



League of Women Voters Beach Cities

Serving El Segundo, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Manhattan Beach & Redondo Beach

The Beach Voter

LWVBC PROGRAM YEAR BEGINS IN SEPTEMBER, 2011

The Kickoff Luncheon on September 10, 2011 will start our program year with a speaker from the Registrar-Recorder's Office. Elections and Redistricting are hot topics this year and will be especially important in 2012. See the enclosed flyer for registration. All members are invited to join members of the hosting League, Palos Verdes, as well as Torrance members for this event.

Consensus discussion on the national study, "The Federal Role in Public Education", will be held on the fourth Tuesday of September and October at 7 PM at the Manhattan Village Mall Community Meeting Room. A flyer with the consensus questions is included in this issue of the Voter. All members are invited to participate.

In League tradition, we urge you to become informed in advance by reading the articles on the Beach Voter website (www.beachvoter.org). Additional information will be presented by the committee at each of the meetings.

See the article below for more information on the venue and scope of the study.

Best Wishes for an enlightening League year,

Jan Nathanson, Vice President—Program

rjnathanson@yahoo.com

FEDERAL ROLE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION: YOUR OPINION COUNTS

At our League's September and October membership meetings we will be discussing and answering consensus questions to provide our input to the National League of Women Voters position on the "Role of Federal Government in Public Education". We hope that you will attend both meetings. The first meeting is on:

Tuesday, September 27th, 2011

7:00—9:30 PM

Manhattan Village Mall Community Room

3200 Sepulveda Blvd., Manhattan Beach

The Community Room is in the hallway adjacent to the restrooms near William Sonoma.

Park in the rear and enter through the back door.

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The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

The League affirms our belief in 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.

The Beach Voter

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Legislative Interview – Assemblymember Betsy Butler – July 25, 2011 11 AM

The offices of Assemblymember Butler 500 Center Street, El Segundo, CA 90245

Attending: Joan Arias, LWVBC, Athena Paquette, LWV, Torrance, and Stephanie Molen, District Director, Office of Betsy Butler, Assemblymember 53rd District

After a brief introduction to the League of Women Voters and the goal of our Legislative Interviews, we asked Assemblymember Butler the following questions. Her responses follow the questions with my comments and definitions in *italics*.

1. Do you support efforts to increase transparency and provide more information to the public through such steps as requiring disclosure and quick reporting of all election-related spending?

Response: Yes! Campaign Finance Reform is critical. We need fair and accurate information with reasonable record keeping. It is unfortunate that our pilot project with the Secretary of State's Office did not succeed. There is currently a bill that would enable \$200 donations to go without being reported (at the present time, the limit on unreported donations is \$99; any donations \$100 and higher need to be reported).

(In response to a follow-up question about how she would like to control campaign financing or change policy and what changes she would make) There should be a set limit on campaign financing from whatever source or sources that are reported. We need to take Independent Expenditures out of the equation (in US elections, Independent Expenditures are political campaign communications which expressly advocate for the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate that is not made in cooperation, consultation or concert with or at the request or suggestion of a candidate, a candidate's authorized committee or a political party.)

(Assemblymember Butler talked about how she had been attacked with false accusations when she ran for Assembly and the money spent by her attackers on the 17 print brochures and materials that were sent to voters in the 53rd District. She also commented on the idea of limiting the money allowed on a campaign depending upon the office sought.)

We need to know where the money is coming from until we have true campaign finance reform. Real campaign finance reform could establish an overall limit on finances for campaigns no matter the source. The limits would be based on the level of the office sought. That is, the limit able to be raised would be higher for Congressional elections and the Presidency as opposed to the State Legislature. By capping the amount of money spent on a campaign, we level the playing field and help diminish campaign negativity since the money is no longer unlimited. This would include self-contributions, corporate contributions and small donor contributions.

2. What can you do to help improve civic discourse and reduce the level of rancor and partisan bickering in national politics?

Response: We have our challenges in the State. Term limits and the last budget situation with the governor was interesting. We need to get rid of the 2/3 vote requirement to raise taxes because we can't pass tax increases without bipartisan support and this is problematic. Through the course of the discussions, a number of Republicans were on board but they were threatened by the party and radio talk show hosts Ken and John. Legislators were scared that they'd get their heads on a stick – that they would be targeted for recall as what happened last election.

There needs to be fair and non-biased media outlets. Somehow Democrats always allow others to have messages that hurt us. I am disappointed with this aspect of my party. We need better communication because the changes we need to look at are the long-term costs of a non-educated society, of poor health care and poor environmental control. I was (pleasantly) shocked when Proposition 16 ("New Two-Thirds Requirement for Local Public Electricity Providers - Initiative Constitutional Amendment") and Proposition 23 (the proposition that would have suspended AB 32, a 2006 law – The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 until the unemployment rate dropped to 5.5% or below for 4 consecutive quarters) both lost.

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Californians didn't accept that, and that shows that voters are intelligent and that despite the investment by many corporations, it is possible to defeat such initiatives.

