



# THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

July 2009

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 59 NO. 10

## Calendar of Events

### Wednesday, July 8

6:00 p.m.  
Board Meeting  
League Office  
720 13th Street  
Modesto

### Thursday, July 16

5:00 p.m.  
Valley Futures Forum  
201 Needham Street  
Modesto  
Speakers:  
Jay Corey  
Stephen Lawton  
"Creating a Vibrant Future"

### Tuesday, July 28

12:00 Noon  
Lunch and Learn  
Appetiz Restaurant  
Roseburg Square  
Speaker: Mike Dozier,  
Director  
The CA Partnership for  
the San Joaquin Valley

### Please Note:

The Local Action Committee  
Meeting  
To Be Announced  
Check Your E-mail

This calendar  
is current at time of  
printing. Check LWVSC  
Website for updates  
[www.lwvstanislaus.org](http://www.lwvstanislaus.org)

## League Urges Realistic, Balanced Approach to Budget

**Sacramento, CA** – The League of Women Voters of California today called on the Governor and legislative leaders to reject the idea of a “cuts-only” budget, especially one that decimates crucial programs. Instead, the League advocates a balanced approach to California’s budget crisis that includes new revenues along with targeted cuts to programs.

“We urge you to give priority to protecting the essential safety net for those most in need,” said League President Janis R. Hirohama in a letter to the budget leaders, reminding them that “the primary obligation of government is to protect the welfare and security of its people.” The League believes that the budget must not eliminate such basic assistance programs as CalWORKs and Healthy Families and should avoid further deep cuts in programs such as Medi-Cal, in-home supportive services, and child welfare services. “To make draconian cuts while rejecting proposals for increased revenues would be both short-sighted and unconscionable,” continued Hirohama.

It is unrealistic to rely on cuts alone to fill a budget deficit of this magnitude. The League of Women Voters has long supported revenues that are sufficient and flexible enough to meet changing needs for state and local government services and that ensure fair sharing of the tax burden. Recent polls have shown that a large majority of Californians agree, supporting a budget solution that includes a balance of cuts and new taxes.

A number of viable new revenue sources are on the table, and the League urged lawmakers to consider them. In addition to new taxes or increases in tax rates, possible solutions include repealing corporate tax breaks—included in the budget deals last September and February— that will cost some \$2.5 billion per year. Other alternatives that should be examined are fees that can be established by a simple majority vote in the legislature and reductions in administrative costs.

Looking ahead past these extremely difficult times, Hirohama called for serious structural reform of California’s dysfunctional fiscal system. Reforms include eliminating the two-thirds vote requirements that paralyze government decision-making and establishing a fairer, more efficient tax policy. “For the good of all Californians, and for our future,” she concluded, “we expect our leaders to take on this important task. Our state deserves no less.” Read the League’s letter to the Big 5 and the budget conference committee leaders at:

<http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/letters/2009-06-12budget.pdf>.

June 12, 2009 Press Release b LWVC  
*Sue Chaffee, State and National Director*

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Lunch and Learn  
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**Lee DeLaMare**

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**Laurie Carley**  
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Voter Service  
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Web Master  
**Stella Beratlis**

**League Office**  
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**209-524-1698**  
[www.lwvstanislaus.org](http://www.lwvstanislaus.org)

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Dear Members,

Membership Dues Renewal letters were sent out in June and I hope you all continue your membership with League. Your membership is greatly valued not only by League at all levels, but by the community. This year we have enclosed the membership survey with the membership renewal letter. Please fill out what interests you so that we can be sure to include you in those activities. Thank you for your participation.

Since we are on the subject of membership, I invite your suggestions on how our League can attract more members. We are at a time when the baby boomers are retiring and they are ready and willing to volunteer. LWV studies show that most of our new members are soon-to be or newly retired. What activities would grab your attention? What forms of communication would get you to take notice of an organization? Please send in your suggestions along with the membership surveys or email me at [ellen-e@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ellen-e@sbcglobal.net). Maintaining and increasing membership is the key for us in properly serving our communities. I look forward to hearing from you, and remember --Ask a friend to join!

As of this date, LWVSC still has two positions on the Board that are not filled. Local Action Director and Nominating Committee Chairperson are the open positions, and we would appreciate volunteers! If you have questions about these two positions and/or are willing to jump in, please contact Susan Novak or me.

This summer your Board is making preparations for 2009-10 activities. We will be keeping you informed through *The Voter* and our website, [www.lwvstanislaus.org](http://www.lwvstanislaus.org), of our news and events. I look forward to seeing you at Lunch and Learn this summer and remember:

"The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement." JOIN LWVSC. where leaders are actively engaged in effecting change at the local, state, and national levels."

