

President's Message

Monica Marquez

WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR! As we move forward with our activities in 2008, the current issue of the Voter and subsequent issues will reflect back on the storied history of the League of Women Voters. Since its inception after the women's suffrage movement, local, state and national Leagues have become deeply rooted in their communities. Both in voter service and community action, local Leagues have taken on the challenges in their communities.

One such challenge we are facing in Glendale is campaign contribution limits. As you may remember, we recently studied local campaign finance reform. As part of our consensus, we came out in support of:

reasonable limitations on campaign contributions in city council, school board, and community college elections including any recall or referendum elections. Also propositions. Reasonable limits should have the goal of:

- Reducing the appearance or reality of corruption
- Leveling the playing field for women and minorities
- Encouraging more participation by individuals and small donations
- Reduction of costs to run campaigns

Here is why campaign contribution limits are a good idea for Glendale.

Access to government and the political process is a fundamental principle of our democracy. We encourage all citizens to participate in government, not just by voting, but by running for elective office.

One of the barriers to running for office is the cost involved. It costs money to reach voters. Money for mailers, signs, postage and phones. Campaign contribution limits would lower the overall cost of elections by imposing caps on how much any person or organization could contribute.

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January 2008 Calendar

Thursday

January 10

6:30 pm

Voter Service Dinner

Home of Monica Marquez

See page 2

Saturday

January 26

10 am

County League Day

Buena Vista Library

Burbank

See flyer page 4

Tuesday

February 5

Election Day

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued from page 1

Another barrier to running for office has to do with the amounts of money a person can donate. Candidates with connections to large donors can get hefty contributions. This works as an advantage to well-known candidates, and as a disadvantage to candidates who are not well-known, particularly those seeking office for the first time. Contribution limits can level the playing field for newcomers.

Another concern is the appearance or existence of impropriety. Candidates who receive disproportionately large contributions from a single or few donors, such as developers, can appear beholden to those interests. Campaign contribution limits ends that situation.

Another advantage of contribution limits is that it encourages candidates to seek small donations from a wider group of people. This encourages more participation in the political process.

But our studies do not just sit in a drawer—they are a call to action, and we are answering the call. I recently appeared before the Glendale City Council to ask for consideration of campaign contribution limits. It was a first step. And I will be asking our members to take the next step with me—appearing before the Glendale City Council on Tuesday evenings to speak about the benefits of campaign contribution limits.

But in order to effect this change, we also need the support of our members and of the broader Glendale community.

To that end, I have been attending meetings of the Glendale Homeowner's Coordinating Council (GHCC), enlisting their support in engaging the Glendale City Council on this issue. We would like the GHCC to sign a resolution supporting the concept of campaign contribution limits in Glendale elections (not necessarily for a specific amount—that could be worked out later), supply volunteers to contact City Council members and the City Attorney, and volunteers to contact the Glendale News Press.

I will keep you up to date on our progress.

Monica

Voter Service Dinner

Thursday, January 10 at 6:30 pm at
Monica's Home

JOIN US for a fun evening and learn about Voter Service. Dinner and dessert will be provided

- Learn about how to do a pro-con presentation for the February 2008 election
- Learn how to register voters

If you plan to attend, please call Monica Marquez at (818) 760-3667. You may also e-mail Monica at mmarquez47@earthlink.net. **The deadline to RSVP is January 7.**

Exciting Redistricting News! League Supports Voters FIRST Initiative (a call for action from LWVC)

AFTER ALMOST THREE YEARS of negotiations with the legislature and good government groups across California, the League has sadly concluded that the legislature will not place a good redistricting reform measure on the ballot next year. After careful consideration, the LWVC board has enthusiastically decided to support the Voters FIRST redistricting reform initiative that we hope will be on the November 2008 ballot. Redistricting information can be found on the Web at <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/redistrict/>.

So it's all hands on deck for a grassroots campaign to bring this to the ballot! Let's give voters a chance to decide if they want to put an end to the inherent conflict of interest in the current system, so that they can choose their legislators and not the other way round. This is where the League shines: doing the hands-on work that makes democracy work in our communities.

We need volunteers—lots of volunteers who will make a difference. The first phase is signature gathering. If your League and your individual members are interested in joining this effort, e-mail or call Advocacy Assistant Maggie Young (916-442-7215); myoung@lwvc.org. Sign on for an exciting experience in making democracy work.

More information regarding the California Voter FIRST Initiative will appear in the February issue of the Voter.



Community Leaders Breakfast Meeting: Water Crisis in California

by Monica Monquez

ON DECEMBER 3, Assemblymember Paul Krikorian of the 43rd District held a Community Leaders Breakfast Meeting at the Castaway Restaurant to provide information about the water crisis affecting California and our local communities. Gwen Cochran, Anna Rundle, Dionisia Rodriguez and Monica Marquez attended on behalf of the League.

