LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF PALOS VERDES PENINSULA

Voter

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CALENDAR 2012

Wed, Sept 12	**12:00 noon**	**Board Meeting,** Joan Hogan's home
Sat, Sept 15	**10 - 12:00 am**	**"Coffee & Conversation"** *HEALTH CARE REFORM,* Peninsula Center Library Community room (see page 2)
Sat, Sept 22	**9:00 - 11:30am**	**Annual Kickoff Meeting,** ***FOIBLES OF THE INITIATIVE & REFERENDUM PROCESS, MICHAEL HILTZIK,*** **Torrance, Beach Cities, & PVP LWVs,** Depot Restaurant, (see page 3)
Sat, Sept 29	**10:00 am**	**Ballot Measure Training/County League,** Hollenbeck Palms
Wed, Oct 3	**7:00 pm**	**Ballot Measure Pro & Cons, Co-Sponsored with AAUW,** Peninsula Center Library
Wed, Oct 10	**12 noon**	**Board Meeting,** Joan Hogan's home
Wed, Oct 10	**8:15 - 9:30 pm**	**Candidate Forum, Co-Sponsor AAUW,** Hesse Park (see page 4)
Sat, Oct 13	**1:00 pm**	**Ballot Measure Pros & Cons, Co-Sponsored with San Pedro Friends of the Library,** San Pedro Library
Sat, Nov 3		**"Coffee & Conversation"**
Tues, Nov 6	**7am-8pm**	**ELECTION DAY !**
Wed, Nov 14	**12 noon**	**Board Meeting,** Joan Hogan's home
Fri, Nov 16	**7:30 pm**	**Elected Officials Party,** Pt. Vicente Interpretive Center
Sat, Dec 1	**10:00 - 12:30**	**"Coffee & Conversation"** *EFFECT OF CAMPAIGN SPENDING ON THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS*

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GRAPHIC FROM PASADENA LWV

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's hard to believe that summer is gone and we are poised to begin an active year ahead. Our kick-off event, planned by LWV Torrance Area, is on Saturday, September 22. We will meet at the Depot Restaurant in Torrance and hear columnist Michael Hiltzik speak on Initative & Referendum reform – the current state study topic. (See flyer in this Voter)

The coming election and all the associated League events are next on the agenda. On Saturday, September 29, the LWV/LACounty is holding a meeting to review the eleven California ballot measures and the two LA County measures as a training session for local League speakers. We will also hold an action workshop on those propositions on which LWVC has taken a position.

This fall our League is partnering with AAUW Palos Verdes to hold two voter education meetings in preparation for the November election. We will have two public pro/con ballot measure presentations and a forum for candidates running for our Congressional district. See the calendar section for the date, time and place of each meeting. Be sure and attend, and bring a neighbor.

We are fortunate to live in a state that promotes voting access. Registrars across California work to make voting easy while maintaining the integrity of the process. The efforts of our League to register voters and provide election information is welcomed and lauded. Many California Leagues have planned special registration events for National Voter Registration Day on September 25.

The National Party Conventions kick off a season of campaigning and political ads. The veracity of many of these ads – especially third-party ads – is often questionable. The County League, with the support of our member Leagues, is participating in the national "Stand By Your Ad" campaign, organized by flackcheck.org. We will be contacting local media asking that they only publish or air third-party ads that they have verified as factual. To check on the truth of ads for yourself, go to flackcheck.org or factcheck.org or politifact.com.

Election time is high season for the League. But the election is not our only focus. Health care reform in California is still our agenda. And the state Initiative & Referendum study is underway. We have a busy year ahead!

Nancy

JOIN THE LEAGUE FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 10 AM - 12 NOON, PENINSULA CENTER LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM. WE WILL DISCUSS THE CHANGES ALREADY IN PLACE AND WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. THE LEAGUE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE DISCUSSION OF HEALTH CARE REFORM FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND WOULD WELCOME YOUR PARTICIPATION, QUESTIONS, AND CONCERNS. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 310-833-5864.
Judith Webb

League of Women Voters

Beach Cities, Palos Verdes Peninsula, and Torrance Area

Annual Kickoff Meeting

The Foibles of the Initiative and Referendum Process

A prelude to the LWVC Update Study

GUEST SPEAKER

Michael Hiltzik

Business Columnist
Los Angeles Times

Mr. Hiltzik is a Pulitzer Prize and Gerald Loeb Award winning journalist who has written extensively on business and finance for the L.A. Times. Come and hear his take on California's Referendum and Initiative process.

