

May 2006 Calendar

LWVC Leadership Council

Sacramento

Saturday May 6/7

LWVGB Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 20, 10 am

DeBell Golf Club

Speaker Mitch O'Farrell

The LA River Revitalization Plan

See flyer on page 2

Last Day to Register to Vote in the June Primary

May 22

Burbank Charter Revision Public Hearings

Monday, May 22, 5:30 pm

Buena Vista Branch

Burbank Library

300 N Buena Vista Street

Saturday June 3 10 am

Fire Training Center

1845 N Ontario Street

Monday, June 5, 5:30 pm

Fire Training Center

1845 N Ontario Street

For more information

[http://www.ci.burbank.ca.us/](http://www.ci.burbank.ca.us/CharterReview/index.htm)

[CharterReview/index.htm](http://www.ci.burbank.ca.us/CharterReview/index.htm)

President's Message

Deeply impressed. Those two words sum up my feeling about the League's Local Election Systems study. The tremendous hard work and dedication of our committee members was on display at our second consensus meeting on April 21.

First, **Arline Ames** and **Sylvia Sutton** presented information on whether city clerks and treasurers should be elected or appointed. They each did copious amounts of research, interviewing clerks and treasurers of at least ten other jurisdictions. Both presentations were well organized and thoughtful. After a thorough discussion, we came to the consensus that the League should support the appointment of city treasurer by the city manager. However, we did not come to a consensus on whether the city clerk should be an appointed position.

Next, **Chris and Tom Carson** did a presentation on whether local municipal candidates should win elections by a plurality of votes, or if they should be required to meet a minimum threshold. Then, it was onto the often confusing but extremely important topic of whether the League should support instant runoff or ranked choice voting. We played a

game that demonstrated choice voting. After a lively but courteous discussion, we came to a consensus that the League should support a threshold requirement, but were not able to come to a consensus on whether the League should support instant runoff or ranked choice voting.

The Annual Meeting is coming up. It's scheduled for May 20, and it's special to me because it marks the end of my first year as your president. We

The Annual Meeting is coming up on May 20. Mitch O'Farrell will speak about the revitalization of the Los Angeles River.

will transact some important League business, including the decision of the membership to adopt the consensus of our Local Election Systems Study. I will be making some remarks, which I hope will not put the membership to sleep. Plus, we have an interesting speaker, **Mitch O'Farrell**,

who will speak about the revitalization of the Los Angeles River. The project seeks to change what is now a cement flood channel filled with trash bags and shopping carts to a rich resource that may include parks, recreation fields and walkways. The river borders both Glendale and Burbank and its future is of interest to all of us.

I do hope you'll join us at our Annual Meeting. I'm looking forward to seeing you

Monica Marquez



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF GLENDALE/BURBANK

67th ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday May 20

DeBell Club House Restaurant

1500 East Walnut Drive

Burbank

(free parking across the street from the clubhouse)

Registration/coffee 9:30am

Meeting 10am

Salad buffet \$20.00 per person

Speaker: Mitch O'Farrell

District Director of Constituent Services

Offices of LA City Council President Eric Garcetti

The LA River Revitalization Plan

Please RSVP by May 10 to

Rosa Frommer
1762 Allen Avenue
Glendale CA 91021
(818) 243-5675

Name(s) _____

Number of vegetarian plates _____ Number allergic to nuts _____

Enclosed is a check for _____ for _____ salad buffets

California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2006

Legislative Bond Act

THE QUESTION

Should the state borrow \$600 million through the sale of general obligation bonds to provide 65 percent of the cost of projects for constructing and renovating local public libraries?

THE SITUATION

Public libraries are generally built and operated by cities, counties, and special districts. A similar measure for \$350 million, The California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2000, funded 45 projects. The funds from that measure are mostly spent.

A 2003 California State Library survey estimated that \$4.4 billion is needed for 579 library projects. Projects would include technological upgrading, seismic retrofitting and structural repairs, and expansion of facilities to keep pace with population growth. The funds from Proposition 81 would meet a portion of those needs.