The meeting room was full—there were over 100 people, including Burbank Mayor (and Glendale/Burbank League member) Marsha Ramos.

First to speak was Jeff Kightlinger, General Manager for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. **He spoke of the challenges of supplying water to the 19 million people in Southern California. Half of California's population resides in Southern California, which is less than 5% of the state's land mass.** There is not enough natural water, and we have to bring in water from the Sierras.

Fifty percent of our water is imported, but on the flip side, that means that 50% of our water is local groundwater. That water is impacted by local conditions. Last year was the driest since 1977, and that's having an effect.

We also import water from the Colorado River, which is in its eighth year of drought. If the drought continues two to three more years, we will be in shortage. In addition, we share Colorado river water with seven other states. According to agreements drawn up long ago, Arizona would be the first state to be in shortage, then Nevada. That's an intense political battle looming on the horizon. The Lake Mead and Lake Powell reservoirs have white rings around them. The storage there is at 50%.

Our last source of supply is the Northern California aqueduct. This State Water Project draws its water from the Sierra snow pack in Northern California. This water is stored behind Oroville Dam and is released throughout the year to flow down the Sacramento River, through the "Delta" to the Banks Pumping Plant, continuing down the California Aqueduct into Southern California. This past year, the Sierra snow pack was only 85% or normal. So now, we're having a dry period in every source of supply.

In addition, there is now a legal impediment to pumping because of a court decision to save a small endangered fish, called the Delta Smelt, that could cause us to lose 25-30% of the water from Northern California.

However, despite the bad news, there is some room for optimism. Southern California has invested in water over the years, through reclamation and recycling. From 1990 to the present, we've imported the same amount of water, but have added 4 million people to the population!

Mr. Kightlinger concluded that we're looking at rationing within two years if the situation is not addressed. Tough decisions need to be made. Infrastructure fixes can do this. He suggested that we need to separate our drinking water from our ecosystem water. We need to build a canal around the delta. It was voted down in 1980, but the legislature is working now on it.

Next to speak was Assemblymember Krikorian to give an update from Sacramento. He is a member of a Special Committee on Water.

First he brought up the Delta Smelt. He referred to it as the canary in the coal mine. The Delta is the most important water ecosystem. A rapid drop off of the smelt means changes in salinity, and changes in temperature. So the ecosystem is going into collapse.

The debate in Sacramento is over what's the right course. There is agreement that we are in crisis, and that we have to guarantee reliable sources of water to California. It's been neglected. Ecosystem protection must be worked on. Problems in the Delta must be fixed and made safe.

In addition, the levees are vulnerable to collapse. A major failure of the levees could mean a Katrina-like disaster. There is consensus on ground water quality and protection.

There is a difference between the two political parties. The central debate is water storage. Republican representatives are in favor of dams and reservoirs. The current Republican proposal would

WATER CRISIS continued on page 9



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

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THE IMPENDING WATER CRISIS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA – IT'S HERE!

A LOOK AT SUPPLY, DEMAND, RECYCLING, AND CONSERVATION.

DISTINGUISHED PANEL

Ground Water/Groundwater Remediation	Wendy Phillips
Conservation/ Recycling	MWD Representative
Water Rates/Local Spreading Grounds	Freeman Allan
Desalination	Jack Sullivan

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

DOROTHY GREEN

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League _____

Name(s) _____

Deadline is January 18, 2008.

Late fee is \$25.00 after Jan. 18th.

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
WHERE WE STAND

FEBRUARY 5, 2008 ELECTION

PROP 91 Transportation Funds

OPPOSE

The League supports stable funding for transportation projects, but Proposition 91 is not the way to provide it. Measures like this remove the flexibility that our representatives need in crafting state budgets, especially in difficult times. Even the proponents of Prop 91 urge a NO vote on this measure, recognizing that its aims were accomplished by Prop 1A of 2006.

PROP 92 Community Colleges: Funding, Governance, Fees

OPPOSE

Proposition 92 locks in new constitutional provisions that would mandate increased spending on K-14 education without regard to the overall state budget situation. It doesn't provide new revenues and thus it threatens our ability to address the state's other pressing needs. The League respects supporters' desire for adequate, stable funding and improved governance in the community college system. However, we cannot support further restrictions on the state's ability to fund *all* the programs that serve Californians, especially in our tight budget times.

PROP 93 Limits on Legislators' Terms in Office

NEUTRAL

This initiative, by itself, makes relatively minor changes to the structure of legislative term limits. Without a package that includes reform of the redistricting process, it does not achieve meaningful improvement of the functioning of our state legislature.

Because League positions do not cover the issues in **PROPS 94 through 97, Referenda on Amendments to Indian Gaming Compacts**, the LWVC is taking no stand on those measures.

