



League of Women Voters

Glendale/Burbank

President's Message

Chris Carson

April 2005
Calendar

Wednesday
April 6
Board Meeting
Home of Chris Carson

Thursday
April 21
League Salon
Redistricting
Starbucks Western/
Glenoaks
7:30pm
See flyer on page 2

Wednesday
May 4
Board Meeting

Saturday
May 14
Annual Meeting
Castaway Restaurant

Friday-Sunday
**LWVC Biennial
Convention**
Garden Grove

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU JUST HAVE TO BRAG. The Glendale//Burbank League has always prided itself on the superior quality of its Voter Service activities, in particular our Candidates Forums. In the month of March, 2005 we surpassed ourselves. We were flat-out terrific.

THE BARE BONES REPORT IS that we conducted three candidates forums in three weeks and taped a presentation on Glendale Charter Revision measures. But that doesn't begin to tell the whole story. A virtually unprecedented situation in Glendale—nine candidates for City Clerk, two for City Treasurer and nineteen for City Council—presented League with a staggering challenge. How to give the voters of Glendale some idea of what the candidates stood for when there were so many candidates to choose from? Clearly, something different was called for. In Burbank, we had a run-off forum for City Council and School Board to conduct. Once again, we felt that the tried and true wouldn't be sufficient. It was time to shake things up.

LEAGUE HAS OVER EIGHTY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE and plenty of tools in our Voter Service toolkit. Reaching into that toolkit, we devised new formats that allowed the very large number of Glendale candidates to present their views and answer questions in a manner that went beyond Yes/No and Me Too. In Burbank, the smaller number of candidates gave us the opportunity to have a "mini-debate" that gave voters the opportunity to hear the candidates' responses to all questions.

CENTRAL TO THIS ACHIEVEMENT, WAS THE DEDICATED service of League members. Our Glendale Voter Service Chair Monica Marquez has been a member less than two years. She walked into the Perfect Storm. Leaguers old and new rallied 'round and Monica did a magnificent job of organizing the success these forums were. In Burbank, Connie Wilson marshaled her forces to create this new format. One of the Burbank crew, Linda Lammers, joined the League in January. She is already a veteran of two forums.

OF COURSE, NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE without the dedication of experienced League members and you'll be hearing more about them next month. For now, let me say again that the League of Women Voters of Glendale/Burbank is spectacular. And we deserve to take at least four curtain calls for our achievement this month.

League of Women Voters
Glendale/Burbank



Salon

The League of Women Voters of Glendale/Burbank Salon for members and invited guests continues. Salon members engage in our favorite past time—discussion of public policy issues. Salon is usually held in members' homes, moving around, but always on the third Thursday of the month. Not each month—but on a regular basis.

WHEN: Thursday, April 21, 2005
7:30 to 9:00 pm
Starbucks
Corner of Western and Glenoaks
Glendale

TOPIC: REDISTRICTING:
WHAT'S THE NEWS?

RSVP: Chris Carson carsonlwv@earthlink.net or
(818) 247-2407

Social Policy at “Popovers”

JULY IS STILL THE “Popovers in Pasadena” month, but this year it will not be the last Saturday in July. Instead, mark your calendar for the fourth Saturday, July 23, and plan to go beyond the headlines on a wide array of social policy issues. The LWV/LAC Social Policy Network is planning a keynote presentation, a series of workshops and follow-up discussions that you will not want to miss.

The keynote presentation will be an overview of the California Health Insurance Reliability Act recently introduced in the Legislature by Senator Sheila Kuehl (revises prior session SB 921). CHIRA is based on recommendations found in the recently released Lewin Report. The proposed plan “assumes an insurance plan that covers medical, dental and vision care [for all Californians]; prescription drugs; emergency room services, surgical and recuperative care; orthodontia; mental health care and drug rehabilitation; immunizations; emergency and other necessary transportation; laboratory and other diagnostic services; adult day care; all necessary translation and interpretation; chiropractic care, acupuncture, case management and skilled nursing care.” The Lewin Group estimates that CHIRA could “reduce total health spending in California by \$8 billion in the first year, alone. The total savings under this plan from 2006-2015 would be \$343.6 billion...” By July, much will be known about how this bill is faring in the legislative process. Sponsors are enthusiastic, but many hurdles are fully anticipated.