THE PROPOSAL

Proposition 81 would:

- authorize the sale of \$600 million in general obligation bonds to fund a library construction and renovation program, with 35 percent in matching funds contributed by local government agencies
- give priority to eligible applications that were submitted but not funded under Proposition 14 (2000); no more than \$300 million of the new funding would be reserved for these applications
- reserve \$25 million for “joint use” projects serving both a library and a public education institution (such as a school district or college)
- establish a seven-member board to review project applications, with the State Librarian as administrator of projects.

FISCAL EFFECT

The total cost to the state’s General Fund is estimated to be \$1.2 billion over 30 years, according to the Legislative Analyst. Local agencies would contribute 35 percent in matching funds. After completion, the additional annual operating costs for local agencies could total several million dollars statewide.

WHAT A YES OR NO VOTE MEANS

A **YES** vote means that \$600 million in general obligation bonds could be sold to provide grants for construction, renovation or expansion of local public libraries.

A **NO** vote means that these bonds would not be sold.

SUPPORTERS SAY

- Proposition 81 invests in our local communities wisely; it does not raise our taxes, the funds cannot be used for local administrative costs, and the 35 percent matching fund requirement maximizes the use of limited state funding.
- We need to invest in literacy and life-long learning. Illiteracy is often passed from generation to generation, and adult illiteracy hurts our economic competitiveness.

OPPONENTS SAY

- Bond financing ties up our taxes for 30 years, even if the technological improvements become obsolete or if the economy collapses.
- Local governments that cannot raise 35 percent in matching funds cannot participate, but taxpayers will still pay for projects in other communities through their state taxes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

PRO: 916-786-7605, www.yesforlibraries.com

CON: 916-991-9300, www.protecttaxpayers.com

Preschool Education: Tax on Incomes Over \$400,000 for Individuals; \$800,000 for Couples

Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute

THE QUESTION

Should California create a new preschool program for children, funded by an increase in personal income taxes?

THE SITUATION

Most California children attend some preschool or child care program. A program where children are cared for in groups is referred to as center-based care. Approximately 62 percent of the state's 4-year olds attend such programs, the participation rate varying widely by family income level. About one-half of these children are served by existing state and federal programs, designed primarily for low-income families. There are two main state programs, costing approximately \$360 million annually, and the federal Head Start program in California costs \$500 million annually.

THE PROPOSAL

The Preschool for All Act (PFA) creates a free, voluntary preschool program for all four-year-olds beginning in the fall of 2010. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) would have overall responsibility for these preschool services, which would include:

1. a program that runs a minimum of three hours per day, 180 days per year;
2. state preschool standards and guidelines coordinated with K-3 education; and
3. minimum class size and staffing requirements.

The program would be funded by an additional 1.7 percent income tax rate (effective January 1, 2007) on individuals' taxable income over \$400,000 (\$800,000 for married couples). These added revenues would not be considered for any limit on state expenditures, nor when calculating educational minimum funding guarantees. Preschool teachers and instructional aides would be required to meet higher educational standards. The initiative would provide up to \$700 million to address educational requirements.

Under certain circumstances the Legislature could require a parental fee, but no child could be denied access based on an inability to pay. The amount the state is now spending for state preschool and child care would have to be maintained, and PFA funds could not be used to supplant state or federal funding for children with special needs.

FISCAL EFFECT

The increase in personal income taxes would result in revenues for 2006-07 of roughly \$500 million, increasing to about \$2.6 billion by 2010-11; such amounts are expected to fully fund the educational expenditures required by the measure.

WHAT A YES OR NO VOTE MEANS

A YES vote means that the California Constitution and state law would be amended to create a new preschool program, funded by an increase in personal income tax rates for high-income taxpayers.

A NO vote means that the proposed amendments to the California Constitution and state law would not be made to create this preschool program. The current federal and state programs would be unchanged.

SUPPORTERS SAY

- Prop. 82 strengthens all education by giving children the right to a high-quality preschool education. It encourages parental involvement, allowing choice among public, private and nonprofit preschool providers.
- Prop. 82 invests in our children and our future, resulting in savings from reduced remedial education, lower high school drop out rates, and the economic benefits of a better-educated workforce.
- Prop. 82 protects taxpayers with strict financial controls and limits administrative expenses.

