



# THE BEACH VOTER

The League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities  
serving El Segundo, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Manhattan Beach, and Redondo Beach

## Improving Education

The efforts of local Leagues throughout the state were recognized at the League of Women Voters of California's board meeting last month, during which the board adopted an updated Education Position that was based on an intensive study effort by over 1,000 members in 49 local Leagues. The new position is posted on the LWVC's members only website—at <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvonly/index.html>—and our organization is now able to advocate more effectively for much needed improvements in education.

**Shaking Up the Status Quo** And, in the meantime, our Social Policy Director, Harriet Chase, represented our Beach Cities League at the EdSource Forum's April meeting, here in Manhattan Beach. The topic—*Shaking up the Status Quo: the Movement to Transform High School*. Prominent speakers at this event focused on the need to improve public high schools. A number of them offered exciting examples of alternatives to the traditional high school as well as views on the best ways to implement change. The conflict between offering a rigorous college-prep curriculum versus providing multiple pathways to high school students was debated. But all seemed to agree with keynote speaker Tom Vander Ark, executive director for education for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Borrowing a slogan from The Big Picture Company, Vander Ark said that the new three R's for high school are "rigor, relevance, and relationships." As speakers focused on those three R's, a fourth R emerged: resources. An eight-page report including details of the speakers' suggestions and success stories may be downloaded for free from the EdSource website at [www.edsource.org/pub\\_abs\\_forum05.cfm](http://www.edsource.org/pub_abs_forum05.cfm).

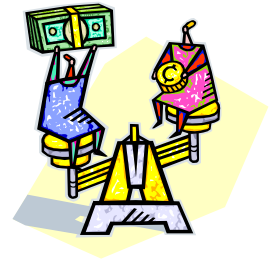
Charter Schools are receiving increased attention — Who controls them? Are they effective? Our new Education position, which applies to public schools, includes charter schools (which also are public schools). The following link will take you to an Ed Source publication used in the LWVC's study effort mentioned above — [www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org) (click on 'Education in California' and then follow the links to the study guide and charter schools.)



## Making the Tax System Reflect CA's Economy

The League has often looked at tax expenditures as one good way to address the state's structural budget deficit. (Another article in this series reports on a bill to require regular evaluation of tax expenditures.) However, there are many changes that would help our tax system more closely align with our 21st century economy and also help address the deficit. Thoughtful League members will want to consider the varied proposals for changes to our tax system that are being discussed around the state.

Our state's sales tax base has not reflected the changes in our economy to a more service-oriented one. Because a sales tax is meant to capture a small amount of the money spent by citizens in order to help finance public expenditures, the sales tax is a logical place to look for added revenue. Lenny Goldberg of the CA Tax Reform Association



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## California Water Plan

The League is concerned about the Public Review Draft of the California Water Plan which is about to be issued by the Department of Water Resources (DWR). Based on recommendations from the LWVC representatives to the Water Plan Advisory Committee, Polly Smith and Jack Sullivan, the LWVC has submitted a letter to the DWR, commending department staff for their leadership in developing this update to the water plan but making a number of suggestions for modification of the existing draft.

In particular, we urge DWR to include an Initiative in the plan that would stress conservation, recycling and nonstructural management techniques in water planning. We also urge DWR to discuss more fully the uncertainties that lie ahead in water planning and, in particular, the uncertainty presented to water planners by climate change and global warning.

The League believes that DWR should be more explicit about the groundwater situation in the state and stress that groundwater is an important part of the state's water infrastructure.

The full text of the LWVC letter is on the LWVC Web site at <http://lwvc.org/lwvc/action/natres/water/>.

## League Perspectives on the State Budget

Although a great deal of public attention is currently focused on redistricting, the continuing state budget struggle remains a major issue for the LWVC. A number of initiatives related to the budget process have been given a title and summary and released for signature gathering. It is too early to tell which, if any, of these initiatives will qualify for the ballot. We are monitoring all of them as well as the special legislative session bill sponsored by the Governor.

The LWVC has joined a number of other organizations in signing a statement of principles for achieving a balanced state budget and dealing with the ongoing structural budget deficit. This "[Fighting for California's Future](#)" statement describes our vision for California and its budget; supports a balanced solution that includes increased revenues rather than only cuts and borrowing; and opposes policies that would place further automatic restraints on the legislature and Governor as they attempt to meet the needs of California. The statement is included in this UPDATE and available at <http://lwvc.org/lwvc/action/budget/>.

