



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

May-June 2011

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 59 NO. 24

State and National

NATIONAL:

BUDGET: With 116 other organizations the LWVUS formed a coalition of a diverse group of Americans to address the current national budget negotiations. In a letter to the Senate, the coalition presented the Senate with a list of guiding principles to develop the national budget. These principles address some current proposals that the coalition asserts are harmful and will do little to improve our current economic situation.

These principles include rejection of global federal spending caps or entitlement caps and constitutional balanced budget amendments. They advocate reliance on revenue increases at least as much as on spending cuts, protection of low and moderate income individuals from bearing the major burden of deficit reduction, and protection of investments vital to our nation's economic advancement.

HR 672: The LWVUS strongly opposes HR 672 that would terminate the Election Assistance Commission. According to the League, this bill relates to how important it is to Members of Congress "that the United States is able to carry out our elections with integrity."

The EAC was established to help implement the Help America Vote Act, which was passed in response to the 2000 Presidential election. Some of the duties of the EAC are certification and testing of voting systems, periodic studies of election administration issues, and developing and maintaining a national mail voter registration form. The League asserts that the work of the commission is far from complete and its value "far outweighs any monetary costs."

STATE:

BUDGET: This month, the LWC also encouraged the Legislature to create a "realistic, balanced approach" to the budget by both increasing revenues and cutting spending. The LWC supports extension of the current taxes that are due to expire soon. "California cannot return to a thriving economy and a healthy community without a stable and realistic budget," stated Janis Hirohama, LWVC President.

REDISTRICTING: The first round of hearings have ended. The first draft will be available for public input in June, and the commission will complete its work by September 15

Ann Krabach, State and National Director



We propose to get into the great parties and to work from the inside. We do not fear issues, and we do not fear the future. We'll not vote as women, but as American citizens, and we are unafraid,

Carrie Chapman Catt, 1919

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. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With 91 years of experience and over 800 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

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President's Message

Dear Members,

We begin our new League year with renewed enthusiasm thanks to a fun and informative Annual Meeting celebrating 100 years of California women having the right to vote. We welcome some new Board members and our new LWVC President, Jenny Waggoner from LWV San Francisco where she served as President. Jenny has been serving on the state Board as our communications director and is a familiar face to those of us who participated in the free League webinar series she initiated.

We welcome our new Voter Service Director, Sarah Jamieson, who will be working with Marsha Waggoner and a committee to put together a schedule of forums for the November local elections. Serving on the Voter Service committee is a good way to learn about all the behind the scenes work that goes into providing fair and impartial candidate forums. Contact voterservice@lwvstanislaus.org if interested. The time commitment can be as much or as little as you want it to be.

We welcome Patty Beyer as our new *Voter* editor. Patty will continue our effort to make our *Voter* more of an e-newsletter than a print document. You can help by giving Marie Bairey your e-mail address and permission to send you the *Voter* electronically. You can also read it online at our website www.lwvstanislaus.org.

Stella Beratlis, Vice President, tapped into member interest in education and gathered enough volunteers for our League to participate in the LWVUS study on the role of the federal government in education. Thanks to all those League members willing to give time this summer to studying such an important issue. It's not too late to join the group!

Ann Krabach, State & National Action Director, will be staffing a "Vote with the League" advocacy table again at the Modesto Farmers' Market. The first will be on June 2nd.

Margie Lipsky and Joan Goldsmith will be this year's Lunch & Learn program directors. They have June and July scheduled already (see pg. 3) and welcome your ideas for future speakers.

Have a wonderful summer, treat yourself to a Lunch & Learn program, and renew your membership!

Susan

A Tribute to Myrtle

Myrtle Osner, long time LWVSC member, was recently awarded an Outstanding Senior of Stanislaus County 2011 honor, by the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors. She was selected by Dick Monteith, Supervisor of her District #4, for her long history of outstanding service. In particular, her work with the LWV in voter education and action on issues, were highlighted. In her acceptance speech, Myrtle mentioned her frequent appearances in the board chambers to share the League's position on issues.

In Memory

It is with great sorrow that we say goodbye to two longterm members, Hazel Gotshall, and Effie Chilton. Hazel was a dedicated member and loyal supporter of our League. Although no longer a member, Effie was President of our League from 1962 to 1963, They will be greatly missed.