OPPONENTS SAY

- Analysts expect this program will cost much more than predicted, with related cuts in education that worsen the current fragile quality of K-12 public schools. Public preschools will put private preschools out of business.
- California already provides preschool and daycare programs for families in need. We should properly fund existing programs and make them readily available to those who truly need them.
- This measure will have a significant negative impact on revenues for other important programs such as schools, public safety, transportation and health care.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

PRO: 310-786-7605, www.yeson82.com

CON: 916-218-6640, www.NoProp82.org

The League is **recommending a "YES" vote on Proposition 81 and is taking no position on Propositions 82** in the June 6, 2006 election.

For more detailed information on these two measures visit the LWVC website:

<http://ca.lwv.org/action/prop0606/prop81.html>

<http://ca.lwv.org/action/prop0606/prop82.html>

EdSource Conference 2006: School Accountability and Funding

The EdSource conference was held this year on March 16 and 17. I attended the session on March 17 in Pomona. The conference featured the California Secretary of Education, Alan Bersin, a panel of superintendents from several California school districts, Ted Mitchell, Chair, the Governor's Advisory Committee on Education Excellence, and a panel of educational researchers. The morning session focused on accountability. Alan Bersin described the progress of the "Harmonization Project," an effort to address accountability on three levels: 1) accountability system; 2) intervention; 3) transparency. (Bersin is working on this project with State Superintendent Jack O'Connell and other leaders.) Linda Lammers, LWV Glendale/Burbank

ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

California is attempting to develop a metric that harmonizes the California API (Academic Performance Index) system and the federal AYP (Academic Yearly Progress) system. API was launched in California with the passage of legislation in 1999. In 2002, AYP was introduced under "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB). Both systems are currently in effect in California and they are quite different. California's API system is a growth model, and in contrast, the federal AYP system is a status model. California will be submitting a new proposal to the federal government this year to meet the requirements of NCLB which uses API as its core.

Bersin pointed out that there are some disadvantages to API. It may not put enough spotlight on sub-group issues and may not do as much to help narrow the achievement gap. Recommendations for changes to API have

been proposed and should be addressed this spring. The goal is to strengthen API.

INTERVENTION

Bersin mentioned that efforts are underway to create an intervention framework that is state based, but consistent with federal law (NCLB). The goal is to submit a proposal to the state legislature this year. He mentioned a triage system in which the state addresses the most serious problems and other issues are dealt with at the city and county level.

TRANSPARENCY

An important change relating to transparency will be the reporting of API and AYP data in advance of the school year start date. Also, the testing window will be shortened to accommodate the earlier reporting of this data.

EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

Sue Burr, Deputy Executive Director, California County Superintendents Educations Services Association moderated a panel of school superintendents consisting of Carl Cohn, Superintendent, San Diego City Schools, Jean Fuller, Superintendent, Bakersfield City School District, Dale Vigil, Superintendent, Hayward Unified School District.

Another problem is the difficulty of the public understanding the data.

A common theme was the need for schools to develop the strongest possible leaders and school principals. The panel expressed concern that the current resources and support available in school districts, such as training for beginning administrators, are insufficient to achieve this goal.

The panel also recommended the use of teacher leaders and coaches who are rotated, and they wanted to see more time for site administrators to be in the classrooms. Funding, lack of time, and elements of the educational code were seen as potential obstacles.

Another area discussed was parental involvement. Jean Fuller stressed the importance of asking parents to be activists and demanding quality education. She mentioned that the development of a positive the parent-teacher relationship can yield many benefits. She also spoke about educating the parents. In Bakersfield, the district has helped to provide classes for parents to explain what the test scores of their children mean.

Carl Cohn discussed K - 8 education and the problem of students coming to high school without basic skills, such as grade

school math. He was concerned about social promotion and an overemphasis on the high school exit exam at the expense of standards for other levels, such as middle school.

Cohn also mentioned a study on failing schools that had improved which suggested that trust in schools is a core resource for school improvement. Relationships are important.