Workshops will include the following:

- An update on the Los Angeles County hospital system, with emphasis on Martin Luther King Jr. / Drew Medical Center, and implementation of Measure B.

In addition to inquiries made by the media and the Los Angeles County Supervisors about the status of the Los Angeles County healthcare delivery system, hearings by the recently formed Select Committee on the Los Angeles County Health Care Crisis (chaired by Assemblyman Mark Rid-

ley-Thomas) are scheduled for late February and into spring. In establishing the special legislative panel, Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez said, “Six hospitals in Los Angeles County shut their doors in 2004 alone. The insured and uninsured alike will face a real disaster if the healthcare safety net begins to unravel. We must focus on this looming crisis and help make the county’s healthcare system financially stable.” The Los Angeles Times recently pointed out that “[s]ince the 1980s, ten of the county’s trauma centers have closed, largely because of financial woes stemming from treating the indigent and uninsured.” By July, the hearings will have finished, the Board of Supervisors should have received additional reports from Navigant regarding King/Drew, and an additional report on application of Measure B funds should have been filed.

- A discussion of affordable housing options in Los Angeles County. For those who attended the January 29 LWV/LAC Land Use meeting, this workshop will be an expansion on possibilities raised by SCAG COMPASS and the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning. In working with the 187 cities that form SCAG, COMPASS has recommended that development be evaluated in terms of mobility, prosperity, livability and sustainability. The Housing Element (updated 2001) of the Los Angeles County General Plan states that the county will have “[a]n ongoing planning and monitoring function focused on housing that promotes the provision of affordable housing, and ensures the long term availability of developments that provide affordable housing.” Presentation of plans being proposed, already implemented and a consideration of laws and proposed legislation (pending as well as past failures) are planned for the workshop.
- An overview of the PreK initiative that is expected to be circulated for qualification on the November 2006 General Election ballot. This initiative replaces the previously qualified but later withdrawn “Improving Classroom Education Act” initiative of spring 2004. First 5 California Chair

Continued on page 6

Who Does What in the County?

MANY PEOPLE ARE NOT AWARE of who does what in Los Angeles County and how all of the taxes collected here are raised and spent. This article is the first of a series to familiarize you with the areas of the County's jurisdiction. It is important for you to determine whether you live in an incorporated city or an unincorporated County area to determine from whom you receive certain quality-of-life services. But, wherever you live, you are still paying taxes directly to the County in the form of sales taxes and fees to provide basic services to all the citizens of the entire County. The County also receives funds (usually that it must match) to provide certain services from taxes we have paid to the Federal Government and to the State.

There are 88 cities within the County, each with its own city council. All of the cities, in varying degrees, contract with the County to provide municipal services. Thirty-seven contract for nearly all of their municipal services. The heavily urbanized areas of the County have chosen to incorporate into cities for many reasons but mostly to determine local control of various services. The usual responsibility of cities is to provide police and fire protection, maintain roads, sewers, sidewalks, trees, trash collection, water and power. There are also many areas of misunderstanding about who does what in the cities and in the unincorporated areas. In some cases, cities contract with the County, other cities, or private companies, for some of their services.

Most of the 10,179,716 residents (as of July 2004) in the County reside in the southern portion of the County where there is the most residential, commercial and industrial development. But, more than 65 percent of the County is unincorporated mostly in the northern portion of the County and in small urbanized areas of the south. For the 1 million people living in those areas, the Board of Supervisors is their "city council" and County departments provide the municipal services.

And, since the County is governed by the five-member Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, who are elected by the County's voters, the small size of the board means each supervisor represents almost 2 million people.

The day-to-day Los Angeles County government is operated by a Chief Administrative Officer (currently CAO David Janssen) and is organized into many departments, each of which is enormous in comparison to equivalent county-level (and even state-level) departments anywhere else in the United States.

As a subdivision of the state, the County is charged with providing numerous services that affect the lives of all of its residents. Traditional mandatory services include law enforcement, property assessment, tax collection, public health protection, public social services and relief to indigents. Among the specialized services are building and safety, regional planning, flood control, water conservation, parks and recreation, and many diversified cultural activities.

Next month we will talk about Taxes.