Lunch and Learn

March 28th Lunch and Learn

Dr. Larry Giventer

Ranked Choice Voting Explained

League member and retired CSUS professor Larry Giventer spoke at the March Lunch and Learn about Ranked Choice Voting (also known as IRV and Instant Run-off) and answered questions about current issues in California.

LWVC supports Ranked Choice Voting as a way to assure a majority vote without an additional run-off election. The system came into the news recently after elections in Oakland and San Francisco where it impacted the results.

With IRV, voters vote for more than one candidate, listing their first, second and third choices (or more depending on the election rules). If no candidate receives a majority, the last place candidate is eliminated and his second choice votes are counted. Again, if no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the next least votes is eliminated, and his next choice votes are counted. The process continues until a candidate receives 50% plus 1. As occurred in Oakland and San Francisco, the candidate with the most first choice votes may not win.

Implementation of IRV requires significant computer start-up costs and extensive voter education. It took Alameda County 2 years to use the IRV system. One argument used in favor of the system is that it could be less polarizing as candidates must appeal to a broad base in order to attract not only their supporters (first choice votes), but second and third choice votes as well.

April 26th Lunch and Learn

**Modesto Mayor Jim Ridenour and City Manager Greg Nyhoff
Modesto's City Plan**

At the April Lunch and Learn, Modesto Mayor Jim Ridenour, City Manager Greg Nyhoff and Deputy City Manager Dee Williams-Ridley presented the key elements of its three-year Strategic Plan. The details of the Plan have been presented at several community forums.

The premise of the Plan is that government is a service-driven organization that asks where the community wants its money and resources spent and how government can be accountable and transparent. The Strategic Plan includes six commitments:

- Build and promote neighborhood partnerships
- Provide a safe, inviting community
- Provide innovative and accountable government with adaptive leadership and responsive public service
- Foster a vibrant economic environment for business
- Champion education partnerships
- Promote Modesto

All City business will be tied to the Strategic Plan from budget to meeting agendas to service priorities. The Plan includes nine principles that reflect the standards for its commitment: EM-BRACE IT - Exceptional service, Measurable success, Build trust, Results oriented, Accountability, Community outreach, Excite pride, Innovation and Teamwork.

All three officials reiterated the need for citizens to be involved with the City by giving input on municipal issues and/or by becoming a volunteer at any of the city-wide projects or those that benefit neighborhoods. For more information about the Strategic Plan, visit <http://embraceit.modestogov.com>.

Marie Bairey

Upcoming Lunch and Learns

The **June 28th** Lunch and Learn will feature Terry Withrow, Stanislaus County Board of Supervisor's newest member. His District covers the Salida area. He supports opening new discussions on the Salida Community plan in view of the potential lost revenue with no housing construction taking place. League has a keen interest in the land use issues in the Salida area.

The **July 26th** Lunch and Learn speaker will be Fred Cavanagh, City of Modesto Transit Manager. He coordinates public transportation including the City bus system, Dial-A-Ride, the Amtrak Station as well as taxicabs. Hope to see you there!

Membership Renewal

It is dues renewal time. Letters will be going out in the mail mid June with a due date of **July 31st**. Thank you to everyone who renewed at the Annual Meeting on May 21st. You helped us save postage and stationary by renewing early. Please make sure that you include your up-to-date telephone number and email address when renewing. Thank you!

Colleen Norby, Membership Committee

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
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352

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

- Wednesday, June 15** **5:30 p.m. - Joint Board Meeting (incoming and outgoing Board members,) at home of Laurie Carley, 1313 Broughton Place, Modesto**
- Tuesday, June 28** **12:00 Noon - Lunch and Learn**
Appetiz Restaurant, Roseburg Square, Modesto
Speaker: Terry Withrow, Stanislaus County Supervisor
Topic: Revisiting the Salida Community Plan
\$11. Call one day ahead for special dietary needs
- Wednesday, July 13** **6:00 p.m. - League Office**
720 13th Street. Modesto
- Tuesday, July 26** **12:00 Noon - Lunch and Learn**
Appetiz Restaurant, Roseburg Square, Modesto
Speaker: Fred Cavanagh, City of Modesto Transit Manager
Topic: Modesto's Public Transportation System