Registration begins at 9:00 AM
Meeting will adjourn at 11:30 AM
Saturday, September 22, 2012
The Depot Restaurant
1250 Cabrillo Ave., Torrance, CA 90501

Join us for a sumptuous brunch buffet
prepared by Chef Michael Schafer
at the restored historic Southern Pacific Railway Depot

✂- -

Make check payable to: **LWVTA** (LWV Torrance Area)
Mail to: **LWVTA Treasurer, Box 964, Torrance, CA 90508 by Sept. 15, 2012**
Phone: 310-408-1870 for information.
Number of reservations______ @ **$25.00 per person**
Note: After Sept. 15, reservations ______ $30.00 per person
Check enclosed for $________________
League Name ____
Name(s) ____
Phone _________________________ E-mail ___________________________________

CANDIDATES FORUM
33rd CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 10TH
8:15 pm to 9:30 pm

AT HESSE PARK,
29301 HAWTHORNE BOULEVARD,
RANCHO PALOS VERDES
(310) 541-8114

BILL BLOOMFIELD ***HENRY A. WAXMAN***

SPONSORED BY THE PALOS VERDES PENINSULA CHAPTERS
OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMAN VOTERS AND
THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

COUNTY SUMMER LEAGUE DAY - LA COUNTY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

On July 28, 2012 the County League of Women Voters sponsored its annual "Popovers in Pasadena" at the Pasadena Women's Club and featured guest speaker Wendy Schwartz, Director of Board Relations, Department of Health Services, who addressed the question, "How does L.A. County meet the public's health needs?" Ms. Schwartz identified the scope of the county's mandate. The county runs four hospitals* and contracts with 61 health clinics; has 20,000 employees, an annual budget of $3.05 billion and sees 800,000 unique patients every year. Outpatient visits number three million per year, 12,000 of which are children under the age of 17—a group that includes approximately 2,400 youth in juvenile hall, many with poorer health than their non-juvenile hall peers. The county additionally serves a substantial number of the undocumented. Health surveys conducted by the county in partnership with the UCLA Public Health Research Center use a formula which combines mortality (years of life lost) and morbidity (years living with a disability such as chronic illnesses, drug and alcohol dependence, violence and unintentional injuries) to produce a clearer picture of health issues in the county. The county also operates five medical hub centers for children entering the foster care system which includes, among other services, forensic exams in the case of abuse or neglect. The Affordable Patient Health Care Act (ACA) has profoundly impacted the county. 900,000 L.A. County inhabitants will qualify for Medical (Medicaid) expansion and 750,000 (those above the poverty line) for health care exchanges. "Medical homes" are being established to provide ambulatory care to the chronically ill (hypertension, depression, high cholesterol, diabetes etc.) so that patients see the same doctors and nurse practitioners and receive medications and other services from the same place, just one example of expanding forms of "integrated" care to increase efficiency and less duplication in the medical system. Finally, the county is implementing a much needed information technology system at a cost of $280 million so records can be maintained and shared at highest efficiency. Among the on-going questions under the ACA are these: How do we balance the patient mix visiting medical facilities and how do we provide a quality safety net for those who are uninsured? How will doctors and nurses be reimbursed for services? How are funds for the expansion of Medicaid refused by some states redistributed to states that are implementing the expansion? Will the focus on Medical Homes and other integrated systems redirect those who use the Emergency Room as their primary care system? How do we educate our citizenry to adopt healthy life styles in order to avoid certain preventable diseases?

*LAC + USC Healthcare Network
Harbor UCLA Medical Center
ValleyCare Olive View—UCLA Medical Center
Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

Note: Martin Luther King Jr. Hospital will reopen in 2013 or 2014 and will be run by a private entity. The county will contribute $10 million for the first five years of the hospital's new opening. The county will run an MLK out-patient center nearby.

Pat Colby, PVP LWV

SENTENCING REFORM IN CALIFORNIA

A forum sponsored by LWVLA
at downtown Loyola Law School, August 18, 2012

In May 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered a massive inmate release to relieve California's crowded prisons that, in the eyes of the Court majority, had caused "needless suffering and death" and amounted to cruel and unusual punishment. Justice Anthony K. Kennedy, a Californian, spoke of suicidal prisoners held in "telephone booth-sized cages without toilets" and others, sick with cancer or in severe pain, who died before seeing a doctor and as many as 200 prisoners housed in a gymnasium and as many as 54 prisoners sharing a single toilet.

