



The Voter

Impact of the State Budget on LOCAL SERVICES



Join us on 4/18 to put the Budget Puzzle pieces in perspective.

Although the California Legislature finally passed a budget last February, our budget crisis is far from resolved.



Some aspects of the budget must be approved through a series of propositions to be voted on in a special election May 19th. In addition, income to the state is already falling behind what was projected. Meanwhile, cuts to various services have been implemented and, because of revenue shortfalls, more are expected.

Most hard hit have been Counties which receive their funding for many important programs through the state. The State budget crisis has forced counties to decrease services.

To give an overview of just how our community will be affected by loss of county revenue, the LWVSJC has invited county administrators who oversee many of these important programs to attend a panel discussing the impacts

IMPACT of the State Budget on Local Services

Saturday
April 18, 2009

9:30 a.m.—refreshments
10:00 a.m. —Program

Hospice of San Joaquin
3888 Pacific Avenue
Stockton

of these cuts to our county.

Speakers will cover many aspects of county services. We are fortunate to have a panel of speakers well versed in their fields:

- Dana Cowell, Deputy Director of the SJ Council of Governments
- Mick Founts, Deputy Superintendent of the San Joaquin County Office of Education
- Ken Cohen, Director of

SJ County Health Services

- Wendy Moore, Deputy Director of the SJ Human Services Dept.

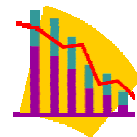
- Steve Moore, San Joaquin County Sheriff



- Lani Schiff-Ross, Director of SJ County First Five Programs

This will be a very informative and interesting discussion, helping us to more fully understand what the State's financial situation means to the people of our county.

Join us!



Inside this issue:

Nominees Wanted!	2
President's Message	2
Board of Directors	2
5/19 Ballot Positions	3
GREEN in the NEWS	4
Legislative Interviews	5
Focus on LWVUS/LWVC	6
LWVSJC News	7
Calendar	8

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Save the Date:
June 18th is our Annual Meeting

President's Message—PEACHES EHRICH

April 19th kicks off National Volunteer Week so this is a great time to say **Thank You!** to ALL League volunteers! *We* do the hands-on work to safeguard democracy. No other volunteer-based group has the local, state, and national reputation of the League. We all make up the organization that makes democracy work! Take a bow!

Our League year is winding down, but there are several things coming up—our program on the impact of the State budget, the Asparagus Festival and Earth Day are all in April. I hope we'll see you at some of these League activities.

It's not too early to put the Annual Meeting on your calendar. We'll meet at Bud's Seafood Restaurant in Lincoln Center at 6:00 p.m. on June 18th. Dinner is \$35. We'll need your reservation by June 8th, though you can pay at the door. This meeting is important because we pass our budget and elect officers and boardmembers—but it is also a fun meeting. It's a time to visit as well as a time to plan. I hope we'll see you there.

Don't forget to vote on May 19th. League positions on the ballot measures are outlined on the next page.

HELEN PEARSON NOMINEES SOUGHT

In 1978, our League created an award to recognize a League member for contributions to our chapter. We named it the Helen Pearson award in memory of past LWVSJC president Helen Pearson.

Helen Pearson was a two-time League president in the early 50s who was active in voter services. She was a tireless observer of the City Council and Board of Supervisors and served as LWVSJC historian and parliamentarian. She was known not only for her commitment but also for her sense of humor.

League members are invited to nominate someone for this honor.

A few guidelines may help you decide on a nominee:

- Nominee must be a current League member
- Nominee can be a male or female and must have been a member for at least one year
- He or she should have done something exceptional in any one of the following areas:
 - Worked on a special project, area or activity (e.g., voter services, advocacy,

programs, community outreach, financial support)

- Held an executive position or other crucial Board position and performed exceptionally well
- Overall, has worked hard for the League in some capacity, showing a real sense of commitment—and a sense of humor

If you have a nominee for this award, contact one of the members of the Committee: Sylvia Kothe, Cate White or Vickie Markarian. Cate and Vickie's contact information is in the chart to the right. You can contact Sylvia at Sylwv@aol.com or 464-1004. Nominations should be made no later than May 15th.

The Helen Pearson award recipient will be announced at the Annual Meeting which will be held on June 18th at Bud's. Join us for the presentation—and an evening of fun and planning for the future.

LWVSJC Board of Directors for 2008-2009

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Nominating Committee

Dee Matteucci, Chair; Tandy Gotschall, Sally Miller and two Board members to be appointed. Bea Lingenfelter and Colleen Foster have been selected to complete the Committee.

Helen Pearson Award Committee

Vickie Markarian, Chair; Sylvia Kothe and Cate White



LWVC Announces Opposition to Measures on the May 19th Ballot

The League of Women Voters of California has announced its opposition to Propositions 1A, 1C, 1D and 1E on the May 19th Special Election ballot and urged voters to reject them.

“We oppose these measures because they are NOT the solution to our long term financial crisis, with the continuing structural deficit in the state budget and flawed budget process,” said Janis R. Hirohama,



president of the League. “We make this decision with regret. We would support real reform to make the state budget process more accountable and give the Legislature and Governor effective tools to advance state priorities. However, these hurriedly drafted propositions, produced at the end of a flawed process that kept both the public and most legislators in the dark, will only make our fiscal situation worse.”

PROPOSITION 1A is touted by its proponents as the way to bring stability to the budget process. But what it will *really* do is tie the hands of the Legislature and Governor as they face changing needs for state and local government services. It will keep them from taking into account the State’s changing demographics and growth in the actual cost of important services like health care.

“Although some claim there is an urgency to pass Prop. 1A to resolve our state’s budget problems, we disagree,” said Hirohama. “Most of its provisions will not take effect for two years—two years that we should spend hammering out *real* solutions to our budget and fiscal challenges.”