Thank you again and have a great summer. Stay cool and I look forward to working with all of you!

*Ellen Meyer, President*

**DIVERSITY POLICY:**

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County in both its values and practices affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

# LUNCH AND LEARN

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, July 28. Our speaker will be Mike Dozier, the Director of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley. A graduate of Merced College and CSU Stanislaus, he has had extensive experience in city planning and community development in the Central Valley, and since January of this year is the Interim Director of the Office of Community and Economic Development with Fresno State. In this capacity, he has also assumed the role of Lead Executive for the Office of the Secretariat for the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley.

The California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley was set in motion by an executive order by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2005. According to their website, it is an unprecedented public-private partnership sharply focused on improving the region's economic vitality and the quality of life for the 3.9 million residents who call the San Joaquin Valley home. The Partnership is addressing the challenges of the region by implementing measurable actions on six major initiatives:

- Build a 21st century transportation mobility system
- Grow a diversified, globally competitive economy supported by a highly skilled workforce
- Create a model K-12 education system
- Develop high quality health and human services
- Attain clean air standards
- Implement an integrated framework for sustainable growth

In April, the Partnership submitted a "Draft" Regional Economic Recovery Work Plan to the California Business, Transportation & Housing Agency (BTH). The plan included 2,412 project submittals totaling over \$9 billion in funding requests. In a subsequent meeting the Partnership and the BTH issued a "Final" plan to meet the following criteria:

- Projects that can begin within 120 days (shovel ready)
- Projects that have support from multiple organization & agencies
- Projects that are regional or multi-jurisdictional (affect more than one city and/or county)
- Projects that cross over several categories such as Water, Energy, Transportation, and Infrastructure
- Public/private projects—projects that leverage additional dollars other than public. BTH wants to attract investor interest

The projects listed in the "Draft" Proposal in Stanislaus County include: in Modesto, Hwy 99/Pelandale Avenue Interchange Reconstruction, and Pelandale/SR 99 Interchange Design; in Ceres, Service Road/SR 99 Overcrossing; and in Stanislaus County, Kiernan Interchange.

On May 16, 2009, the Modesto Bee printed an article telling of "Stanislaus County's lukewarm support for valley-wide cooperation" as "several leaders from the county and its nine cities took a dim view of a request for money to continue the governor's Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley." Financial support from the state will run out in June of this year.

A few days later, in an interview with the Modesto Bee, Mr. Dozier outlined the work the Partnership was doing to increase the chances of the San Joaquin Valley landing "coveted stimulus money." Mr. Dozier is quoted as saying, "You can try to go it alone, but we'll have more clout if we go in together."

Sounds like an interesting lunch hour, doesn't it? Why not invite a friend and come along to Appetize to "Lunch and Learn?" See you there!

*Lee DeLaMare, unch and Learn Director*

## National Popular Vote Study Results

To the disappointment of our local League, the study results of all the Leagues submitted to LWVUS were interpreted as not achieving a consensus in favor of supporting the National Popular Vote Compact. Our League reached a consensus to support the Compact as well as to continue to support a Constitutional amendment abolishing the Electoral College. We included this information in the notes we submitted with the answers to the consensus questions. In other words, we did not see supporting the NPV compact as replacing the League's long range goal of abolishing the Electoral College. From reading the blogs it appears that quite a few members who studied the issue feel that the consensus questions were written in a way that made it difficult for some Leagues to reach consensus. The following is part of a memo to the membership from LWVUS President Mary Wilson on members' responses to the consensus questions:

"Because the process of coming to consensus is an amalgam of members' thoughts, ideas and ways of looking at the facts, members attending the consensus meeting must dig deeply into the issue. That is why we cannot typically pose a consensus question in the frame of 'Do you support the NPV compact approach to electing the President?' Consensus questions are designed to spark a discourse about the issue akin to the discussion we would expect policymakers to have when they deliberate the issue. Consensus questions are not black and white, yes or no questions. There is no right or wrong answer to a consensus question.

"Because the League over the years has adopted a number of positions about issues that may be affected by the consensus we reach on a new issue, we often must develop consensus questions that make our members think about our other positions and balance and weigh how they feel about a new issue against what they feel about an 'old' issue."

You can read the full text at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).