In response, Governor Brown signed AB 109/AB 117, the cornerstone legislation for California's solution to closing the revolving door of low-level inmates in the state's 33 prisons to 135.5% of design capacity by June 2013. AB 109 mandates that individuals sentenced to non-serious, non-violent or non-sex offender offenses will serve their sentences in county jails instead of state prisons. No inmates currently in state prisons will be transferred to county jails or released early. AB 117 allows maximum local flexibility within the statutory framework for the adult population transfers and requires counties to notify the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as to the county agency designated to supervise offenders released to Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS).

The panel strongly recommended sentencing reform by converting minor offenses from felonies to misdemeanors, moving away from mandatory sentencing and revising of the three strikes law.

Two reforms alone would save the state hundreds of millions annually while keeping communities safe: making possession of a small amount of drugs for personal use a misdemeanor instead of a felony, and making low-level, nonviolent property offenses—like vandalism or writing a bad check—a misdemeanor. Such changes decrease costs because sentences are shorter and court costs are lower. California spends hundreds of millions of dollars every year locking people up for minor offenses when they pose no threat to public safety.

For some panel experts, the move from **indeterminate** sentencing to **determinate** sentencing in California is less fair. An indeterminate sentence is a sentence imposed for a crime that isn't given a definite duration. The prison term does not state a specific period of time or a release date, but just a range of time, such as "five-to-ten years." It is the opposite of determinate sentencing, in which a fixed term or incarceration (set by the legislature) is imposed. However, an inmate sentenced under a determinate sentence can be released early due to good time credits. California uses determinate sentencing which denies the judge any discretion over the length of the sentence and also often rules out any possibility of probation or alternative to prison. Determinate sentencing has been cited as a factor leading to increases in prison populations. Determinate sentencing eliminates parole boards and credit for participating in rehabilitation programs.

The panel would revise California's three strikes law, most notably by not imposing a life sentence if the third strike was neither serious nor violent. It would also allow for the resentencing of prisoners serving life, but continue to impose the sentence for certain

offenses if previous convictions were for rape, murder or child molestation (reflective of Proposition 36 on the November ballot).
The panel concurred that historically and in present time we must reestablish what correctional facilities were designed for by moving from mandatory sentencing and prison crowding to a focus on the rehabilitation of inmates so they may be transformed into productive citizens and reintegrate into society. That focus should be on education, drug treatment, counseling and job training programs within correctional facilities. This approach, the panel argues, is cost effective and protects the public from high recidivism rates.
Another important step is to draw the public's attention to misperceptions of the prison population. An estimated two-thirds of state prisons are comprised of non-serious offenders; 97% of federal prison inmates are convicted of non-violent crimes; and 16% of the prison population is mentally ill. Interestingly, polls conducted by the ACLU among California voters indicate that a solid majority of Republicans, Democrats and Independents from all areas of the state believe that too many people are imprisoned and that penalties for minor offences are too harsh.
Ironically, the length of imprisonment is mostly ineffective in crime deterrence, especially for more serious offenses. Therefore, mandatory sentencing and three-strike legislation are ineffective is discouraging criminal activity. On the contrary, education and drug treatment have long been the more logical alternative for the non-serious offenders who make up the vast majority of the prison population and these options are better provided at the county level where social services are available. Unfortunately, politicians are deeply concerned about appearing "weak" on crime and there is little resistance to what one panelist called "drive-by" legislation (sentencing enhancement laws). Some panelists are advocates for the establishment of an independent sentencing commission with the authority to develop sentencing guidelines that become law unless rejected by a majority vote in the legislature.

Members of the panel included: Moderator Judge David Wesley, Sheriff Lee Baca, Reaver E. Bingham (L.A. County Probation Department), Hanna Liebman Dershowitz (Criminal Justice and Drug Policy Reform Advocate, ACLU, Southern California), Laurel Gord (Friends Committee on Legislation of California), Laurie L. Levenson (Professor of Law, Loyola Law School), Kaile Shilling (Coalition Director for the Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles).

Pat Colby, PVP LWV

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO WELCOME
A NEW MEMBER!
EILEEN HUPP
Rolling Hills Estates

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ®
OF PALOS VERDES PENINSULA/SAN PEDRO
P.O. BOX 2933
PALOS VERDES PENINSULA
CALIFORNIA 90274

✳ **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