11/27/07

VOTE ON FEBRUARY 5!

The LWVC Opposes Prop 92: Time to Stop Digging!

THE LEAGUE of Women Voters of California opposes Proposition 92, the community college governance and funding measure on the February 2008 ballot.

In light of the League's support for a community college system with sufficient resources to offer all Californians access to a quality higher education, some may ask why the League would oppose a measure that could increase funding and reinforce the college system's governance structure. Perhaps the simplest explanation is the adage that says, "If you are in a hole, stop digging."

California has dug itself into a budget hole with what appears to be a permanent structural deficit, in which expenditures continue to exceed revenues. Unless significant changes are made, we will continue to find ourselves papering over shortfalls, even in relatively good years, and making painful cuts or going further into debt in bad years.

Our current revenue structure does not allow us to maintain the current level of services provided by existing programs, meet growing infrastructure needs, and improve some services that Californians desire. Any suggestion of either raising rates on existing taxes or adding new ones faces a determined minority in the legislature that denies the necessary two-thirds vote for passage.

Some ballot measures on popular issues have succeeded in securing new revenues for specific programs, such as tobacco taxes for early childhood development programs and, more recently, higher taxes on upper-income taxpayers for new mental health programs. These, however, typically mandate that spending be used only for new or expanded programs, not to replace existing funding in those areas. This can have the perverse effect of causing existing programs to be cut back even as new ones are started.

Other measures, like Proposition 98 (which guarantees that K-14 education will receive about 40 percent of the General Fund) and Proposition 49 (which guarantees funding for after-school programs), mandate spending without adding any new revenues.

Proposition 98 and payment on the state debt must be paid for before any other expenditures, and the newest bond measures, added to the deficit financing bonds passed in 2004, have driven up the level of debt service. Add in all the other ballot measures that have created or expanded programs without paying for them, and there is very little money left in the General Fund for discretionary spending. In contrast, the League's positions on state and local government finance demand that we give preference to measures that *increase* the flexibility of the system, rather than tie the hands of legislators and the Governor even more when dealing with a difficult budget situation.

The end result is that any new required spending is likely to come from cuts to some existing programs. Experience has taught us that those cuts are most likely to fall on programs for health or welfare, which so far have seldom had financial backers who could qualify and win ballot measure campaigns to protect their funding.

The LWVC has positions that clearly support better funding for a variety of programs, including the community colleges. But if those programs are entitled to a slice of the budget, we can be certain it will be at the expense of other programs we also support.

We strongly support California's community colleges, and we agree that there is need for systemic reform. However, we do not believe that Proposition 92 is the way to address these needs.

Proposition 92 not only would mandate increased spending without regard for the overall state budget situation and without adding a new revenue source, but it also requires a cut in community college fees, even though they are low compared to other similar college systems and are waived for students with financial need. The basic problem is that we cannot support even more ballot-box budgeting without knowing what the real tradeoffs will be and who will ultimately bear the costs.

The League of Women Voters Through the Decades!

Compiled by Kay J. Maxwell

The Voter will present the history of the League of Women Voters from its beginning. Look for more in following issues.

Founding and Early History:

FROM THE SPIRIT of the suffrage movement and the shock of the First World War came a great idea—that a nonpartisan civic organization could provide the education and experience the public needed to assure the success of democracy. The League of Women Voters was founded on that idea.



Carrie Chapman Catt In her address to the National American Woman Suffrage Association's (NAWSA) 50th convention in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1919, President Carrie Chapman Catt proposed the creation of a league of women voters to "finish the fight" and aid in the reconstruction of the nation. And so a League of Women Voters was formed within NAWSA, composed of the organizations in the states where woman suffrage had already been attained.

The next year, on February 14, 1920, six months before the 19th amendment to the Constitution was ratified, the League was formally organized in Chicago as the National League of Women Voters. Catt described the purpose of the new organization:

"The League of Women Voters is not to dissolve any present organization but to unite all existing organizations of women who believe in its principles. It is not to lure women from partisanship but to combine them in an effort for legislation which will protect coming movements, which we cannot even foretell, from suffering the untoward conditions which have hindered for so long the coming of equal suffrage. Are the women of the United States big enough to see their opportunity?"

Maud Wood Park became the first national president of the League and thus the first League leader to rise to that challenge. She had steered the women's suffrage amendment through Congress in the last two years before ratification and liked nothing better than legislative work. From the beginning, however, it was apparent that the legislative goals of the League would not be exclusively focused on women's issues and that education aimed at all of the electorate was in order. For almost 90 years, the League has helped millions of women and men become informed participants in government. And it has tackled a diverse range of public policy issues.