Dale Vigil discussed the efficacy of the API and AYP systems. He likes API because it provides targets and AYP because it identifies sub-groups. He stressed that not enough time is provided to achieve the AYP (federal standards), especially in connection with special need students. In the area of teacher evaluation, he recommended giving teachers time at school to work together and use the process of peer reflection, rather than peer review.

Vigil also focused on the importance of looking beyond the content of curriculum provided and to look at the process. We assume that students have the *skills* to perform – reading, writing, speaking, thinking and use of academic language. He recommends more interactive classrooms in which the students can challenge each other on bigger concepts and work on these skills.

State Advocates Mobilize to Move SB 840 to Governor's Desk

Years of pushing forward through health care studies and prior single payer legislation have led to SB 840 (Kuehl) that provides for universal health insurance for Californians. Initiated by Health Care for All-California, this bill with 39 co-authors has passed the Senate, the Assembly Health Committee, and now is poised to pass in the Assembly. The issue of universal single payer health care is in the public view and is a top priority for California's leadership. Throughout this longtime effort, the League of Women Voters of California has supported HCA-CA's efforts including every legislative attempt to achieve universal single payer health care.

Now, is the time to escalate this effort and build support by creating a massive grassroots movement. To achieve this goal, HCA-CA introduced the OneCareNow Campaign for passage of SB 840. The campaign defines, in simple terms, a unique California vision for single payer health care. "OneCareNow" means one plan, now. It means one standard of high quality care for all. It means everyone will be in one risk pool and be covered by one insurance fund.

OneCareNow's organizational framework for building the movement into a major political force is the statewide petition drive and 365-city campaign. The petition drive is spreading across the state and can be accessed at OneCareNow.org. It will continue to grow as advocates and petition signers spread the word about this viable solution to the health care crisis.

The central idea of the 365-city campaign is simple. Starting this August, there will be an activity held every day in a different town or city that will focus on educating and advocating for universal health care insurance. Supporters will reach out to local governments, schools, officials, officeholders and others to grow the support. The activities will begin in small towns and culminate 365 days later in the largest city, Los Angeles. Afterwards, people from these 365 cities and throughout the state will hold a huge rally in Sacramento in August 2007 to call for universal health insurance.

Other organizations also are gearing up to work for SB 840. California Nurses Association is now a sponsoring organization. Others such as California Physicians Alliance, California Teachers Association, California School Employees Association, Latino Issues Forum and the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry, California have made passing SB 840 a top priority.

As for all prior efforts, the LWVC has continued its support by endorsing the OneCareNow Campaign. This campaign, and especially the petition drive, is critical to building the momentum to get SB 840 to the governor's desk this year. It only takes a simple majority to pass SB 840. Intense support from constituents will move the Assembly to pass the bill. The LWVC urges leagues to participate in the campaign at the highest level possible for their members.

Passage of SB 840 paves the way for final passage of universal health insurance. To this end, the OneCareNow campaign will continue after its passage. The companion bill SB 1784 (Kuehl) was introduced this year to provide the funding mechanism for SB 840's universal insurance fund. The senator and other legislators are working to define the complex details that must be added before this bill can move forward. SB 1784 will require a two-thirds majority to pass.

Working closely with HCA-CA, LWVC's eight health care committee members are well informed on the issues. Each member has been assigned as a resource person for about nine leagues. Notification and information soon will be forthcoming to all League presidents to provide to interested members.

For more information, please contact Barbara Storey, program director for health care at 619-231-8231 or bs_lwv004@cox.net.

*Barbara Storey
LWVC Off Board Health Care Director*

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)
- \$30.00 for a one-year student membership

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

I am unable to join League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$ _____. **Gifts made payable to "LWV Education Fund" are tax deductible.**

March 28, 2006
The Honorable Bruce McPherson
Secretary of State of California
1500 11th Street
Sacramento, California 95814

LWVC Statement on CalVoter

Dear Secretary McPherson:

The League of Women Voters of California is concerned that under new state procedures for adding registered voters to the CalVoter state database, it appears that a large number of registrations are being inappropriately rejected.

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 requires each state to implement, by January 1, 2006, “a single, uniform, official, centralized, interactive computerized statewide voter registration list.” Recognizing that the state of California would not have such a database in place by that deadline, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the California Secretary of State entered into a memorandum of agreement to update and use the existing CalVoter registration system for HAVA compliance. Emergency regulations were adopted by the Secretary of State to implement that memorandum.