Lola Ungar, Land Use/Smart Growth

Redistricting

AS PREPARATION for our League Salon on Redistricting, we reprint the Executive Summary of **Drawing Lines: A Public Interest Guide to Real Redistricting Reform**. This report was endorsed by LWV California as a guide to discussion of substantive models for redistricting. To read the full report go to the LWVC website <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/redistrict/>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In California's 2004 legislative and congressional elections, every incumbent running for reelection won and no seats changed party hands. This lack of competition is due significantly to the legislature's decision to redraw electoral districts to protect incumbents against challengers. When the deck is so stacked against competition, the public loses.

There are currently several California legislative bills and initiatives proposing to strip the legislature of the power to draw new districts and give it to an Independent Redistricting Commission. While redistricting should be conducted by a Commission, our analysis suggests that none of the various

proposals under current consideration does enough to encourage the creation of more competitive districts or to improve representation of minorities, the two areas where California is most in need of improvement.

The public interest can be better served by amending these proposals to comply with the following public interest goals: insulating the redistricting process from legislative control; performing redistricting only once a decade; protecting minority influence in a judicious manner; increasing the number of close contests between candidates from different political parties; and ensuring that no party can capture and unfairly exert influence on the redistricting process.

Proposed Measures

One significant ballot initiative and two significant legislative reform proposals have recently been

introduced to reform the state's redistricting process – Ted Costa's ballot initiative (currently in circulation for signatures), ACAX1 3 (McCarthy, R-Bakersfield), which is supported by Governor Schwarzenegger, and SCA 3 (Lowenthal, D-Long Beach). These proposals have provoked an important discussion and shined a spotlight on California's flawed redistricting process.

Recommended Commission Features

An Independent Redistricting Commission must have the following key features:

1. Membership

- The Commission should include: nine retired judges and other citizens; three Commissioners from each major party and three Commissioners from neither major party; and a membership that reflects California's diversity.
- There should be restrictions on previous and future political activities – such as running for partisan public office, lobbying, and working for a candidate's campaign – to ensure unbiased decision-making.

Continued on page 6

2. Selection Process

- The Judicial Council should select a pool of 36 potential Commissioners.
- The pool should reflect the racial diversity of California, have equal numbers of men and women, and include six retired judges registered with each major party, six citizens registered with each major party as well as six retired judges and six citizens registered with neither major party.
- The four legislative leaders should each have two preemptory vetoes on individuals in the candidate pool.
- A random process should be used to select nine Commissioners from the candidate pool. This process should also ensure fulfillment of diversity and partisan equality membership requirements.

3. Criteria

- All districts must be: equal in population according to federal standards, contiguous, nested^[1], compliant with the Voting Rights Act and other federal law, and neutral with respect to political parties, incumbents and other candidates.
- The Commission's additional objectives, in priority order, should be: full representation of racial and ethnic minorities, more competitive districts, respecting identifiable communities of interest, conforming to geographic and political lines to the extent practicable, and creating compact districts.

4. Transparency and Public Accountability

- All meetings and hearings should be public, with adequate notice given.
- Hearings should occur (i) before the Commission begins drawing maps, (ii) after an initial map is proposed, (iii) after any significant revisions are made to the draft maps and (iv) after the Final Plan is proposed.
- Redistricting information, expertise and tools should be provided on-site for use by individuals and organizations as soon as relevant information is available, and all proposed full or partial maps and agenda items should be posted to a web site

one week before a meeting or hearing.

- The Commission must comply with the Bagley-Keane Act. No legislative privilege should be exercised or ex parte communication allowed (except between Commissioners and staff, who still must make public their communications once the Final Plan has been proposed).
- Independent experts should evaluate how well Commission-created draft maps comply with listed criteria, and the Commission should itself issue a report when releasing its Final Plan explaining how it met all the criteria.

5. Implementation and Review:

- The state should be redistricted once every ten years, respecting traditional decennial redistricting principles.
- The Commission must be guaranteed sufficient resources to enact a plan and defend it in court.
- The Final Plan should be reviewable directly by the California Supreme Court.

We compare the major features of each proposal to those of our Ideal Plan below (and provide a more detailed description and analysis in the Appendix). While the Lowenthal proposal appears to provide the best starting point for an Independent Redistricting Commission, it is not yet optimal. In

light of the current proposals' weaknesses, we advise amending all of the proposals to incorporate the public interest recommendations in this report.

