

### September 2003 Calendar

Thursday

September 25

7-9pm

**THE PATRIOT ACT AND  
YOUR CIVIL LIBERTIES  
A PUBLIC FORUM**

COMMUNITY ROOM

GLENDALE FIRE STATION 21

421 OAK STREET

GLENDALE

Saturday

November 15

10:00 am

**PROPOSITION 13**

**TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER**

Lunch Speakers

Ed Edelman and Joel Fox debate  
the effects of Proposition 13

PICKWICK GARDENS

BURBANK

Watch for news next month

## President's Message

Chris Carson, President

**L**IVING IN A DEMOCRACY can negatively impact your stress levels. This has certainly been the case for the past two years. On September 11, 2001 our country and our deepest beliefs were attacked by people who rejected everything that America stands for. We have faced many challenges over the course of our history. And the past twenty four months have indeed tested our resolve.

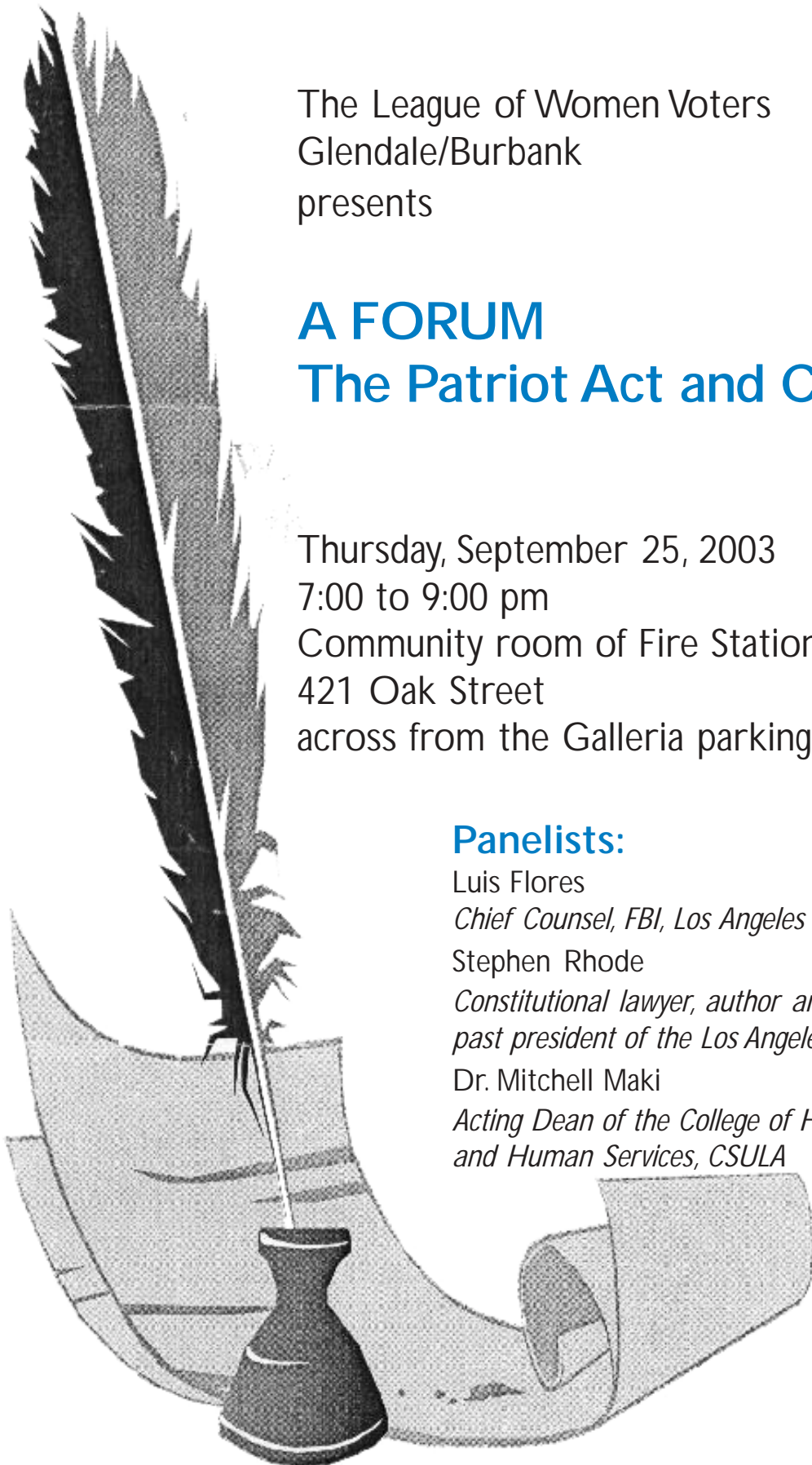
This September, as we pause to commemorate the events of September 11, 2001, we here in California find ourselves in an unusual position. Our political system seems to have ground to a standstill and we are caught in the throes of a grueling recall election without precedent in modern California politics. Serious questions of state finance and popular will vie for attention with a media circus that has reduced these grave questions to a tabloid sideshow. In many ways we are, most definitely, the entertainment capital of the world. And half the planet tunes in daily to watch the performance.

