



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

October 2010

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 59 NO. 20

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, October 5

7:00 p.m.
Turlock City Council Forum
156 S. Broadway
Turlock

Friday, October 8

Superior Court Judge Forum :6:30 p.m.
YCCD Forum 7:30 p.m.
MJC E. Campus, Forum 110
Modesto

Wednesday, October 13

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

Thursday, October 14

6:00 p.p.m.
Modesto City Council Forum
District 5
2908 Coffee Road
Modesto

Thursday, October 14

7:00 p.m.
Pros and Cons of Ballot Propositions
MJC E. Campus, Recital Hall
Music 108
Modesto

Friday, October 15

1:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Civic Engagement Project
Symposium on
Employment in the Valley
MJC E. Campus, Forum 110
Modesto

Calendar Continues on page 6

www.lwvstanislaus.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Educate...advocate...empower—that's what members of the League do. This is the month to roll up your sleeves and get busy connecting with voters.

Educate yourself, your family and your friends about the myriad of local and State ballot propositions.

Advocate for the issues supported by League after careful study. Advocate against those that work against our principles.

Empower citizens to make informed decisions.

With more than 90 years of experience and 850 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

Be a part of this grassroots effort. This newsletter is filled with links to ways you can educate, advocate and empower. Just do it!

Susan Novak, President

FINANCE DRIVE UNDERWAY

The annual Finance Drive is underway. I hope you will read your letter and give careful consideration to including the League in your giving this year. Our services are heavily called upon and more and more of the costs fall on the League as local governments are too financially strapped to assist with costs such as filming forums for re-broadcast. Your donations are well spent and spent locally. Donations to the Education Fund are tax deductible. Please give as generously as you can, but even small amounts add up. A big thanks to Margie Lipsky, Lynn Kelso, and Susan Novak for help with the mailing and to Michele McNeil for printing the insert.

Mary Giventer, Finance Drive Director

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209-524-1698

www.lwgstanislaus.org

STATE AND NATIONAL

LWVC President Defends Redistricting Reform

The following letter to the editor appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on September 7, 2010.

The [League of Women Voters](#) rejects the false choice presented by Daniel Lowenstein in Sunday Insight ("Prevent 'Jim Crow' redistricting by returning control to the legislature"). We strongly oppose Proposition 27 as a politician-funded attempt to kill real redistricting reform.

The two redistricting measures on the November ballot are trying to change the historic redistricting reform approved just two years ago. Prop. 27 would eliminate the independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. It would return us to the days of back-room deals, safe seats and no accountability to voters.

Prop. 20 would extend the commission's authority to draw district lines for congressional seats. The League supports the concept, but opposes Prop. 20 as premature. The new process should be fully implemented before the commission's responsibilities are expanded so dramatically. Prop. 20 also shortens the time the commission has to do its work by a month, and it narrows the way communities of interest are defined, which could make it harder for the commission to respect [California's](#) diverse neighborhoods.

Let's give the redistricting reform approved by the voters two years ago a chance to work. We urge Californians to vote no on Prop. 27 and no on Prop. 20.

Janis Hirohama, President California League of Women Voters, Sacramento

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.

Positions on November Ballot Measures

The LWVC has taken stands on seven of the ten measures on the November ballot, is neutral on two, and has no position on one.

- **Oppose** Proposition 20, Redistricting of Congressional Districts
- **Oppose** Proposition 23, Suspends Clean Energy and Air Pollution Standards
- **Support** Proposition 24, Tax Fairness Act
- **Support** Proposition 25, Simple Majority Vote for Budget
- **Oppose** Proposition 26, Polluter Protection Act
- **Strongly oppose** Proposition 27, Eliminates State Commission on Redistricting
- **Neutral** on Proposition 21, \$18 Vehicle License Fee for State Parks and Wildlife Programs
- **Neutral** on Proposition 22, State Government Prohibited from Taking Local Funds
- **No applicable League position** on Proposition 19, Legalize and Regulate Marijuana

The [League Recommends PDF flyer](#), and the [LWVC Web site](#) have more information about our positions. Pros & Cons are now on the LWVC Web site.