Judging from statistics compiled since the first of this year for Los Angeles County, most of the rejected registrations and re-registrations fall into one of two categories. One type of problem occurs when individuals provide a driver’s license number or the last four digits of their Social Security number (SSN) on their registration form, but their name or birth date is not exactly the same as in the DMV records. Another type of problem occurs when individuals do not provide a driver’s license number or the last four digits of their SSN on the registration form although their other information can be matched with DMV or other state agency records.

Since many registrations are in fact re-registrations prompted by a voter’s change of address, party, etc., many of these individuals have already been on the voter registration rolls in California. However, in both types of situation, the current system does not allow any of those individuals to be included in the statewide registration list.

We must object. Our procedures should guard against inappropriate elimination of legitimate voters from the system. It is not enough to allow them to cast a provisional ballot if they make it to the polls. Being excluded from the registration list means that they will not receive a sample ballot or a ballot pamphlet, they will not receive notice of the location of their polling places, and they will not be permitted to request an absentee ballot.

We hope that a resolution to this problem can be reached quickly. We urge you to find alternatives to the current rules (data standards and match criteria) for processing registrations. If possible, that would be done by administrative procedures available to you. However, if it proves that legislation is needed, the LWVC would support that approach. Under HAVA, it is intended that information provided by other databases, such as DMV data, will **supplement** the information provided by voters when they register or re-register, thereby helping to **correct** an application so it can be processed and accepted, if the applicant is eligible, instead of rejected.

It is a well-known problem that mistakes are made in database administration and management. Applicants transpose or forget numbers and letters, and make other noncritical errors as well. Officials likewise inadvertently make data entry errors. Databases themselves maintain these errors over time, compounding problems if databases are compared and matched with each other.

A well-run system will use the wide variety of information that is available from a number of sources to make corrections in order to maintain an accurate system. If, for example, the applicant transposes digits in his or her driver’s license number, as evidenced by the driver’s license record, a correction is made and the application is processed.

The corollary is that **a failure to match the applicant or his/her data with another database must not result in the rejection of the applicant.** This is important for a variety of reasons. First, matching is not an eligibility requirement under HAVA or state law. Second, the database information is likely to have significant errors. The Social Security Administration acknowledges that its data is not foolproof, data entry and other errors in DMV and voter registration agencies are well known, and simple matching mistakes—from the use of different forms of names to transposed or missing numbers—are significant. Third, the absence of information does not suggest a problem. Only positive information of a disqualifying characteristic should result in the rejection of a voter in a database matching system. Rejection must be based on a positive match of the identity of the voter, and a positive match with a disqualifying characteristic.

In the voter registration context, the failure to find a match does not provide information that the voter is ineligible. If there is no match, the voter registration application should be processed on its own terms.

If the applicant is eligible to vote, then his or her name should be entered on the list. If necessary, the applicant can be placed on a “pending” list of individuals who receive the normal election materials and services but must provide identification (if a first-time voter) or swear to his or her identity in order to cast a normal ballot.

Uniform and nondiscriminatory practices are important for any process concerning the registration of voters. We must not go into this election season burdened by processes that disenfranchise voters.

Sincerely,
/signed/ Jacqueline Jacobberger
President

The Voter

THE VOTER IS PUBLISHED nine times a year by the League of Women Voter of Glendale/Burbank, California.

President: Monica Marquez

Editor: Chris Carson

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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.



249 N. Brand Blvd.
Glendale, CA 91203
Corner of Brand/Calif.
tel: 818.244.4448
fax: 818.244.4795
M-F 8:30-6, Sat. 10-4
1125 E. Broadway
Glendale, CA 91205
Btwn Chevy Chase/Adams
tel: 818.242.4270
fax: 818.242.0525
M-F 8:30-6:30
Sat. 10-4, Sun. 12-4



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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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7714 Via Capri
Burbank CA 91504
(818) 247-2407

League websites:
LWV Glendale/Burbank
<http://www.gb.ca.lwvnet.org>

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

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

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