There are other issues however, which need our attention. One of them is the ongoing problem of balancing our need to defend ourselves against foreign aggressors with concerns for our

own civil liberties. In the calm days before the recall storm broke, we planned a forum on the Patriot Act and Civil Liberties, thinking that September would be an opportune time to focus public attention on this issue. Now, we are competing with a global "media event." Does anybody still care?

We certainly hope so because our League has put together an outstanding program. We have distinguished speakers from the FBI and the American Civil Liberties Union. A respected academic will give his unique perspective on the question. They will challenge all of us to examine the new face of terrorism which confronts us. They will ask us to consider what price we might be willing to pay for safety. They will recall what has happened in the past when fear for safety and civil rights collide. There are no easy answers, no matter what some people might lead us to believe. The choices before us are complex and difficult and come with no guarantees of success. But as citizens of a democracy we have no choice. We must listen, ask questions and deliberate.

Please join us on September 25<sup>th</sup> for the public forum. Invite your family, friends and neighbors. Take time out from the three ring circus of recall and spend two hours considering the future of our democracy.



The League of Women Voters  
Glendale/Burbank  
presents

## **A FORUM**

# **The Patriot Act and Civil Liberties**

Thursday, September 25, 2003  
7:00 to 9:00 pm  
Community room of Fire Station 21  
421 Oak Street  
across from the Galleria parking structure

### **Panelists:**

Luis Flores

*Chief Counsel, FBI, Los Angeles*

Stephen Rhode

*Constitutional lawyer, author and  
past president of the Los Angeles ACLU*

Dr. Mitchell Maki

*Acting Dean of the College of Health  
and Human Services, CSULA*

# Glendale Community College Board of Trustees Vote for "LEED" Sustainable Building Guidelines

RESPONDING TO A REQUEST made in 2002 by a coalition of groups, the Glendale Community College Board of Trustees made a commitment to the environmental health of the GCC campus that should also result in long-term cost savings. In a unanimous vote May 19, 2003, the GCC Board adopted a policy that all new building construction and future building renovations will be done in accordance with the guidelines known as the LEED standards (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Under the new policy, GCC will obtain LEED certification and will strive for the highest LEED standard possible within the resources allocated for each project.

GCC mathematics professor Mike Allen was instrumental in assembling the coalition that brought the LEED rating system to the attention of the Board: Susana Reyes and **Nancy Kent** representing the Sierra Club; **Chris Carson** for the League of Women Voters, Glendale/Burbank; Martin Schlageter of the Coalition for Clean Air; Dave Brain of the GCC faculty and Walker Wells of Global Green USA. Prof. Allen was motivated by an email sent to a listserv from Santa Monica mayor pro tem Kevin McKeown announcing the adoption of the LEED guidelines by the Los

Angeles Community College District. *The Southern Sierran* article "Model City" (June 2002) described the adoption of these guidelines by the Los Angeles City Council.

The LEED guidelines were established by the U.S. Green Building Council to provide a nationally recognized system to rate the level of sustainability of building design and construction. The people responsible for a specific project are able to select sustainable features from an extensive menu that assigns a point value to each item, such as using efficient insulation, natural light, solar energy, recycled building materials, a gray water irrigation system or construction materials that do not produce "off-gassing" of harmful chemicals. For information about the LEED guidelines, go to [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

## BOARD ACTION 5-19-03

\* A resolution on sustainable building construction, establishing a Board Policy to design and construct all new buildings and future building renovations according to sustainable building guidelines developed by the U.S. Green Building Council and known as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards.