We need clear campaign finances and fair media coverage. When I ran for office, I did not want to go negative. Candidates and representatives on both sides are equally threatened by the bloodsport nature of politics today and by the issues that have become so harsh deterring them completely from a life of public service. . We have hour-long floor debates on such issues as open carry (*carrying loaded weapons openly*), same-sex marriage, and other issues in which the fringe elements have taken over. Some of these discussions are unproductive and represent grandstanding from fringe elements. The attitude is anti-establishment, anti-incumbent. I don't know how to fix that! I'm a pretty conservative Democrat but I've become more liberal because we are combating an attitude that government is bad and yet we need a safety net. People need to be educated and feel safe in their communities. That's government.

We need campaign finance reform – that's where the rancor comes in. We need more information and a balanced media. The national media needs to mandate fair and balanced reporting.

3. What are your major priorities for the 2011-2012 Assembly?

My major priorities are consumer fairness and awareness – banning toxic substances and working to keep families, especially children, safe. Also, to grow the job market. I have bills in play to prevent elder identity theft, establish veterans' courts and address job creation and green growth. I also am working on broadening the film tax credit so we stop California from hemorrhaging film jobs.

I will continue to work on consumer protection legislation and speak for those who don't have a voice. The chemical industry is against my BPA bill (*Bisphenol-A – a toxic substance used in "sippy cups"*).

(When asked about bipartisan support and how she makes that happen:) Most of my bills have passed with bipartisan support. I WORK my bills; I talk to my colleagues and am proud that members of both parties are helping me and speaking for my bills.

SB 173 – (*awaiting action in the Assembly and opposed by doctors and insurance companies*) requires that, following a mammogram, individuals with dense breast tissue be told that they have dense breast tissue, that dense breast tissue can obscure seeing a problem and other abnormalities on a mammogram, and that they may wish to discuss with their doctors the potential value of additional screenings.

(When asked about how as a new member of the Assembly, she picks her issues:) I want to fight for families, people without a voice. I campaigned on these issues: energy, environmental issues, the elderly (this district has the fastest aging population in California), jobs – green jobs in particular.

When asked about term limits: Term limits are good but ours are too short. 12 years would be better. Even in the United States Congress, 30-year limits would be good. In the past, when you began a career in the California State Legislature new members didn't say anything for the first two years! You learned. Right now you need to know who you're working with. I believe that public service and politics is about working to make people's lives better, healthier and safer.

Please visit our website (beachvoter.org) for answers to these additional questions:

1. Do you believe that Congress should delay or curtail enforcement of the Clean Air Act?
2. Do you support repealing or limiting the newly enacted national health care legislation, the Affordable Care Act?

Submitted by Joan Arias

“Popovers in Pasadena”

Saturday July 30th, 2011

When asked for his “crystal ball for school funding,” **Rick Simpson, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the California State Assembly** said it was “survival!” Simpson was the keynote speaker for the annual League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County's County League Day “Popovers in Pasadena” gathering of more than 100 Leaguers.

Rick Simpson gave his views on Federal Support for Education which began with his statement that he had never been a “big fan of a Federal role in public education.” The current policy in Washington is to give less money with fewer strings and almost any solution to the current financial crisis will involve less funding for education.

Themes in education include charter schools, choice and vouchers; block grants rather than specifically designated monies and standards and testing. Mr. Simpson talked at some length about the need to avoid the mistakes of the past and the “ready, aim, fire” strategies that guided standards for content and testing. He was not optimistic about the move to less money and more flexibility and he feels that standards and assessments should be an interstate collaborative effort.

Simpson noted that most federal mandates (such as special education, school lunch programs) aren't mandates at all; they are incentives (if you do X, you get money). Many state mandates arise in response to specific incidents and may not be particularly effective. We need to look at mandates individually.

He noted that there are several areas that merit federal attention: early childhood education is one. There is no doubt as to the positive effects and return on investment related to early childhood education and our failure to invest in preschool education is a mistake. This is where a federal investment would be positive.

Equity – fairness – is another core role of the federal government. The Federal government has a history in this area – trying to resolve unfairness. The Federal government should look deeper at poverty because the relationship of student success and poverty is profound and persistent. Simpson added that perhaps the most cost-effective school reform would be finding jobs for parents

Also of note during this event was the progress report on redistricting by Chris Carson. Chris informed us that the Commission voted on all the maps related to State offices and Congressional districts (13-1 in favor of the new State maps and 12-2 in favor of the Congressional maps). The final vote will take place on August 15 after which the maps will go to the Secretary of State and the Department of Justice. The maps are then final. Chris warned us to “prepare for law suits!” Chris asked us to send emails to the Commission to thank them for their excellent work and noted that the Commission had had to put up with a great deal of nastiness from the public but they had worked respectfully with one another to carry out their mission. There are 14 days for comments from the public.

Submitted by Joan Arias

Climate Action – Sept. 24th – “Moving Planet” Day

In 2010, the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere was almost 390 parts per million, well beyond the 350 ppm that leading climate scientists say is the safe upper limit for CO2 in our atmosphere. In addition, energy-related CO2 emissions hit their highest level ever in 2010. However, despite the evidence that burning fossil fuels is the chief culprit behind these numbers, efforts to curb CO2 emissions are at a standstill.