Vote With The League Advocacy Table

Ann Krabach will be staffing a “Vote with the League” table at the Modesto Farmers’ Market on Thursday, October 14th from 8 a.m. until noon. Join Ann in discussing our LWVC positions on the State ballot propositions, especially our opposition to Props 23 (suspends Clean Energy and Air Pollution Standards) and Prop 27 (eliminates State Commission on Redistricting). On Thursday mornings the Market is frequented by two key voting groups: retirees and downtown workers. Enjoy a freshly made fruit crepe or baked goods from one of the terrific food booths, grab a cup of coffee, and enjoy the ambiance while discussing issues we care about. If you can help, send an e-mail to vp2@lwwstanislaus.org or leave a message at 524-1698.

The League Recommends Positions on Local Measures

At its September 8 meeting, the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County Board approved the following recommendations from the study committee for three Modesto measures on the November ballot.

Measure J: Charter amendment to change the date of the run-off election for mayor and delete run-off elections for council members. In principle, League advocates that mayoral elections require a majority vote achieved by Instant Runoff Vote (IRV) rather than a second election. Currently, implementation of IRV is extremely expensive and complex. Measure J balances the need for the city-wide office of the mayor to require 50% plus 1 vote while the recently implemented district council members are elected by plurality. Not requiring a run-off election for district council members would encourage greater voter and candidate participation. **Vote YES on Measure J.**

Measure K: Charter amendment to clarify language regarding run-off election vote-counting procedures. The changes are intended to avoid confusions about which votes to count. League has no studied position from which to make a recommendation on Measure K. **Neutral.**

Measure L: Advisory vote to extend sewers to the unincorporated Parklawn neighborhood, one of several unincorporated county pockets that lack infrastructure and services that are standard in most cities. Parklawn residents requested this advisory vote as the necessary first step to improve their standard of living. Ordinarily these measures are placed on the ballot if there is a financing plan in place, but this is seen as a public health issue needing attention. The proponents are working with the county to apply for grants. The League supports measures to increase the supply of safe and affordable housing. We support Measure L so long as funding options are developed. **Vote YES on Measure L.**

Marie Bairev, Local Action Director

Voter Service

LWVSC conducted election forums with candidates in Oakdale and Riverbank in September. On October 5 the League will be in Turlock to conduct a forum for the City Council race.

A Forum with candidates for the Yosemite Community College District and one for Superior Court judge election runoff, jointly sponsored with the Modesto Junior College Civic Engagement Project will be held at MJC on October 8 at MJC, Forum 110.

Pros and Cons of Ballot Propositions Presented

The LWVSC with Modesto Junior College Civic Engagement Project will present the Pros and Cons of the propositions on the ballot, October 14, MJC East, Campus Recital Hall, Music 108.

League to assist City Council

The League will assist the Modesto City Council with public reviews of candidates for appointment to fill the vacant City Council seat. These hearings will take place on October 14 and October 21 with President Susan Novak as moderator.

Candidate Forum

Thursday, October 14, 2010 at 6:00 p.m., Sylvan Elementary School, 2908 Coffee Road, Modesto,

Candidate Forum (if necessary)

Thursday, October 21, 2010 at 6:00 p.m., Sylvan Elementary School, 2908 Coffee Road, Modesto,

We need help with these events. If you are able to assist at one or more please contact me at voterservice@lwvstanislaus.org.

Ellen Dunbar, Voter Service Director

MJC Symposium to Address Unemployment

MJC's Civic Engagement Project (CEP), a joint venture between the Yosemite Community College District, Associated Students of MJC (ASMJC) and LWVSC, is hosting a symposium on Valley employment. An expert panel will provide background on our high unemployment rate and offer business and community leaders ideas for improving it. This free symposium will take place on Friday, October 15 from 1 to 5 p.m. in Forum Room 110, MJC East Campus.

California Budget Challenge

On October 27 Turlock Branch AAUW is co-sponsoring with LWVSC the California Budget Challenge. Next 10, an independent, non-partisan and non-profit organization that educates, engages and empowers Californians to improve the state's future, will engage participants in a discussion about the budget choices. Participants will be asked questions and then asked to vote their choice, using instant response clickers. For instance, do you want more or fewer \$\$ for education, etc.? Participants will also make choices on revenue sources. The totals are instantly recorded. The audience will be able to compare the budget that our roomful of participants voted on to the current budget and deficit looking out five years. This should be a very fun and informative program.