Nancy Kent LWVGB member

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of Glendale/Burbank would like to thank MailBoxes Etc. owner Joe Pavone for underwriting a generous portion of the VOTER.

Please make sure to show your appreciation by using the services of MailBoxes Etc. for your copying and mailing needs.

MailBoxes Etc. has two convenient locations in Glendale.



**MAIL BOXES ETC.**

**Andrea Williams**  
Manager/Notary Public

1125 E. Broadway  
Glendale CA 91205  
Broadway/Chevy Chase Drive  
tel: 818.242.4270  
fax: 818.242.0525  
M-F 8:30-6:30  
Sat. 10-4 Sun. 12-4

249 N. Brand Blvd.  
Glendale CA 91203  
Corner Brand/Calif  
tel: 818.244.4448  
fax: 919.244.4795  
Open M-Sat.

# Education Update Planning Committee Seeking Diverse Perspectives

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THE AD HOC COMMITTEE PLANNING the process for updating the LWVC Education position is seeking League members with some specific experiences to assure a diversity of perspectives. Do you know someone who has these experiences and is interested in working on the committee? Will you volunteer?

A person with one or more of these experiences would be valued as a committee member:

- has children currently in elementary school
- current or past school board member
- member or officer of an employees union
- current or former classroom teacher.

The committee is also looking for a member from northern California and one from a rural area. The ad hoc committee already includes members who are willing to continue as part of the update/study committee and who have the following backgrounds: parent involvement/past PTA Council

president, readiness to learn/pre-school, classified administrator, parent of secondary school age children in public school, former classroom teacher, and former administrative (confidential) employee in a K-12 district. Geographic areas already represented are Los Angeles County, Central Valley, and the Bay Area.

If anyone from the League is interested, please contact Joanne Leavitt, ad hoc committee chair, at [ac997@lafn.org](mailto:ac997@lafn.org). The Planning Committee expects to recommend the scope of the study and the names of members to serve on the Study Committee at the September LWVC board meeting.



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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.

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)

- \$50.00 for a one-year individual membership (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$70.00 for a one-year household membership for two members who share the same address (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- 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. Dues are not deductible for tax purposes.

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

# What's Wrong with L.A. County Government?

Saturday, October 4  
9:30 am-2:00 pm  
(Including lunch)

TAIX Restaurant  
1911 Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles

Conveniently located near the Hollywood Fwy and Alvarado

Valet parking \$1.25

## Featured Speaker Michael Feuer

This County League Day will help prepare you  
for the fall County Government Study consensus in your local League.

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Mail your check for \$25 payable to LWV-LAC by Sept. 24 to:

Gwen Cochran 427 E. Walnut Ave. Burbank CA 91501

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

League: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Lunch choice:  Chicken Salad  Vegetarian Salad



## Special Recall Election

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Report from the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/ County Clerk Community Voter Outreach Committee meeting of August 25, 2003:

WITH 135 CANDIDATES for Governor listed on the ballot, voters are urged to study the Sample Ballot they receive before going to the polls. The order in which candidates are listed was decided by random drawings and will not be the same in every precinct. It is suggested that you write down the number listed next to the name of the candidate you want to vote for before going to vote, as these numbers will correspond to those on the ballot for your precinct. It is also important to note the address of your polling place that appears on the back of the Sample Ballot as polling places have been consolidated and may be different from previous locations. Polling places used in the last election will have signs posted saying where voters in that precinct should go. If possible go to the correct location to vote since the ballot order of candidates may not be the same for all precincts and Provisional Ballots would be difficult to correlate. Los Angeles County's ballot will contain Part 1, Part 2, and Propositions 53 and 54 on one ballot card. Some other counties may have to use more than one card.

Part 1 asks: Shall Gray Davis be recalled as Governor of California? Part 2 lists candidates to replace Governor Davis in the event the majority of voters vote to recall him. If you vote not to recall the Governor, you can also vote for your choice to replace him in the event he is recalled.

Election information is available on the Internet at [www.lavote.net](http://www.lavote.net), <http://gb.ca.lwvnet.org>, and <http://www.smartvoter.org>.

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## Touchscreen Early Voting

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FROM SEPTEMBER 24 to October 3, 2003, voters may go to any one of 12 locations to vote by Touchscreen for the October 7th election. The closest location for Glendale/Burbank is the Jackie Robinson Center, 1020 North Fair Oaks Avenue, Pasadena, which will be open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For other locations call (818) 242-5215.

