

The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MODESTO



August 2003

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LWV: Study, Position, ACTION!

Members and the public sometimes ask how League determines when to take action on a particular issue. As you know, League only makes advocacy statements after a study has been conducted and a position has been adopted by the membership. A case in point is the (California) Community College System Position that was adopted by the delegates to the LWVC 2003 Convention.

It all started with a grassroots effort at the 2001 Convention where delegates noted the LWVC Education position includes only K-12 while there were many concerns about governance and funding for community colleges. Without a position, the League was unable to take action regarding community colleges. Convention delegates approved the study. Recall that we and other local Leagues participated in the study in the fall of 2002.

We interviewed local community college constituencies and met in small groups to respond to consensus questions prepared by the LWVC Study Committee. The results were
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Calendar of Events

Wednesday August 13	BOARD MEETING 6:00 p.m. LWV Office, members welcome
Friday August 15	LOCAL ACTION COMMITTEE 12:00 Eddie Cash-Dudley's office 1608 F Street, Modesto
Tuesday August 26	LUNCH AND LEARN 12:00 Appetize Topic: Public Libraries in 2003 Speaker: County Librarian Vanessa Czopek
Wednesday September 10	BOARD MEETING 6:00 p.m. LWV Office, members welcome
Saturday September 20	League of Women Voters of California Regional Training Workshop in Fresno
Sept. 25, 29, 30 and October 1	CANDIDATE FORUMS

President's Message

Help American Voter Act of 2002

Have you heard of HAVA? Help American Voter Act of 2002?

This is an important piece of federal legislation that will bring significant changes to the voting process.

After the 2000 election exposed the many problems facing the election system, Congress passed HAVA in 2002. Throughout the debate, LWVUS worked to ensure that key reforms were considered. In the end, HAVA authorized funds for states to improve elections and set basic federal standards to ensure that every citizen has an opportunity to vote and to have that vote counted.

The legislation calls for:

- ✓ Replacing punch card voting systems
- ✓ Creating a statewide registration database
- ✓ New identification requirements for new voters
- ✓ Ensuring disabled voters have access to secret ballot
- ✓ System to notify provisional ballot voters if they were counted
- ✓ Complaint procedure
- ✓ One-stop shop for military and overseas voters
- ✓ Training for poll workers
- ✓ Educating voters about their rights
- ✓ Ensuring voters can check their ballot and change any errors

In California, under the auspices of the California Secretary of State, the State Plan Advisory Committee, which included a League representative, held public hearings and drafted a plan. On June 17th "My Vote Counts: The California Plan for Voting in the 21st Century. HAVA California Preliminary State Plan" was posted on the Secretary of State's web site for public inspection and comment. Check The National Voter (May/June, 2003), LWVC web site (lwvc@lwvc.org) or the California Secretary of State's web site for details.

LWV of MODESTO

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Yes!

I want to add my voice to yours by joining the
League of Women Voters of Modesto.

- ☐ Student membership \$15
- ☐ Individual Membership \$50
- ☐ Household Membership \$75
- ☐ Please contact me with more information

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (for the directory) _____ E-mail _____

Mail to: P.O. Box E, Modesto, CA 95352

Diversity policy: League of Women Voters of Modesto 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.

New League Member Edits Voter

Our current editor of *The Voter*, Susan Cassidy, has been with the League just since 2002. Past experience has shown her that the best way to learn about a group or organization is to jump in and take some responsibility – thank you, Susan, for the many hours of volunteer work that go into putting our monthly newsletter into production! When she is not busy working on our latest issue, Susan might be found volunteering in her children's schools, or working at the Stanislaus County Library in Modesto, where she is a part time children's librarian. In fact, she first heard about the League from two friends at the library who are also active League members: Linda Walden and Susan Novak. In her 'spare' time Susan might be found out walking their family dog or perhaps taking a yoga class. Reading is her favorite activity – though she mostly reads children's books (both for her job and because she loves them), she also finds time for adult mysteries and classics. Her favorite author is William Faulkner. Her family includes her husband, Alan, a Deputy District Attorney for Stanislaus County, who is also a League member, son, Brendan, who is entering Modesto High School this year and daughter, Nora, who will be entering La Loma Jr. High. One of their favorite family activities is attending plays – they especially enjoy the plays of the Prospect Theater Project. (The Prospect Theater Project is a 70-seat theater and gallery space in downtown Modesto which encourages innovative alternatives to the community's performing arts. Web site: www.prospecttheaterproject.org/about_ptp.htm)

--Patty Lundy, Membership

BUDGET ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The League of Women Voters of California is supporting an initiative designed to alleviate the legislative gridlock that has increasingly bogged down the state budget process. The Act would require a 55% vote of the State Senate and Assembly to adopt a state budget. The League has long held positions calling for majority vote on budget and finance issues. The Act also includes provisions for accountability:

⇒ Withholds salary and expenses from the Governor and legislators if the budget is not passed and signed by the Constitutional deadline,

⇒ Requires the legislature to stay in session and not act on other legislation until the budget is adopted, and

⇒ Provides for a “rainy day” reserve fund of 5% to be established in good years to cushion the state from severe cuts in a bad economy.

A petition in support of this Act is now available. Those interested in signing or circulating it should contact Marie Bairey.

(Excerpted from LWVC web site)

CANDIDATE FORUMS

The League of Women Voters will host up to five candidate forums this fall in order to accommodate the number of local offices and anticipated candidates.