*Marion Taylor, LWVC Legislative Director*

### Volunteer — and learn as you participate!

- **Government Observer** — We would like to designate observers for each of the six beach cities. Do you have time to attend (or watch on TV) meetings of city councils, school boards, water districts, or health district? Partner up with a friend to cover your city's governance!
- **Fundraising!** Almost all of your annual dues support League activities at county, state, and federal levels. Our local League activities rely heavily on fundraising.
- **Smart Voter Coordinator** — Here is your chance to become active in the League in a position with no rigid schedule. You will be busy only during election times, when you will be talking to candidates for state, county, and local offices. All you need is a computer, internet service, and a desire to get balanced information to voters. For details, email Wendy Phillips at [wendy@beachvoter.org](mailto:wendy@beachvoter.org), or Francis Talbott-White at [ca-south@smartvoter.org](mailto:ca-south@smartvoter.org).

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suggests that there are many untaxed "services" that are actually a temporary use of tangible commodities which should be taxed. These include admission to golf courses, gyms, concerts and sporting events. Even without taxing labor services per se, adding such taxes for use of a commodity to our tax structure would add more than \$800 million annually. Another consideration is that broadening the tax base would allow the possibility of lowering the sales tax rate.

Although progressive, our personal income tax base and rate structure has several weaknesses that should be considered. Having a top tax bracket that begins at the \$40,000 income level for an individual (\$80,000 for a couple) means that this tax system may not be as progressive as warranted. Additionally, high-income earners have received windfall savings due to federal income tax cuts—but federal spending cuts continue to lead to California budgetary losses. Reinstating the top tax brackets of 10 and 11 percent that the state had under Governor Pete Wilson in the early 1990s would greatly benefit California's treasury and more closely reflect the income distribution of today's families.

Corporate taxes provide a smaller percentage share of tax revenues than they did in the 1980s, even though the economy is growing. Addressing loopholes and incentives that may not be effective and making other reforms to the corporate tax structure could generate substantial revenue.

The local property tax is another area that must be addressed for the state as a whole to be solvent. An area of property tax law that may require changes is the complex "change of ownership" rules that define when investment property is reassessed. Currently, these laws allow for very similar commercial properties to pay disparate amounts in property taxes. This is not fair to newer owners or to the citizens of California. Another reform supported by League positions would be a constitutional amendment to require the periodic reassessment of nonresidential property at market value. The California Tax Reform Association has written extensively on this subject; to research it more thoroughly, visit their Web site, [www.caltaxreform.org](http://www.caltaxreform.org).

It is clear that substantial revenue could be generated through changes to some of California's tax policies. Such changes would also help alleviate the ongoing structural budget deficit. A review of the current tax system will certainly uncover many reforms that are appropriate, including some mentioned here. California needs the revenue that will provide a good education system, public services, and sound infrastructure. Our state's future depends on a tax structure that is sustainable—one that is fair, efficient and equitable.

*This article is one in a series of LWVC articles on State and Local Finance.*

*For other articles, go to our website, at <http://lwvc.org/lwvc/action/budget/>.*

Become a Philanthropist.

Please remember the League of Women Voters when planning your estate or reviewing your will.

Remember the League.

## **\*\* Popovers \*\* In \*\* Pasadena \*\***

Keynote Address: Update on the  
Los Angeles County Health Care System  
King/Drew Medical Center  
Measure B



Plus workshops on

- Trying to Achieve Healthcare for All
- Preschool for All Act (Pre-K Initiative)
- Affordable Housing Options and Legislation
- Post LWVC Convention Education Study Update and Pending Action

**Saturday, July 23rd, registration at 9:30 (meeting starts at 10)**

**160 North Oakland, Pasadena**

*Join us for the LWV—LA County's Signature Event!*

\$25 for RSVP by July 9th. (\$30 for late registrations.)

Send your \$25 check to Peggy Bartlett at 701 13th Street, Manhattan Beach 90266.

Vegetarians — please indicate your preference for a vegetarian lunch.

For reservations after July 9th, mail your \$30 check to the LWV LA Co at

427 East Walnut Avenue, Burbank, CA 91501

From the (Guest) Editor:

Thank you all for your assistance in providing content, labor, and moral support for the production of this newsletter — which, we are pleased to announce — is now an “award-winning” newsletter, as recognized at the LWVC Convention last month. Kudos to our former editors, Kate Alson (who had to resign when she recently took on the responsibilities of a new job), and to Jeanne Leuschner who, as our old pro, laid the foundation and provided valuable guidance to Kate and me. And a special thanks to the production team of Sunhee Park, Susan Grebe, and others!