*Susan Novak 1st Vice President*

## Board Highlights

June 10, 2009

- Joan Goldsmith has agreed to review the 2008-09 accounting records
- The computer and software for the accounting system have been purchased for \$491.61 from the General Fund
- The National Popular Vote study was completed by our League. LWVUS Decided not to take a position at this time. Our League study group reached a consensus in support of the NPV compact.
- Membership renewal letters will go out in June.
- We are still in need of a Chairperson to serve on the Nominating Committee
- The Local Action Board Position needs to be filled.

*Marie Bairey, Secretary*

## Membership

Membership renewal letters were mailed in June. Thank you to those who have already sent in your dues for 2009/2010. If you have not yet renewed your membership, why not do it right now? This would get it off your mind for the next year, and save us the expense of sending a reminder. We value your membership, and look forward to another wonderful year for our League.

*Colleen Norby, Membership Director*

## I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO YOURS BY JOINING THE LEAGUE WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY!

Student Membership \$15 \_\_\_\_  
Individual Membership \$60 \_\_\_\_  
Household Membership \$90 \_\_\_\_

Please contact me with more information:

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (for directory): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO

LWVSC  
P.O. Box E  
Modesto, CA 9535

## Local Action Committee at Work

The Local Action Committee continues to observe and monitor issues that relate to LWV Stanislaus County's Local Program, especially land use, affordable housing and elections. Even though we do not have a director, there is a cadre of interested and dedicated members who meet regularly to maintain our League's presence and influence.

At Annual Meeting several members volunteered to be the eyes and ears of the Committee by going on-line to check on agenda items of local government agencies or watch meetings on TV. Their assistance is essential to cover the many jurisdictions within the county. Joan Goldsmith is following the Board of Supervisors. While doing so, she came across Clerk/Recorder Lee Lundrigan's report to the Board on the May election.

With tight budgets, questions of election costs and ways to reduce them were discussed. All-mail elections were among options. Because this piqued our interest, we are investigating how League positions address this issue. We appreciate all who agreed to give us a hand. Others who would like to be part of this effort, contact President Ellen.

Modesto's Urban Growth Review was discussed at the June 8 Committee meeting in light of potential Measure M ballot measures on the November ballot. The Economic Development Committee is proposing future sewer extensions and annexations of land in north Modesto that could be made available for business and jobs development. City Council will act on these recommendations. Check the maps and descriptors on the City of Modesto Planning Commission website. Go to [www.ci.modesto.ca.us/UrbanGrowth](http://www.ci.modesto.ca.us/UrbanGrowth) for the June 1 agenda. If the Council approves the measures, we welcome member input regarding support or opposition to the proposals.

*Marie Bairey*

## 2009 Sustaining Member Recipient: Debbie Kleinfelder

Debbie Kleinfelder is the 2008-2009 LWV Stanislaus County Sustaining Member Award honoree. In her "other, pre-League life," Debbie was an accountant and budget director for Modesto City Schools. Debbie then became a stay-at-home mom and has contributed her skills and talents as a volunteer for League, Salida Library and her children's school.

Debbie joined League and immediately became an active member. She served on the Board as Finance Drive Director from 2002-2006. She and her committee updated and streamlined the Finance Drive procedures. In 2005, Debbie hosted a lovely backyard Spring Membership Event with Elizabeth Hill, California's Legislative Analyst, as speaker. Debbie can always be counted on to give a hand with Voter Service activities – registering voters and serving as question sorter at candidate forums. For the last 5 years, Debbie has chaired or served on the League's budget committee. Her knowledge of budgets and accounting has contributed to League's ability to plan its financial future.

We are pleased to recognize Debbie Kleinfelder for her ongoing participation and contributions to LWV Stanislaus County. Thank you, Debbie.

*2008-2009 Board of Directors*



*"There are those, I know, who will say that the liberation of humanity, the freedom of man and mind, is nothing but a dream. They are right. It is the American dream."*

*. Archibald MacLeish*

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan 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.

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**  
(Check Website for Updates)

**Wednesday, July 8**

**6:00 p.m. Board Meeting**  
League office  
720 13th Street, Modesto

**Thursday, July 16**

**5:00 p.m. Valley Futures Forum**  
201 Needham Street, Modesto  
Speakers: Jay Corey and Stephen Lawton  
“Creating a Vibrant Future: ... Planning in an Era of Scarcity”  
(\$10 charge)

**Tuesday, July 28**

**12::00 Noon Lunch and Learn**  
Speaker: Mike Dozier, Director  
The California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley  
Appetiz Restaurant, Roseburg Square, Modesto  
\$11.00. For special dietary needs call one day ahead

**Please Note:**

**Local Action Committee Meeting**  
Time and Date To Be Announced. Check Your E-mail