## New Voter Registration Regulations

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ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE NOT been registered before will be affected by new voter registration requirements contained in the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

California's Secretary of State has not yet provided the exact definition of a "first time voter" but new registration forms have now been printed to bring Los Angeles County into compliance with the law. Applicants are now required to supply a driver's license or California I.D. number. If applicants do not have either of these numbers, they are required to list the last four digits of their Social Security number. These numbers will allow the Statewide Voter Database to check identification.

If the applicant is unable or unwilling to provide this information, he/she can still register to vote, but will be required to provide identification the first time he/she goes to the polls to vote. The form of identification that will be accepted is still being discussed, but such items as a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, government paycheck, or government document have been suggested. Voters will be allowed to vote by provisional ballot in case of questions.

First time voters who vote by absentee ballot and have not provided the required information when they registered will need to include copies of authorized identification in the absentee ballot envelope. It will be important for voters who are re-registering to change their address, name, political party, etc. to fill in the portion of the form which asks if they have ever been registered to vote, even if they can't remember all of the information required. Otherwise, they will be considered "first time voters."

The new voter registration form also asks, "Are you a citizen of the United States of America?" and "Will you be 18 years of age on or before election day?" and states, "If you check 'no' in response to either of these questions, do not complete this form." and "It is a felony if you sign this statement even though you know it is untrue; you can be fined and jailed for up to three years." This information is required by HAVA.

# Statewide Special Election October 7, 2003

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THERE WILL BE THREE QUESTIONS on this statewide special election ballot: a two-part question regarding the recall of the governor; Proposition 53; and Proposition 54. The last day to register to vote in this election is September 22, 2003. The first day to apply for an absentee ballot is September 8, 2003; the last day such applications will be accepted will be September 30, 2003.

## RECALL

The recall question contains two parts. You may vote on both parts or on just one. The first part will ask, "Shall Gray Davis be recalled (removed) from the office of governor?" The second part will list the names of candidates running to replace the governor if he is recalled. If you choose to vote for a replacement candidate, you may vote for only one of those candidates. For more information see [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org) or [www.ca.lwv.org](http://www.ca.lwv.org).

There are no party primaries to select candidates and no provision for a runoff if no candidate receives a majority of the vote. If the recall succeeds, the candidate with the largest number of votes is elected to the office and takes office the following day.

There is no limit on the number of candidates who can run. If there are a number of candidates running, the winner could be elected with a relatively low percentage of the vote. The proponents' statement of reasons for recall and the response, if any, filed by the official whose recall is sought are printed on the sample ballots mailed to voters.

According to a Fair Political Practices Commission fact sheet (see [www.fppc.ca.gov/dex.html?id=10](http://www.fppc.ca.gov/dex.html?id=10)), the recall part of the election would be classified as a ballot measure, for which there are no contribution limits under the state Political Reform Act. Thus, the contribution limits of Proposition 34 would not apply either to the proponents of the recall measure or to the elected official who is the target of the recall. However, Proposition 34 contribution limits would apply to the campaigns of the candidates running to succeed the recalled official. As with other elections in California, all

candidates and campaign committees have reporting and disclosure obligations under the Political Reform Act.

For more information:

**Recall process:** See the Secretary of State's Website, [www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections\\_recall\\_faqs.htm](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_recall_faqs.htm), for frequently asked questions about recalls; see also [www.ss.ca.gov/elections/recall.pdf](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/recall.pdf) for a publication, Procedure for Recalling State and Local Officials.

**Recall proponents:** Rescue California, [www.rescuecalifornia.com](http://www.rescuecalifornia.com), 916-443-6703, or People's Advocate, [www.davisrecall.com](http://www.davisrecall.com), 916-482-6175.

**Opponents of the recall:** Taxpayers Against the Governor's Recall, [www.stoptherecall.com](http://www.stoptherecall.com), 916-569-0898 or 213-382-4111.

Or check out "Campaign financing reports" at [www.cal-access.ss.ca.gov/Global/search.asp?SEARCH=Recall+Davis](http://www.cal-access.ss.ca.gov/Global/search.asp?SEARCH=Recall+Davis)

## PROPOSITION 53

FUNDS DEDICATED FOR STATE AND LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE  
(Legislative Constitutional Amendment)

### THE QUESTION

Should the California Constitution be amended to require specified percentages of General Fund revenues to be committed to pay-as-you-go infrastructure projects for state and local governments?

