



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF PALOS VERDES PENINSULA**

Summer 2011

Voter

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CALENDAR

Sept 10, Sat	11:00- 1 pm	Fall Kick-Off meeting, DoubleTree Hotel Torrance, Salon A, 21333 Hawthorne Blvd. Torrance (see page 3)
Sept 14, Wed	12 noon	Board Meeting, Joan Hogan's home
Sept 24, Sat	10 - 11:30 am	Education Meeting, The Role of the Federal Government in Education, Los Verdes Golf Club
Oct 12, Wed	12 noon	Board Meeting, Joan Hogan's home
Oct 12, Wed	7 - 9 pm	RPV Candidate Forum, Hesse Park
Oct 22, Sat	TBA	County League Day, State & County Redistricting Update, Rio Hondo Country Club

 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE **NOW DUE - \$65** - THE SAME AS LAST YEAR

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

The debacle in Washington makes us realize how important it is for us to have an electorate that understands the issues at stake on election day. The pros and cons that Leagues provide on measures and the opportunities to hear candidates speak, help voters make choices based on information and their own assessment of that information. This is key to the democratic process. We should all be proud of the League's record and the work of the PVP LWV in voter education and service.

But we can't rest on our laurels. The November election is around the corner. Local issues and local candidates are very important with direct impact on residents' lives. You can check out the information on local candidates and issues on the LWVC election website <www.smartvoter.org>.

The LWVUS Education study is another activity coming up this fall. The PVP League's study committee is already underway, with Pat Colby as the chair. If you are interested in participating, please contact Pat or Joan Hogan. Pat is planning a meeting focused on education for Saturday, September 24. It will be a luncheon meeting with a panel of speakers at Los Verdes Country Club in RPV.

The PVP League is also hosting a fall kick-off meeting on Saturday, September 10, that will include the Torrance and Beach Cities Leagues. The Registrar/Recorder's office will present information on selecting a new voting system for Los Angeles County – an effort that is currently in progress. Details of the time and location of this meeting are on next page.

The LA County League will hold a County League day on October 22. We'll look at state and county redistricting. The meeting will be at the Rio Hondo Country Club in Downey. Watch for a flyer on this meeting.

As you see, the board is planning a busy year ahead. We will have more opportunities to meet together to discuss issues or hear speakers. Make a commitment to yourself to participate in all – or at least some - of the League meetings this year. Learn new information and enjoy interesting discussions with the PVP League.

Nancy

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:

New email address for ANN SHAW is anndshaw@gmail.com
Welcome New Members IRENE TYSON, PVE, irenesbt2@gmail.com
and DEBORAH McDONALD, RH, debby5525@gmail.com

**LWV FALL
KICK-OFF
MEETING!!**

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 10, 11 am to 1 pm
DoubleTree Hotel Torrance/South Bay, Salon A
21333 Hawthorne Blvd., Torrance, CA 90503**

**SPEAKER: KENNETH BENNETT
from LA County Registrar/Recorder's Office**

**CHOOSING A NEW VOTING SYSTEM FOR LA COUNTY
what we need, options, & selection process**

**LUNCH MEETING Hosted by PVP LWV
\$30 per person, choose chicken or vegetarian,
send reservation & checks by Sept 2 to
LWV PVP, PO Box 2933, PVP 90274**

Name _____ Lunch selection _____

Specific allergens _____

Enclosed is check for \$ _____ for _____ person(s)

COUNTY LEAGUE DAY: “POPOVERS IN PASADENA” : OVERVIEW

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.

The meeting began with announcements and an overview of the “hot off the presses” redistricting work 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.

Announcements included:

- Cancellation of the planned September 25 ballot measure meeting because there are no ballot measures!
- Formation of a committee to discuss whether the voting position should include a vote-by-mail statement. Our position is based on a voting system that is Secure, Accurate, Recountable, Accessible and Transparent (SARAT). Should we add vote-by-mail? See Nancy Arnheim of the Los Angeles League of Women Voters if you are interested in joining that committee.
- The Los Angeles County Board meeting will take place on Wednesday morning August 3 at the Los Angeles League Office. If you would like to attend from Beach Cities, contact Joan Arias (joanarias@roadrunner.com) for details.

From 10:30-11:45, attendees had a choice of workshops held for Presidents and Treasurers, an MTA League Tour (MTA=Management Training Advisers) and the Education Study and then regrouped for lunch.

Following lunch, keynote speaker Rick Simpson commented on the Federal role in education and responded to questions from the audience. (See article in this Voter on Simpson's remarks.)

By Joan Arias, LWVBeach Cities

COUNTY LEAGUE DAY: RICK SIMPSON, KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Rick Simpson, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Speaker of the California Assembly, was the keynote speaker at County League Day, "Popovers in Pasadena," on Saturday, July 30, 2011. Mr. Simpson addressed aspects of the role of the federal government in public education.

Educational policies in Washington D.C. currently lean toward less money, fewer strings, less federal discretionary funding and increased emphasis on charter schools, choice and vouchers. In the House, chairs of education committees would like to fold all categorical federal funding into a single block grant. This, Mr. Simpson says, has been faced by Californians in the past; it is not good policy for kids.