With much gratitude, Wendy

**The League of Women Voters** is a non-partisan organization open to all citizens, men and women, of voting age. Non-citizens and youth are welcome as associate members.

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 Voter*

#### Co-Presidents

Henrietta Mosley

Wendy Phillips

#### Guest Editor

Wendy Phillips

#### Production

Sunhee Park

#### Circulation

Ann Martin

*(thanks everyone!)*

## *Tri-League's Summertime Brown Bag Lunch!*

### Keep the Lights On — Save Energy



Join us for a presentation by the  
**South Bay Energy Savings Center**

Katy Geissert Public Library  
 (Torrance Public Library)  
 3301 Torrance Blvd

Thursday, July 28th  
 11:30 to 1:00

Bring your lunch! No reservations necessary.  
 Coffee and cookies will be served.

Sponsored by the Tri-League of Women Voters  
 Beach Cities — Palos Verdes — Torrance

## Welcome to the LWV Beach Cities!



We have three new members — Jennifer Tencza of Redondo Beach, Susan Volmer of Hermosa Beach, and Martha Andreani of Manhattan Beach. It is a pleasure to welcome all three and we look forward to getting to know them in the near future. Interested in joining? Contact us through our website ([www.beachvoter.org](http://www.beachvoter.org)), call us (310-413-6904), or send us the form on the next page.

Susan Grebe & Irma Cohen, Membership

## LWV of California Convention 2005



*Dateline Crowne Plaza Anaheim* — Over 200 delegates, observers, and volunteers joined together for three days of plenary sessions, workshops, receptions, a banquet, and lots of good will and fellowship. The LWVC's slate of speakers was excellent — in addition to our own League leaders, we heard from Secretary of State Bruce McPherson, Senator Sheila Kuehl, Orange County Supervisor Bill Campbell — plus others.

Delegates voted to designate three Issues for Education and Advocacy over the next two years, including:

- redistricting
- state and local finance, and
- healthcare.

Unfortunately, an issue that delegates did not select was a study proposed by the Torrance and Beach Cities delegates on the State's Judiciary system (let's try again next time!). And, after debate, delegates also rejected designating the initiative/referendum process and multi-member voting districts as Issues for Education and Advocacy.

On day 3 of the convention, delegates expressed the Will of the Convention through three resolutions, on civil liberties, protection of aquifers, and support for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). These resolutions may be read at [http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/conv05-resolutions\\_index.htm](http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/conv05-resolutions_index.htm).

The Orange County Leagues were excellent hosts of Convention 2005. And the LWVC was pleased to announce that the next convention — Convention 2007 — will be in the San Joaquin Valley. Local Leagues from that area treated delegates to a special multi-media briefing on their economy and culture. We're looking forward to Convention 2007 in the beautiful San Joaquin Valley!



We're a not-for-profit organization, established in 1920, with the mission of promoting political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. We never support or oppose political candidates. We do advocate on issues that our members have studied and on which we've reached consensus.

All citizens — men and women of voting age — are welcome to join. If you can't attend our monthly meetings and special events, please consider showing your support through your 2005/06 annual membership fee of \$50 (which is not tax deductible — however, donations to the LWV Beach Cities Education Fund are tax deductible).

For more information, you may contact Susan Grebe at [susan@beachvoter.org](mailto:susan@beachvoter.org) or (310) 545-2097. Or just send your check (payable to the League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities), to Peggy Bartlett at 701 13th St, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

*The League affirms our belief in and our commitment to diversity and pluralism. There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability. The League recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making.*



Day 1 (above): Volunteers Jan Nathanson (Action) and Jeanne Leuschner (Natural Resources) help out with registration.



Day 2 (above): Volunteer Maggie Wilkinson (Program Chair) and Delegate Henrietta Mosley (Co-President) reflect on program motions and the upcoming Energy study.



Day 3 (left): Delegates Peggy Bartlett (Treasurer), Susan Grebe (Membership), and Janis Hirohama (Webmaster) heading back to the Beach Cities, after the 'debate and vote on will of the convention.'

June 27	Mon	6pm to 9pm	Old-New Board meeting	at home of Wendy Phillips
July 23	Sat	9:30 am	<b>Popovers in Pasadena</b> <b>LA Co Healthcare Update</b> <b>and King/Drew</b>	Women's City Club 160 N Oakland, Pasadena
July 28	Thur	11:30 to 1:00 pm	<b>Brown Bag — Keep the</b> <b>Lights On — Save Energy</b>	Torrance Public Library 3301 Torrance Blvd



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