### THE SITUATION

California has hundreds of billions of dollars invested in public infrastructure. This includes facilities and structures for water resources, transportation, higher education, natural resources, criminal justice, health services, and office space. In addition, the state provides funds for local infrastructure, including K-12 schools and community colleges, streets and roads, parks, water treatment, flood control, and jails. This infrastruc-

SPECIAL ELECTION continued on page 8

ture, from time to time, requires modernization or expansion. State infrastructure needs are estimated at \$54 billion over the next five years.

At present the only major dedicated revenues are for transportation (highways and mass transit). In the past five years the state has spent about \$2.3 billion annually on that infrastructure. Most state infrastructure projects use funds from general obligation bonds that must be presented to the voters for approval, or lease-revenue bonds approved by the legislature and repaid out of rent payments. The state has spent about \$4.2 billion of bond proceeds annually over the past five years. Direct General Fund appropriations, totaled about \$275 million annually in the past five years.

## THE PROPOSAL

—establishes an infrastructure investment fund and commits a percentage of the General Fund for “pay-as-you-go” infrastructure projects

—requires the Legislature to allocate the funds annually--50 percent for state-owned projects and 50 percent for local government projects, other than schools and community colleges

—transfers 1 percent of General Fund revenues to the infrastructure fund beginning with the 2006-07 fiscal year, and increases transfers to the fund annually over several years to a maximum of 3 percent of General Fund revenues. Transfers would be subject to increase, decrease, or suspension with revenue increases and decreases.

—reduces the transfer rate if growth in the Proposition 98 school funding guarantee exceeds the percentage growth in revenue. Caps transfers so that total of transfers plus debt payment for bonds would not exceed 7.5 percent of revenue.

## FISCAL EFFECT

The amount of transfers from the General Fund to the infrastructure fund is difficult to determine. The Legislative Analyst’s estimate for 2006-07 is \$850 million, increasing to several billion dollars when transfers reach the 3 percent maximum rate.

## SUPPORTERS SAY

—The Legislature has failed to keep up with critical infrastructure needs such as highways, water systems, and universities in California, and that is damaging both our economy and our quality of life.

—Proposition 53 would meet those needs without raising taxes by requiring a stable pay-as-you-go system of infrastructure financing.

## OPPONENTS SAY

—Less than 30 percent of the state budget is currently discretionary. Proposition 53 locks in spending increases out of limited existing revenues, meaning that the money will come at the expense of other important services such as education, health care and public safety.

—It is a blank check with no oversight or guidelines, which will allow more pork barrel spending by the Legislature.

For more information:

**Supporters:** Yes on California’s Future, Yes on Prop. 53, [www.yeson53.org](http://www.yeson53.org), 916-444-5701.

**Opponents:** California Tax Reform Association, 916-46-4300.

## PROPOSITION 54

CLASSIFICATION BY RACE, ETHNICITY, COLOR, OR NATIONAL ORIGIN  
(Initiative Constitutional Amendment)

## THE QUESTION

Should the California Constitution be amended to restrict state and local governments from “classifying” (collecting and using) information on an individual’s race, ethnicity, color, or national origin?

## THE SITUATION

Currently, information relating to race, ethnicity, color, and national origin is collected by state and local government institutions on individuals for various purposes, all allowable by the state consti-



tution. Much of the information collected is required by the federal government to assure compliance with federal nondiscrimination legislation and as a condition for receiving federal funds. The state constitution prohibits state and local government agencies from discriminating against or granting “preferential treatment” to any individual or group based on race, color, ethnicity or national origin in public employment, public education, and public contracting.

## THE PROPOSAL

Proposition 54 prohibits the classifying (collection and use) of race-related information by state and local governments, effective January 1, 2005. The exceptions are:

- to comply with federal law
- to remain eligible to receive federal monies
- to comply with a court order in force as of 1/1/05
- to allow law enforcement agencies to describe individuals
- to place prisoners and assign undercover officers
- to collect and use information related to medical research subjects and patients
- to allow the Department of Fair Employment and Housing to collect certain race-related data through 2014.

Race-related information could continue to be collected and used in areas other than public education, contracting, and employment if “classification” of those individuals is approved by a 2/3 majority of the Legislature and by the Governor as serving a compelling state interest.

For some current government activities, the effect of the measure is unknown and would depend on future interpretation of the measure’s language by courts and future actions by the Legislature.