The Common Core Standards (CCS) and related assessment tools are favored by the Obama administration. The Common Core Standards were established through the Governors and Superintendents of Education of individual states with input from teachers and other educational experts. They are guidelines for what students are expected to learn as they progress through each grade, K-12. The CCS are national not federal and have been adopted by 41 states, including California. Our state is also a lead state in one of two federally funded consortiums, called Smarter Balance, which is developing assessment tools, but does not require the use of tests for teacher evaluations. Implementation of the CCS requires considerable preparation: teacher and administrator training, new textbooks, new tests and proper understanding and use of assessment tools in the classroom.

The Federal government has historically acknowledged imbalances in educational opportunity for our nation's children. Often laws or "incentives" are established for the "common good". Such incentives include the school lunch program, Head Start and Pell grants for the college-bound. Yet, Mr. Simpson points out, not all uniform federal actions are necessarily "good." He advises that laws be examined in isolation. Do they make sense? Are they applicable to the state and the students to be served? If the federal government truly wants to improve education, it should look at poverty vs. education. The Stanford Study, "Getting Down to Facts" clearly illustrates that children in poverty rarely meet national academic performance indexes on tests. State and federal government could do more for poor school children by giving their parents a good paying job.

Early Education works. It has been proven in multiple studies, that a sound pre-school experience represents an investment in our children's future. Early pre-school successes mitigate the need for later remediation in a child's educational life. California has a modestly sized pre-school program; Mr. Simpson advocates for a far larger involvement in this area.

The future of school finance has to be local At the state level there is a hydra-headed educational leadership system that is too convoluted to be effective. Mr. Simpson says the State Superintendent of schools should not be an elected position. Rather, he explains, make the director of the state board (appointed by the governor), the leader. Currently, the legislators control the budget, the governor appoints the State Board of Education which makes educational policy and the elected Superintendent is required to carry out the policy the board sets. Power reverted to the state during a series of Sacramento bailouts that began with property tax reform in the 1970's. As a Times editorial (July 2011) states: "Taxes raised and spent locally would provide a measure of 'home rule' that cities, counties and school districts once had. Governor Jerry Brown, who in the 1970's and 1980's presided over the shift of control from local governments to the Capitol, has proposed a 'realignment' to return much of that power. A return to local control means that cities, counties and school districts would have to be able to raise their own money, make their own choices and accept the consequences."

See next page for Questions & Answers

COUNTY LEAGUE DAY: RICK SIMPSON, Q&A

Question: Parent Involvement in schools is critical. What is being done about this component?

Answer: Parents cannot be mandated to participate in their children's education. It's up to the school to make visits attractive to parents.

Question: What was the effect of Serrano v. Priest?

Answer: Serrano vs. Priest was a landmark 1976 California Supreme Court ruling that required more equal funding of school districts regardless of the wealth of the community. With the gross disparity in property values in rich and poor communities, this translated into a gross disparity in the quality of education that the district could afford. To be clear, the case did not actually result in equally funded districts across California. However, it did establish important principles that have framed the continuing struggle for educational equality in the state. The 1976 decision ruled that the existing system of financing schools was unconstitutional because it violated the equal protection clause of the state constitution.

Question: What are the most significant aspects of SB90?

Answer: SB90 is Governor Jerry Brown's balanced FY 2011-12 State Budget Proposal (January 2011) which includes \$12.5 billion in proposed state spending cuts and includes a major, far-reaching realignment and restructuring of government functions. SB90 restores to local government the authority to make decisions that are best made close to the people.

Question: What about equity concerns in the over 1,000 school districts in California?

Answer: Raise funds county-wide for concerned schools. Works better than funding lots of very small districts.

Question: What is significant about Proposition 39?

Answer: In November 2000, California voters decided to reduce the voter approval threshold for school district and community college district general obligation bonds from 2/3 voter approval to 55% voter approval. Prop 39 amends article XVIII of the California Constitution to allow for the levy of ad valorem (Latin for "according to value") taxes on real property in excess of the 1% limit to pay debt services on bond issues for school construction with the approval of 55% of the votes cast. This allowed the Los Angeles Unified School District to build out of multi-track schools.

What's the future of teacher and other pension plans in the state?

Answer: In general, California pension plans are dangerously under-funded, the result of overly generous benefit promises and unwillingness to plan prudently. Unless reforms are made now, the problem will get far worse, forcing counties and cities to severely reduce services and lay off employees to meet pension demands. The Little Hoover Commission, State of California (February 2011) found the state's ten largest pension funds—encompassing 90% of all public employees—are over extended in their promises to current workers and retirees. A hybrid model, which contains a lower defined benefit pension with an employer matched defined-contribution plan (such as the State Teachers Retirement System has) is a model that must be made to public agencies. The state needs to collapse unsustainable pension formulas and create a lower defined benefit formula to facilitate this approach. A cap must also be placed on the maximum pension an employee can earn. The California pension system—a conglomeration of 85 defined-benefit pension plans—demands more uniformity and oversight.