So to change the political dynamic, a global demonstration - - “**Moving Planet Day**” - - is being planned to mobilize against climate change and to move towards a sustainable, renewably-powered future. On September 24, people all around the world will be turning out to demonstrate their concerns about climate change and their support for fossil-free solutions in their communities. Last year Beach Cities League members on 10/10/10 joined others in the line along the beach to demonstrate our concern about the rising ocean levels as a result of climate change.

National LWV is urging us to be part of the Global Day of Climate Action this year on September 24 to help send a message to policy makers that it’s time to get off fossil fuels and move towards a sustainable, renewably-powered future. And as stated by Joe Galliani, the organizer of the South Bay 350 Climate Action Group, “Here in the South Bay we have an extraordinary opportunity to embrace two ready-to-roll sustainable solutions that not only address climate change, but will also improve our health, well-being and the livability of our communities. The **South Bay Bicycle Master Plan** and the **Vitality City Livability Plan** will make our streets and neighborhoods more livable by making them more bikeable and walkable.”

Our League hasn’t had an opportunity to study these plans but they do appear to address our need to help reduce the use of fossil fuels in our local communities. The Manhattan Beach City Council has endorsed the “Moving Planet South Bay” day event and has approved use of the 13th Street Farmers Market site as the venue where it will take place on Sept. 24, between 10 AM and 2 PM. League members are encouraged to attend the event that day (by biking or walking) and by helping with the various activities that are taking place – such as getting attendees to fill out support cards, helping with workshops and presentations and helping with the outreach activities taking place at the various booths.

If you are able to volunteer that day, please email Joe at MrJoe@mrjoe.com to let him know about your availability. In any case, I hope you can attend and encourage your friends and family to attend as well.

Maggie Wilkinson (310) 322-7870

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(Continued from page 1)

Topics for the September meeting will cover the History of Public Education, Common Core Standards and Assessment including Consensus Questions 1-9. The October 25<sup>th</sup> meeting will cover Equity and Funding (includes a discussion of special populations and early childhood education) including Consensus Questions 10-15.

Please visit our website: [www.beachvoter.org](http://www.beachvoter.org) to view all the Consensus Questions and background information that will be helpful in answering the questions.

Harriet Chase, Social Policy Chair

## CLEAN AIR PROMISE CAMPAIGN

In late July the National League of Women Voters, in association with our partners in the environmental and public health communities, launched a citizens campaign seeking to renew America's promise to protect clean air and public health as provided by the Clean Air Act. The "Clean Air Promise" is an issue campaign aimed at changing the debate over the Clean Air Act to one focused on protecting public health.

The League is bringing the Clean Air Promise to voters around the country to inform and engage all of us in the issue of clean air and to demonstrate what is at stake. For too long, the debate has focused on "overregulation" and featured false assertions that environmental protections hurt our economy.

Thus the Clean Air Promise Campaign calls on citizens, elected officials and community leaders to join in making this simple promise to protect the health of our children and families:

"I promise to protect America's children and families from dangerous air pollution. Because toxics and pollutants such as mercury, smog, carbon, and soot cause thousands of hospital visits, asthma attacks, and even deaths, I will support clean air policies and other protections that scientists and public health experts have recommended to the EPA to safeguard our air quality."

The LWVUS hopes to inform and engage Americans on the issue of clean air and to demonstrate what is at stake. During the course of the campaign the national office will provide local leagues with additional information on the campaign, fact sheets on clean air issues, model letters-to-the-editor and op-ed pieces along with tips for reaching out to coalition allies (such as the Sierra Club, the Lung Association and others). We are also being asked to reach out to key officials, community leaders, our friends, family and the general public, asking them to make the promise.

We are being asked to take the "Clean Air Promise" to local city meetings and other public events. Until our local league has had an opportunity to plan our outreach strategy for the Beach Cities, as an individual you can log onto LWV's special website, [PeopleNotPolluters.org](http://PeopleNotPolluters.org), and make the promise as an individual. You can also share this information with your friends and family. Thank you for your help!!

Maggie Wilkinson  
Environmental Chair

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We are now on Facebook! Search: LWV Beach Cities under the "pages" tab and click button to get updates on seminars, workshops, pictures, relevant news stories and commentaries. The newest way to get all the latest on the League!
www.facebook.com

CALENDAR

Sept 10th Saturday	11 AM To 1PM	Kickoff Luncheon "Voting Systems" <i>See Flyer for Details</i>	Double Tree Hotel 21333 Hawthorne Blvd. Torrance, CA Reservations Required
Sept 13th Tuesday	7 PM To 9:30 PM	Board Meeting	Home of Susan Grebe 629 19th Street Manhattan Beach 310-545-2097
Sept 27th Tuesday	7 PM To 9:30 PM	Consensus Meeting "Federal Role in Education"	Manhattan Village Mall Community Room 3200 Sepulveda Blvd. Manhattan Beach



**League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities
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