## FISCAL EFFECT

State and local governments could experience

minor one-time costs to modify forms and data collection systems. Minor annual savings might be experienced due to reduced data collection and use. Overall, no significant fiscal effect is expected.

## SUPPORTERS SAY

—Labeling people as to their ancestry and racial background without their knowledge and/or consent is an invasion of privacy.

—Government-imposed racial classifications have been used to divide people by emphasizing minor differences rather than common interests and values. We should stop categorizing citizens and create a colorblind society where we’re all just Americans.

—The California Constitution forbids state and local governments from discriminating against or granting preferential treatment based on race; therefore there is no need to classify people by race, ethnicity, color or national origin.

## OPPONENTS SAY

—Preventing the collection, analysis and use of race-related data will hinder the ability to address disparities by race and ethnicity in public health, education, crime prevention, and civil rights enforcement

—The exceptions leave open questions about the scope of the prohibitions, making numerous legal challenges a certainty.

—America is not close to being a colorblind society. We need to understand our differences in order to deal with them in a positive way.

For more information:

Supporters: American Civil Rights Association, [www.racialprivacy.org](http://www.racialprivacy.org), 916-444-2278.

Opponents: Coalition for an Informed California, [www.informedcalifornia.org](http://www.informedcalifornia.org), 510-452-2728

# Something to Think About—

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## Why Does It Matter?

THE MORNING NEWS DETAILS another mugging; it is news because, this time, it is in a “good” neighborhood. Pouring your morning coffee, you wonder why the police are not more vigilant. Later you hear that the mugger has been caught and this is not his first offense. You wonder what his probation officer has been doing.

Driving your grandson to school, there is additional graffiti on the overpass near the school, and last week’s swear words have not yet been erased. As you leave your grandson at the school, you think about how large his class has grown, that the building needs paint, and that he has complained that there is no orange construction paper (and it’s October!).

On the way to the grocery store you drive over another pothole.

It is getting harder to avoid the corners where homeless folks stand with signs such as, “Will

work for food.”

You want to stop at the library on your way home, but realize that the library has cut back its hours and will not open until noon. You wonder why the city is not acting more quickly to solve the problems that are affecting your quality of life.

A cogent argument can be made that there IS a connection between the above thoughts and the fact that your community has fewer and fewer resources, and many of those resources have strings attached. The state’s authority to allocate resources strikes at the very heart of a local government’s ability to meet public demands and expectations. Although not “sexy,” state and local finances matters more than we may have realized!

Adapted from the newsletter  
of the Association of Bay Area Governments

## Doing the Math

ASSUME A NEIGHBOR earns \$1 million annually and you earn \$30,000. You buy a used Ford Escort for \$10,000. With a sales tax of 7% you pay \$700 in sales tax; this is 2.3 percent of your yearly income. Your neighbor buys a new BMW for \$40,000; he pays \$2,800 in sales tax or 3/10 of 1 percent (0.3%) of his income for the tax on his car purchase.

You each need a new refrigerator and purchase the same model for \$900. About \$63 in sales tax is almost 11 percent of your weekly paycheck. Your richer neighbor pays 1/3 of 1 percent of his weekly paycheck in sales tax for the same item.

You are contributing 12 times as much of your income in sales tax to support your state government as your neighbor, despite the fact that his income far exceeds yours.

It quickly becomes apparent that the sales tax has a far greater impact on the middle class and working poor than on the wealthy.

by Dick Seeley, Glendale resident

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## An End and a Beginning

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ON AUGUST 28, THE VERDUGO Mountains Open Space Reserve was opened to the public. The decades-long battle to preserve this beautiful mountain area has ended. The public will now be able to enjoy hiking, biking, birding, photography and just enjoy the beauty of the area.

# Budget Accountability Act Supporters Submit One Million Signatures

Trudy Schafer, LWVC Program Director/Advocate

Petitions containing more than one million signatures to qualify the Budget Accountability Act for the March 2004 ballot were turned in yesterday. Representatives of the League of Women Voters spoke at press events in Los Angeles and Sacramento. The following press release was issued. Thank you to League members who circulated petitions!

## ONE IN FIVE SIGNATURES GATHERED BY A VOLUNTEER

Sacramento - Today Californians for Budget Accountability officially submitted over one million signatures, gathered in less than 60 days, in an unprecedented effort to qualify the Budget Accountability Act for the March 2004 statewide ballot. A broad coalition of groups from across the state manned an unparalleled volunteer signature gathering effort that garnered almost 200,000 signatures.