*Please
consider the
League of
Women Voters
when you make
your will*



Comparative Analysis:

	Lowenthal	McCarthy	Costa	Ideal Plan
1. Are major parties guaranteed equal representation on Commission?	Yes	No	No	Yes
2. Is the Commission instructed to make districts more competitive?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
3. Is the Commission given the data and instructions necessary to make significantly more competitive districts likely?	No	No	No	Yes
4. Is Voting Rights Act compliance explicitly required and prioritized?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
5. Is the Commission likely to reflect California's diversity?	Maybe	No	No	Yes
6. Is the Commission prohibited from using incumbent residence when drawing districts?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
7. Are all Commission meetings required to open to the public?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
8. Must most of the Commission's data and documents be made public?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
9. Will the "once a decade" redistricting rule be maintained?	Yes	No	No	Yes
10. Will the Commission's proposals be implemented without requiring an additional legislative or popular vote?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Check out our website
 for more news on League action
<http://www.gb.ca.lwvnet.org>

LWVUS Advocacy News



To: Members of the U.S. Congress

From: Kay J. Maxwell, President

Re: Social Security

The League of Women Voters is deeply concerned over proposals to privatize the Social Security system. We believe that any Congressional debate must address the broad social needs the system now meets, the long-term future of the system and the financial risks that privatization could place on individuals and on government.

In the 1930s, the League of Women Voters supported passage of the Social Security Act. Fifty years later, in a study of the fiscal policy of the United States, League members determined that the federal government has a role in funding and providing for old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance. For such insurance programs, participation should be mandatory and coverage should be universal.

Social Security is one of the most successful social welfare programs of the 20th Century – one that has contributed to unprecedented economic growth and the stability of the U.S. economy. It has been the primary safety net for older workers and their spouses. Before Social Security, one in three senior citizens lived in poverty. Today that number is one in ten. In addition, disability and survivors' benefits under Social Security have provided for millions of American families. We must recognize that Social Security is not merely a retirement program – it is a social insurance program with broad effect.

Concerns have been raised that Social Security is in crisis and that Congress needs to act now. The League of Women Voters believes that both the perceived crisis and the proposed solutions need to be thoroughly examined and debated. We believe there is sufficient time to do so. The long-term challenges do not manifest themselves until the year 2042. Even then, Social Security has 70 percent of needed funds. Diverting money from the Social Security trust fund into private accounts could hasten the insolvency of the fund. The results could include a substantial increase in the deficit and significant cuts in some or all of Social Security's retirement, disability and survivors benefits.

If Congress determines that changes in Social Security are needed, there are reasonable, moderate adjustments that can achieve solvency and fiscal soundness. But it is key that we have a full, national debate before making major changes in the system that has served so many Americans so well.



March 8, 2005

The Honorable John Cornyn
The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Cornyn and Leahy:

The League of Women Voters is pleased to endorse S. 394, the OPEN (Openness Promotes Effectiveness in our National) Government Act of 2005. We appreciate your leadership in introducing this legislation which will expand the accessibility and accountability of the federal government by strengthening the Freedom of Information Act and making information more readily available to the public.

For decades, the League of Women Voters has supported broad citizen participation in government and the citizen's right to know. We believe that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government. The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by making information and records accessible to the public.

S. 394 addresses these concerns by establishing a presumption of openness in government. It will strengthen the Freedom of Information Act and assist citizens receiving timely responses to their requests. At a time when citizens are apprehensive about the accessibility and accountability of government, the OPEN Government Act addresses these concerns.

We look forward to working with you to pass the OPEN Government Act.

Sincerely yours,
Kay J. Maxwell
President

Civil Liberties

A THIRD FOCUS OF THE LEAGUE'S democracy agenda involves the basic civil liberties that under gird our entire system of representative democracy. The right to speak freely, to assemble freely, to read and debate freely on all subjects is the prerequisite for a vibrant democracy. When the government can investigate what books you read or take out of the library, as is allowed with the current so-called USA Patriot Act, then basic civil liberties have been called into question.

Many of the key provisions of the Act undermine civil liberties, including the "sneak and peek" warrants that allow the government to search your home or business without notifying you or without a search warrant ahead of time. Protecting against terrorism is important, but so too is protecting against the possibility of government intimidation. A balance between homeland security and civil liberties is necessary, but finding that balance is challenging. The League will be closely monitoring congressional action as several key provisions of the Patriot Act come up for "sunset." If they are to continue, Congress must reauthorize them.