By Pat Colby, LWV PVP

STATE AND COUNTY PREPARE FOR HEALTH CARE REFORM

The Health Care Reform bill passed in March 2010, known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), includes provisions to secure and expand Medicaid (“Medi-Cal” in California) programs. Beginning in 2014, those with family incomes less than 133% of the federal poverty level (FPL) will have full Medi-Cal with no asset test, and those between 134% and 400% will be eligible for premium subsidies. (133% FPL for an individual is \$14,484/year.)

Section 1115 Waivers

The Federal Medicaid program provides for waivers which authorize states to develop Medicaid programs that differ from the standard federal program. There are different types of Medicaid waivers, including Section 1115 waivers for research and demonstration projects designed to temporarily test expanded eligibility or coverage options.

The State of California has participated in the Medicaid Section 1115 Waiver for many years. Since this waiver was due to expire on October 31, 2010, in June the California’s Health and Human Services Agency submitted a Section 1115 Demonstration Project proposal to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) entitled California’s Bridge to Health Care Reform. The Waiver was approved in November, 2010. Among its provisions, the Waiver

- moves Medi-Cal patients who are eligible as seniors or persons with disability (SPD) from fee-for-service into a managed care plan. This is scheduled to phase-in over a 12-month period starting June 1, 2011. Some exemptions apply, such as dual eligible Medicare/Medi-Cal recipients.
- creates opportunities for counties to develop new health programs for uninsured people with family incomes up to 200% of poverty and helps to redesign the delivery of care. Mental health will be an important component of the Waiver.
- phases in coverage for adults ages 19-64 with incomes at or below 133% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and expands the existing Safety Net Care Pool that was established to ensure continued government support for the provision of health care to the uninsured by hospitals, clinics and other providers.

Implementation in Los Angeles County

Currently, the Department of Health Service’s “Healthy Way L.A.” (HWLA) is the Medicaid Coverage Expansion vehicle in L.A. County. HWLA presently has 65,000 enrollees. When fully implemented, DHS anticipates 130,000 enrollees in HWLA. The County plans to partner with the LA Care Medi-Cal managed care plan to move seniors and persons with disabilities into managed care. To progress towards integration of health, mental health and substance abuse programs, the County’s Department of Health Services and Department of Mental Health are identifying patients who are currently using services in both departments and these will be given priority for enrollment in HWLA.

The County’s goal is to put the necessary programs, structures, technologies and staffing in place to take immediate advantage of the waiver and the full implementation of the ACA in 2014.

By Phyllis O’Conner, LWV Long Beach

INTERNET RESOURCES

Smart Voter www.smartvoter.org
LWV California Ed Fund provides
Statewide propositions, local
candidates and issues, media links,
and background materials

LA County Registrar-Recorder
www.lavote.net Election calendar,
polling places, absentee voting info,
multilingual voting materials

Easy Voter Guide
www.easyvoter.org Concise facts
on statewide propositions; Chinese,
Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, English

Secretary of State
www.ss.ca.gov Official text of ballot
measures, candidates' statements,
maps, dates, election returns

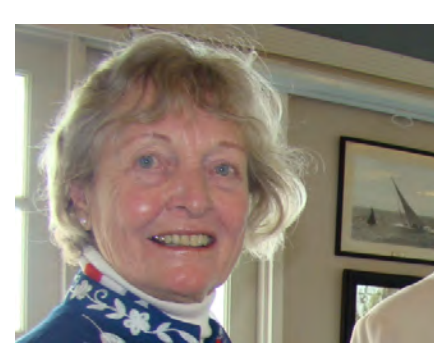
CA Legislative Analyst
www.lao.ca.gov Analysis of all ballot
measures

CA Voter Foundation
www.calvoter.org Data on campaign
contributions to candidates and
measures

CA Budget Project
www.cpb.org Analyzes the fiscal
effects of statewide ballot measures.

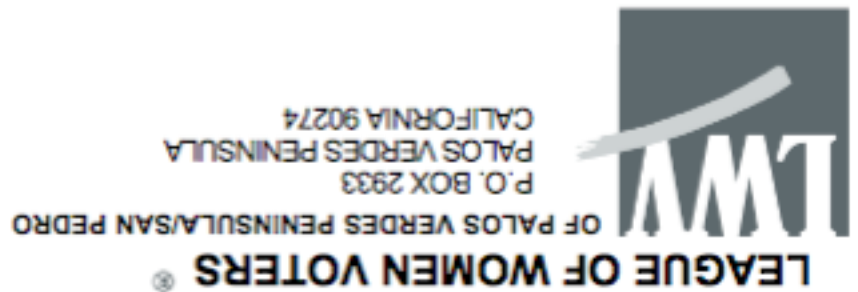
L A County League of Women Voters
<http://lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org>

Compiled by Linda Herman



**Shots of folks at Local Convention this year.
Above, Nancy Mahr with speaker Bill Orton
from Senator Wright's office.
*Thanks to Shirley Borks for great photos.***





* LWV/PVP/SP *

has an excellent, informative website:
www.lwvpvp.org
thanks to BETTY RIEDMAN
& PALOS VERDES ON THE NET
for providing & hosting this web site as
a public service to our community
Please visit our website for more information