“Our office received a constant stream of calls from the public asking where they could find a petition to sign in their area and how they could help the campaign,” said Eric Wooten of the League of Women Voters of California. “Our membership recognizes that we must adopt real reforms, like the Budget Accountability Act, before we can put our state’s fiscal house in order. The momentum is behind the Budget Accountability Act and the enthusiasm about this initiative only continues to grow.”

“We have volunteers in our organization who stood on street corners and gathered hundreds of signatures on their own time because they believe the Budget Accountability Act will finally bring real change in Sacramento,” said Elizabeth Sholes of California Church IMPACT.

“While the national media is focused on personalities, Californians realize that our problem is a broken process,” said Anthony Wright of Health Access. “Voters are enthusiastic for the real reforms included in the Budget Accountability Act, to make structural changes to our current system of gridlock, chronically late budgets, and the lack of accountability of our legislators.”

The Budget Accountability Act is a comprehensive reform package to fix the state’s broken budget process, end the partisan games and hold legislators accountable for passing a responsible budget on time.

The initiative would give voters access to information on how legislators voted through an easy-to-use

web site. It would also require that the Voter Information Guide (ballot pamphlet) mailed to each voter would show how our state’s money is spent.

“The Budget Accountability Act would help provide the voters with the information they need to evaluate the voting records of their elected representatives,” said Lupe de la Cruz of AARP.

The initiative also reduces the vote threshold for legislators to pass a budget from two-thirds to 55%. Only two other states routinely require a two-thirds vote to pass a budget: Rhode Island and Arkansas.

Other provisions of the Budget Accountability Act include withholding the Governor’s and legislators’ pay when they don’t pass a budget and stay in session until they complete their work on the budget. It will encourage responsible budget decisions by the legislature, keep voters more informed of how the state spends its funds, hold elected officials accountable for their actions, restrain partisan extremes, ease budget gridlock, and require a real “rainy day” fund to help balance the budget in hard times

“The Budget Accountability Act finally puts in place consequences for late budgets,” said Cecelia Mansfield of the California State PTA. “Unfortunately, every year, schools are impacted and unable to make appropriate plans and accommodations for the upcoming school year when the state budget is late.”

“California’s budget process has been badly in need of reform for many years,” said Jean Ross of the California Budget Project. “The severity of this year’s budget crisis has brought discussions of needed changes to the forefront, but this is not a new problem. However, the magnitude of the state’s current problems have made the need for reform more urgent, which is why the California Budget Project is backing an initiative for the first time ever.”

# League Announces Support for “Our Democracy, Our Airwaves” Legislation

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## **Ideas Will Matter More Than Money**

**WASHINGTON, DC-** The League of Women Voters of the United States announces its support for the *Our Democracy, Our Airwaves Act* introduced today in the U.S. Senate. The legislation, sponsored by Senators McCain (R-AZ), Feingold (D-WI) and Durbin (D-IL), requires television and radio stations to provide free airtime and advertising vouchers to candidates and political parties before elections.

“The time has come for ideas to matter more than money,” stated Kay J. Maxwell, League President. “As campaigning costs have gone up, driven by the skyrocketing cost of buying television advertising, the political system has eroded,” said Maxwell. “Candidates have lost their focus. Instead of taking the time to speak to voters about their candidacies and issues, they are forced to spend enormous amounts of time raising money, and all too often that money is from powerful special interest groups,” noted Maxwell.

According to the Alliance for Better Campaigns, candidates, parties and special interest organizations spent approximately \$1 billion on political ads in the 2002 election.

“Escalating campaign costs drive out potential candidates,” said Maxwell. “Building on the League’s previous campaign finance reform work, this legislation will help level the playing field for political candidates. Providing free airtime allows the ideas of candidates to be heard,” she added.

“Airwaves are provided free of charge to broadcasters. They, in turn, have a civic responsibility to serve the public interest and play a constructive role in our democracy,” Maxwell stated.

On Wednesday, July 30, Senators John McCain (R AZ), Russ Feingold (D WI) and Richard Durbin (D IL) introduced the “Our Democracy, Our Airwaves Act,” which will require television and radio broadcast stations to provide free air time to candidates and political parties before elections. In

addition, the bill will require broadcasters to provide two hours per week of candidate or issue focused programming in the period leading up to an election.