The League has also just launched "Local Voices: Citizen Conversations on Civil Liberties and Secure Communities," an eight-month initiative that will foster public dialogue about the balance between civil liberties and homeland security. We believe that in this post-9/11 world, it is critical for all communities to explore the relationship between these two important topics.

We will be developing materials and encouraging citizen participation in large League-led conversations about this topic in ten cities. Representing ethnic, economic, and geographically diverse locations, the outcomes of the conversations will be gathered, analyzed, and compared with larger national trends. A final report will be released in Fall 2005 to coincide with the national debate about the sunset provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Local Voices will allow the League to involve the public in grappling with the interplay of civil liberties and security in their own communities.



Membership Application

It is easy to join the League of Women Voters of Glendale/Burbank. All Citizens of voting age are welcome. Associate Membership is open to all others.

YES! I want to add my voice to yours by joining the League of Women Voters as part of your voice for citizens and force for change. I enclose: (please check one or more of the following)

- \$60.00 for a one-year individual membership (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$100.00 for a one-year household membership for two members who share the same address (include a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- I am unable to join League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$ _____

Name/Names _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

- I would like to receive my VOTER by email.
My email address is _____

Make check payable to League of Women Voters. Mail to Vera Naylor, 7714 Via Capri, Burbank CA 91504

Gifts made payable to "LWV Education Fund" are tax deductible.

Save Social Security LWVUS Action Alert

CONGRESS IS CONSIDERING PROPOSALS that would privatize the Social Security system. Social Security is one of the most successful social programs of the 20th Century. The systems financing problems are manageable and can be addressed by reasonable adjustments over time. Rushing into private accounts does not solve the so-called Social Security crisis, but rather would add to the cost of the program. Now is the time to tell Congress not to put those who will depend upon this safety net at risk! **Call the Congressional switchboard: 202-224-3121 or 202-225-3121**

In addition, the House and Senate will be in recess until April 4. Try to meet with your members of Congress or attend public meetings to tell them to oppose attempts to privatize Social Security. Social Security is not merely a retirement program it is a social insurance program with broad effect. Many of our most vulnerable citizens rely upon the safety net provided by the system. Before Social Security, one in three senior citizens lived in poverty. Today that number is one in ten. In addition, disability and survivors benefits under Social Security have provided for millions of American families. This is particularly important for women. Nearly two-thirds of women 65 and over get a majority of their income from Social Security. Social Security works for Americas workers.

The great success of Social Security has contributed to the unprecedented economic growth of the 20th Century. If the demographic challenges of the 21st Century require changes in the financing of the system, then Congress should lead America in a discussion about the most reasonable and secure methods for achieving financial stability. Diverting money from the Social Security trust fund into private accounts could hasten the insolvency of the

fund, not save it. **Tell your Members of Congress** that private accounts would put Social Security in more peril not less. If you know that they agree, thank them for protecting this important safety net.

ACTION NEEDED

1. Contact your U.S. Senators and Representative now, by phone and by email, and urge them to oppose attempts to privatize Social Security. The Social Security system is not in crisis and any changes should make the safety net more solvent, and more dependable, not less secure. Phone calls can be made through the Capitol Hill switchboard at 202-224-3121 or 202-225-3121 or go to **<http://www.capwiz.com/lwv/issues/alert/?alertid=7266326>**.
2. Forward this email to other concerned citizens your grassroots network, your friends, family and co-workers. Encourage them to contact their Members of Congress today.
3. The House and Senate will be in recess until April 4. Try to meet with your members of Congress or attend public meetings to tell them to oppose attempts to privatize Social Security.

The Voter

is published nine times a year by the League of Women Voter of Glendale/Burbank, California

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The **League of Women Voters**, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education advocacy.

The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate. We advocate only on issues that members have studied and come to a consensus on. In an era of proliferating and powerful special interests, the League's advocacy in the public interest is increasingly recognized as an essential voice of democracy.

Member News

Florence Dommès received an award for her watercolor in the juried Burbank Creative Arts show.

Chris Carson was appointed to the Board of the League of Women Voters of California as Government Director. She will be elected to a full term in May.

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LWV California
<http://www.ca.LWV.org>

LWV United States
<http://www.LWV.org>

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