From the beginning the League took action on its stands; for several years, through effective lobbying,

From the beginning, it was apparent that the legislative goals of the League would not be exclusively focused on women's issues and that education aimed at all of the electorate was in order.

the League got selected issues included in the platforms of both major political parties and worked for enactment of legislation furthering its program goals. Over the years many procedural changes have been made in the way League program is defined, adopted and structured, but through all the changes the

basic concept of study-member agreement-action has remained constant.

The League is political, but non-partisan. It never supports political parties or candidates, but it does study issues, develop consensus positions and then actively work to support those positions. As Carrie Chapman Catt noted in 1919, *"Is the (League) political? Certainly, but not partisan. Its members are as free as other women to join and vote with the party of their choice. They make no pledge otherwise in joining the League."*

'Hybrid Democracy' Hamstrings State

by Janis R. Hirohama, Special to The Bee, November 2, 2007

NEWs ABOUT THE STRUGGLE over state water bonds, the state treasurer's recent report on the affordability of the state debt and a new book from the Public Policy Institute of California highlight serious questions about California's continuing problems with ballot initiatives and budgets.

The PPIC book, "The Coming Age of Direct Democracy," suggests that California has moved to a "hybrid democracy" in which voters set policy by initiatives, and legislators and governors must learn to reach bipartisan consensus to craft proposals on complicated subjects that can be taken to the voters.

The League of Women Voters of California supports representative democracy, with our elected representatives working together to address public issues and facing the voters' judgment on what they have done. This idea has been seriously eroded by the requirement that both the state budget and taxes garner a two-thirds vote for passage. **The votes of those citizens who elect a one-third minority of the Legislature are thus worth twice as much as the votes of citizens who vote for members of the majority.**

Under the two-thirds requirement, the Legislature has been unable to raise revenues even for services that the public expects to have, let alone for new projects needed to keep our infrastructure and economy in good working order.

Is resorting to the ballot the solution? Not in our opinion. Ballot measures are by their nature inflexible and, if they address the question of where the money will come from at all, usually promise that for most voters it will be from "someone else." Campaigns for bond measures advertise insistently that passing a bond measure does not require any new taxes, and the possibility of user fees never figures prominently in those campaigns.

The league has studied both state finance and initiatives for many years. We support ballot measures as a "safety valve" when the Legislature has clearly and

persistently failed to do the people's business. However, most ballot measures now come from well-financed special interests with little regard for the state budget consequences. When proponents do include new revenues, they typically require that the funds be used only to finance their measure, and they make the measure nearly impossible to amend.

Under the two-thirds requirement, the Legislature has been unable to raise revenues even for services that the public expects to have, let alone for new projects needed to keep our infrastructure and economy in good working order.

At this point, by passing ballot measures voters have mandated how they want most of the general fund money spent. Proposition 98 alone requires that almost half of the general fund go to education. Proposition 98 money and debt service payments are constitutionally required to be paid ahead of any other costs.

Both the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office predict significant revenue shortfalls in the coming year and a

growing budget deficit going into next year's budget battles.

Can we continue to run the state with a random mix of ballot measures and a state government that is expected to operate under them without authority to make changes when the mix doesn't work? Will California voters start looking at where the "hybrid democracy" of the ballot box has gotten us? Or will we simply continue to hamstring our elected representatives, blame them for a lack of viable solutions and enact more quick fixes?

The treasurer's report points out that our infrastructure is decaying and was never planned to serve our expected population growth. The public seems open to investing in needed improvements, and the Legislature and governor agree on the needs, if not the details. The report suggests a number of changes on both the revenue and expenditure side that could close the gap over the next few years.

It is time for a broader public conversation that is not limited to raising taxes or cutting programs. Let's begin with a dialogue about our priorities for California and then consider the fairest way to pay for them.

WATER CRISIS continued from page 3

cost \$10 billion. Half of that would be earmarked for three projects, none of them for Southern California. The Democratic counter proposal is that with \$5 billion, groundwater cleanup and systemic delivery can be accomplished. The debate continues.

Assemblymember Krikorian noted that they were hoping to have something on the February 2008 ballot, but that did not take place. Now they're hoping to have something on the June ballot. This may be a once in a lifetime opportunity to fix the system and get it right. The issue affects everyone in California.

He concluded by noting Southern California's success in water conservation. The DWP has added 1 million customers without adding a drop of water.

Overall, I found the program to be very thought provoking. Up until this meeting, I had not really been focusing on the drastic state of our water supply. It has been easy to take water for granted, but now I'll be much more mindful whenever I run the tap.

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the League
in your will.

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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 (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$30.00 for a one-year student membership

I am unable to join League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$ _____

Name/Names _____

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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.

The Voter

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 informed and active participation 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.



HOLIDAY PARTY 2007

Glendale/Burbank league members enjoyed a festive evening on December 6 at the Ocean View Grille in Montrose. A special thank you to Rosa Frommer, our party planner this year.

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BURBANK/GLENDALE

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LWV California
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