If you would like more information about this effort, please contact LWVUS Grassroots Lobbying Coordinator, Diana Onken at donken@lww.org or (202) 263-1 328.

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## League Lingo

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### **WE BEGIN A SERIES ON BASIC “LEAGUESE”**

**ACTION** - Steps taken to influence public policy consistent with League positions. Techniques used to achieve League goals include lobbying, legislative testimony, monitoring, public statements, media campaigns, public forums, coalitions and litigation.

**ADVOCACY** - Preferred term for action.

**ANNUAL MEETING** - A general meeting of the membership of a local League held once a year to make decisions affecting local League goals and operations. The annual meeting elects officers, amends bylaws and adopts a budget, local positions and studies.

**BRIEFING** - A training session held prior to unit meetings to prepare discussion leaders, resource persons and/or study committee members and others for presentation and discussion of the subject at units. “Briefing” is also used for meetings held to prepare for conventions, legislative interviews and ballot measure presentations.

**CALL TO ACTION/ACTION ALERT** - A carefully timed request from a national, state, ILO or local League board asking members to take action on behalf of a League position. A request for legislative action is known as a “call to action” by LWVC and an “action alert” by LWVUS.





## Democracy in Peril?

Xandra Kayden, LWWUS Board Member

ROBERT PUTNAM, THE ACCLAIMED author of *Bowling Alone* came to a Santa Monica League salon on a Friday evening in July to talk about his book and the work he has been doing on civic life and social capital. The core of his argument—that created a new field research when the article of the same name appeared in the 1998—is that, while there are more bowlers in America than ever before, there are fewer bowling leagues. It matters because informal—or even formal social networks such as organizations like the League of Women Voters and bowling leagues—have a great deal to do with the health of a society. He made the point, in fact, that they also have a great deal to do with the health of individuals: meetings are good for you! They actually prolong life!

The salon was a small fundraiser for the Santa Monica League and those attending received a signed copy of his book (as well as excellent desserts), but it was also as good a way to spend an evening as one can imagine. The Harvard professor talked about what an amazing thing it was to come to California just when our democracy seems to be falling in upon itself. If you carry his point about loss of the benefits to society of individuals spending their lives in social networks, it is clear that government is also endangered. Trust is down everywhere. And nowhere are people more isolated from one another than in the state of California. When you are part of a group, you feel you can make a difference; when you are not a participant, government is far away and out of reach and it is not difficult to see how, at least in our case, government has become frustrating and an object of anger.

Putnam has a lot to say to the League, beginning with the fact that we, like every other major membership organization in the United States began in the same period: from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the 1920s. And, like every other membership organization, we have suffered declining membership since the late 1960s/mid-1970s. When organizations began to notice, first the leveling off, and then actual drop, the tendency was first to blame last year's program chair, then to call for stronger leadership in a membership committee. The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, this is a national, indeed, an international phenomenon. Every developed nation, with the possible exception of Great Britain, is suffering organizational decline. The difference in England is—not so much that they have solved the problem—but that they are addressing it directly in government and through the schools.

National organizations developed to solve the problems of the day: dramatic changes in technology and communication, and the loss of community. The League, and what Putnam calls the “animal clubs:” Elks, Moose, etc., replaced sewing bees and barn raisings. They were an urban and suburban solution to the loss of small town communities. The industrial revolution brought huge shifts in the economy, including frequent depressions, large deficits, immigration, etc. Problems, not unlike those we face today. The question is what mechanisms can we develop to cope with them? Membership organizations may—or may not—be today's answer. Nor, for that matter, can the Internet—which does get us away from television—answer. E-mail helps keep us in touch, but it is not sufficient for establishing relationships. Face-to-face communication must take place from time to time. His next book will look for examples.



## Member News

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

**Alicia Lloreda**

WE EXTEND OUR SINCERE  
SYMPATHIES

to **Wendy Kazanjian** on the death of  
her father, Dr. Wendell Coffelt.

APPOINTMENT

**Arline Ames** has been appointed to the  
Help America Vote Act subcommittee by  
the County Registrar/Recorder

**Chris Carson** has been appointed to  
the Executive Steering Committee of the  
Mobility 21 Coalition

## The Voter

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citizens—women and men—of voting age.  
The purpose of the League is to promote  
political responsibility through informed  
participation of citizens in government, and  
to act on selected issues.



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