See calendar for details.

Board Highlights

September 8, 2010

- A "Vote with the League" table will be staffed by Ann Krabach and League members on Thursday October 14th at the Modesto Farmers Market. This will be an advocacy table, not voter registration.
- The Board approved withdrawing up to \$600, if necessary, from LWVEF money to cover the costs of having our forums videotaped and aired on public access channels. They can then be streamed for free from our Smart Voter County page.
- The Board acted upon the recommendation of Marie Bairey (local action) and members who attended the August local ballot measures review and approved LWVSC support of Modesto Measure J and Measure L. We are remaining neutral on Measure K.
- The by-laws committee is moving forward and will meet again on November 1st in the home of Marie Bairey.
- Treasurer Seena Rhine discussed Ed Fund donations as part of the Finance Drive. We can apply them to 50% of our PMP due LWVUS and to 25% of our PMP due LWVC. Donations to LWVEF are tax deductible.

Laurie Carley, Secretary

Lunch and Learn

October Lunch and Learn will feature Superior Court Judge, Sue Siefkin speaking to League on " Women's Role In the Court." She will join us on October 26th at 11:45 am at Appetiz Restaurant in the Roseburg Square. Lunch is \$11.00, no reservations required. So bring a friend and join the discussion.

August 31 Lunch and Learn

Steve Ashman, Executive Director of CASA

CASA - Court Appointed Special Advocates - screens volunteers to represent neglected and abused foster children in the court system. Currently there are 700 children in foster care in Stanislaus County; 500 are on a waiting list for a CASA volunteer. One volunteer, who formerly worked in a prison, observed that all those she had worked with had been in foster care at one time or another.

Volunteer advocates establish a relationship with their client/child. The commitment is for at least one year and often longer. Working with social workers and the justice system, advocates make recommendations in court regarding placement, educational, medical and developmental concerns that are in the best interests of each child. Often advocates continue their relationship when the children reach 18 and are no longer "in the system" to provide support and advice. The agency has a \$100,000 budget with 2½ paid staff. Less than half the funding comes from the court system; the rest is raised in the community or through grants.

Marie Bairey

*Save the Date!
Holiday Fling
Monday, December 6, 2010
6:30 p.m.
Speakers: Lynn Dickerson
CEO, Gallo Center for the Arts*

Update on CA Universal Healthcare Act

The League has long supported legislation to establish single payer universal health care coverage in California. We hoped to see the single payer bill, SB 810 (Leno), passed by the legislature and sent to the Governor again this year.

Unfortunately, even with our contacts to every Assembly member in the state, Assembly Speaker Perez declined to even bring SB 810 up for a vote by the last day of the Legislative Session. This bill will be reintroduced by Senator Leno in 2011, and we will continue our efforts to build grassroots support to pass SB 810 and send it to the governor who will sign the bill. We will keep you posted on what you can do to help.

Thanks to everyone who took action from our recent Action Alert e-mail regarding SB 810. To take action on future advocacy issues [make sure you are signed up to receive Action Alerts](#). You can make a difference.

Adapted from *LWVC News*, September 8, 2010

Welcome Our Newest Members

John Miles and Priscilla Peters
Hannah Parris

We look forward to seeing you at our events

I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO YOURS BY JOINING THE LEAGUE OF 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: _____

Please deliver my Voter by: E-mail ___ US mail ___

MAIL TO

LWVSC
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352.

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.

**League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
LWV Modesto
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (Continued from page 1)

(Check Website for Updates. Times on Voter Service Events Could Change.)

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|------------------------------|--|
| Monday, October 18 | Last day to register in November 2 General Election |
| Thursday, October 21 | 6:00 p.m. Modesto City Council District 5 Forum (if necessary)
Sylvan Elementary School, 2908 Coffee Road, Modesto |
| Tuesday, October 26 | 12:00 Noon, Appetez Restaurant
Roseburg Square, Modesto
Speaker: Sue Siefkin, Superior Court Judge, on
"Women's Role in the Court"
\$11. Call one day ahead for special dietary needs |
| Wednesday, October 27 | 7:00 p.m. The California Budget Challenge (see page 5)
Mary Stuart Rogers Gateway Center, Room 130
California State University, Stanislaus, Turlock |
| Tuesday, November 2 | 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. General Election |