Besides Modesto mayor and Modesto City Schools Board of Education, three members of the Modesto City Council are up for re-election. Two of the incumbents have announced their intention not to seek re-election. According to Jean Zahr, Modesto City Clerk, there could be as many as thirty candidates vying for Council seats in November.

It is customary for the League to hold its candidate forums before the first absentee ballot is mailed. This year four of the five will take place before Oct. 6, the beginning of absentee balloting. The dates are: September 25th, 29th, 30th and October 1st. If a fifth forum is needed, it will be held on Oct. 9th.

All forums will begin at 7:00 P.M. and be televised live on the local access cable TV channel. The public is invited to attend in person at Tenth Street Place or call in questions.

A final determination of dates, times and race assignments will be made after August 8th, the close of the regular filing period or August 13th, the close of the extended filing period.

Members interested in helping with Candidate Forum Nights should call the League office, 524-1698 and leave their name and telephone number.

--Linda Walden



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► Finance Drive letters are being prepared to mail in early September.

►
The Smart Voter Committee is meeting to finalize plans for the election information web site.

► The Board endorsed establishing a subcommittee to explore the possibility of presenting a community forum on civil liberties and the Partiot Act.

—Mildred Kinser, secretary

Afterthought: When I read in the Modesto Bee July 8 that the City was proposing water meters in some areas, it reminded me of a report to the LWVC Board from the Natural Resources Director-elect regarding water issues in Southern California.

“...It seems clear that we will have to re-examine the assumption that people can live in Southern California and pretend that it is not a desert. Rather, we will have to face the fact that water, among other resources may ultimately be a limit to growth in our region... It is hoped that we will deal with this, and other resource issues, with the insight that we ought to accept the limitations of the environment in which we live and adjust our life patterns accordingly.”

Could this message apply to Northern California as well???

--Marie Bairey

"Public Libraries in 2003"

County Librarian Vanessa Czopek
at the August Lunch and Learn

Tuesday, August 26

12:00 at Appetez

\$11.00 for Chef's entree and beverage

Special dietary needs? Please call restaurant one day in advance.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM POSITION

Adopted by Delegates to LWVC Convention 2003

Vertical positions indicated by italics

POSITION IN BRIEF

Support a statewide community college system with sufficient resources to fulfill its overall goal: to offer all Californians access to a quality higher education.

Resources should be stable, accommodate all enrolling students, be fairly distributed among the college districts, and provide opportunities for long-range planning.

Governance should allow greater authority within the system itself with local districts making key decisions about mission priorities to meet community needs.

POSITIONS

Mission

1. Support retention of all five missions of the Community Colleges:
 - a. to prepare students to transfer to four-year colleges
 - b. to provide workplace skills, career development and certification in a wide range of occupations
 - c. to offer opportunities for life long learning
 - d. to engage in programs fostering community economic development
 - e. to provide instruction in basic academic skills to those who lack them.

- b. increase local decision making by local college communities while encouraging an effective and equitable balance of responsibility and authority, in areas such as funding, between local and state entities in responding to local needs.
 - c. promote the role of the state structure as one of support for the local colleges as they work to serve the needs of their students and their communities.

Access

2. *Support using the goal of providing access to higher education to all who may benefit as a prime criterion for evaluating the community college system.*

Finance

4. Support measures to finance the non-capital costs of the community college system that provide:
 - a. stable funding
 - b. opportunities for long-range planning
 - c. funding sufficient to accommodate all students
 - d. funding equity among the different districts within the community college system, with accommodations for different circumstances such as special expensive programs, cost of living, urban/rural differentials and community needs.

Governance

3. Support measures that:
 - a. simplify the governance of the community colleges to provide greater authority for the internal decision-making structure of the system to manage its own affairs

Priority Setting

5. *Support local determination of mission priorities for the district, within system-wide definitions of missions, guidelines and accountability standards.*



HELP WANTED

League is looking for someone with computer/mail merger skills to prepare mailings during election season. Contact Marie (523-0663) if you can help.

Election Season is Here



Volunteer Opportunities for League Members:

- ◆ Assist with candidate forums
- ◆ Follow up phone calls for Smart Voter
- ◆ Sign up with Elections to be a poll worker; donated stipends will help fund Smart Voter

Modesto VOTER Wins Honorable Mention



The League of Women Voters of California awarded the 2002-2003 Modesto *Voter* an Honorable Mention in the statewide competition for most outstanding local *Voter*. Congratulations to Editor Linda Walden and President Marie Bairey!

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analyzed, and a report was presented to the 2003 Convention with recommendations for a LWVC Position. With some minor tweaking recommended by the delegates, the Community College System Position was adopted. With the position in hand, LWVC is prepared to advocate on issues related to community colleges in California. (See Position Statement on page 6.) Two elements of that position are “vertical,” meaning local Leagues can take action based on those statements. Other elements require LWVC approval before a local League can take independent action.

Each year members review the local, state and national League program to determine that positions are still timely and appropriate. Occasionally updates or minor modifications are recommended as with three of our local positions last May. (Refer to 2002-2003 Annual Report.) Our program provides the basis for our local action. Based on our local positions, we made statements on land use and affordable housing during the City’s Growth Policy Review process this summer.

The Local Action Committee meets on the 3rd Friday of each month to keep abreast of local issues. Recruits for this important facet of the League are always welcome.

--Marie Bairey