with the Secretary of State's office, and signature gathering has begun. This constitutional amendment, planned for the November 2004 ballot, would require that at least one parent be notified 48 hours in advance that their minor daughter (under 18) is scheduled to have an abortion. Notification can be waived only through a judicial process that may vary by county. The League of Women Voters believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices and does not differentiate on protection of access based upon age or income. Therefore, we suggest that members not sign the initiative.



- **March for Freedom of Choice, in Washington DC — Sunday, April 25, 2004.** For twenty years the LWVUS has worked to preserve the right to privacy in reproductive choice, so we are proud to join with the Feminist Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice America, the National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood Federation of America and other organizations for the March. A toolkit is available on the national website at www.lwv.org, and additional information may be found at www.ppaction.org/PPMarch04/join.html. For a hard copy of the toolkit, e-mail lobbying@lwv.org.

Campaign Finance Reform — League Applauds Supreme Court’s Ruling

By a 5-4 vote, the US Supreme Court announced its decision to uphold key provisions of the McCain-Feingold Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act, including a ban on “soft money” and restrictions on “sham issue” advertisements. “This is a huge win for the American public,” stated Kay J. Maxwell, President, League of Women Voters of the United States. “It establishes a firm foundation for diminishing the role of special interests in government. It gives voters a better understanding of the candidates for whom they are voting by revealing the issues they support and the special interests that support the candidates. When voters are given more information, they are able to make better educated and more informed decisions,” said Maxwell.



Jan 12	Mon	7:15 to 9:15 pm	Board meeting	2704 Maple, Manhattan Beach (at the home of Mignon Theim-Murphy)
Jan 21	Wed	11:30 to 1:00	Alternative Choice in Education—a brown bag discussion	Torrance Public Library (Katy Geissert Room) 3301 Torrance Blvd, Torrance
Jan 26	Mon	7:00 to 9:00 pm	Membership meeting — Study of Presidential Election system	Manhattan Beach Library 1320 Highland Avenue
Jan 31	Sat	9:30 to 12:00	Speakers Training — Pros and Cons for the March 2004 ballot	Hollenbeck House, 573 South Boyle Avenue Los Angeles, CA 91133
Feb 9	Mon	7:15 to 9:15	Board meeting	13731 S Rosburn, Hawthorne (at the home of Jan Nathanson)
Feb 11	Wed	6 :00	Deadline! For articles to be included in the Feb issues of the <i>Voter</i>	Please submit your articles electronically.
Feb 22	Sun	5:00 to 6:00	Democratic Presidential Primary Debate	Museum of Tolerance, and broadcast live on NBC (for tickets, see page 3)
Feb 23	Mon	7:00 to 9:00	Membership Meeting — topic to be announced	Manhattan Beach Library 1320 Highland Avenue
Mar 2	Tues	7 am to 8 pm	National Primary Election	For information on your precinct, go to www.SmartVoter.org and type in your address
Mar 8	Mon	7:15 to 9:15	Board Meeting	2151 Valley Drive (at the home of Harriet Chase)
Mar 18	Thur	7:45 am to 3:30	27th Annual EdSource Forum — Overhauling School Funding in CA	Manhattan Beach Marriott — for registration, call (650) 857-9604 or go to www.edsource.org .



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