The League believes elected officials should be allowed to carry out their responsibilities with flexibility. Years of “ballot-box budgeting” and formulas for auto-pilot spending have greatly eroded that flexibility. Prop. 1A, however, adds to the problem. For example, it dictates how half the

funds that must be transferred to the “Budget Stabilization Fund” are to be used; it removes the Governor’s ability to suspend transfers to the fund in difficult years; and it imposes new formulas for calculating “unanticipated revenues” and specifies how they can be used in good years. And, after the deep cuts made during these strapped times, it could lock in a reduced level of services by failing to properly take account of increased caseloads and program costs.

If Prop. 1A passes, the Governor would be given new power to make mid-year cuts and suspend COLAs in state programs without legislative oversight. The League believes that midyear budget adjustments should require joint action of the legislative and executive branches so that checks and balances are maintained.

PROPOSITION 1C This proposal attempts to raise money for the short term by selling bonds that would be paid off by future lottery revenue. In light of California’s poor credit rating and the state of the economy, those bonds would have to be sold at very unfavorable interest rates, if they can be sold at all. The Legislative Analyst says that in the long term, lottery profits probably would not be enough to cover the higher payments to education required by Prop. 1C. We criticized this proposal as irresponsible last fall, and if anything, that criticism applies more than ever now.

PROPOSITIONS 1D AND 1E On May 19, voters will also be asked to approve the temporary taking of funds from early childhood and mental health programs that were established by two previous initiatives. These are illusory, stopgap measures and the League opposes these propositions as part of this objectionable package. It is ironic that

these initiatives, which did what many consider “the right thing” by providing a source of funding, now face reductions.

The League is neutral on **PROPOSITION 1B**. State responsibility for the funding of public education is essential, and we appreciate the need to pay back the devastating cuts that our schools and community colleges have sustained. On the other hand, the Legislature will have the ability to restore school funding without Prop. 1B and it is not needed in this package of propositions.

Since the League has no position on setting salaries for public officials, we take no position on **PROPOSITION 1F**, which would prevent pay raises for legislators and statewide constitutional officers during budget deficit years.

The League of Women Voters recognizes that California is facing the worst budget crisis in its history, with the worldwide recession severely affecting state revenues and the need for state services. Moreover, our budget system is broken and in desperate need of reform. This year illustrates the need to abandon the two-thirds vote requirement for passing budgets and raising revenues, and we must also look at other budget reforms. In the meantime, a new tax commission is considering ways to broaden or stabilize our revenues. “There is much that needs to be done,” Hirohama stated, “but we are certain that the propositions on the May 19 ballot are not the answer.”



Green in the News

In the March 2009 issue of *This Green Life*, the online monthly from the National Resources Defense Council, Sheryl Eisenberg wrote about the concerns over potential dangers of mercury in CFLs. Some of her comments are excerpted below:

“It’s true that mercury is a dangerous substance, which can damage the nervous system, brain and other organs at miniscule doses. However, you are only at risk of exposure from CFLs if a bulb breaks AND you don’t follow a straightforward set of steps when cleaning up.

One thing I would strongly recommend you do -- recycle the compact fluorescent bulbs when you’re done with them so they don’t break in the garbage or landfill and jeopardize the health of sanitation workers and the environment. Your town may have a special drop-off place for CFLs or you can take them to your local Home Depot or Ikea. Plug in your zip code at www.Earth911.com to find the drop-off place nearest you.

By replacing incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents, you will reduce

your energy usage and help to reduce the amount of mercury you and others are exposed to. You will also help in the effort to rein in global warming, which is a much greater risk to your family’s welfare down the road.



Honestly, if you are looking to make a difference, switching to compact fluorescent bulbs remains the simplest way.”

IF YOU BREAK A BULB...

1) **Open a window before cleaning up, and turn off any forced-air heating or air conditioning.**



2) **Instead of sweeping or vacuuming, which can spread the mercury around, scoop up the glass fragments and powder. Use sticky tape to pick up remaining glass fragments or powder. Wipe the area clean with a damp paper towel or wet wipes.**

3) **Dispose of the broken bulb**

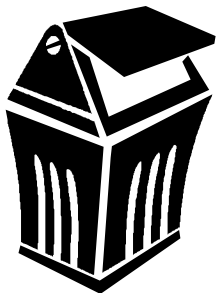
through your local household hazardous waste program or recycling program. If that service is unavailable in your area, place all clean-up materials in a trash container outside the building.

4) **Wash your hands after cleaning up.**

5) **If vacuuming is needed afterwards, when all visible materials have been removed, vacuum the area and dispose of the vacuum bag in a sealed plastic bag. For the next few times you vacuum, turn off any forced-air heating or air conditioning and open a window before doing so.**

Other tips on green living can be found on the NRDC Web site: <http://www.nrdc.org> in their Green Living Guides section. One section focuses on what to do about E-waste, including local recycling, donating electronics to organizations that can use them and returning your used products to manufacturers or retailers with recycling/take back programs.

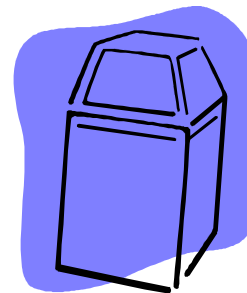
TELLING IT LIKE IT IS - Trash Cans at the Academy of Sciences



Landfill



Compost



Recycle

League Meets with Freshmen Legislators

Each year, local Leagues participate in the LWVC Legislative Interview program. The state League asks local Leagues to make appointments with specified lawmakers from their districts. Usually, the assignments rotate between senators and assemblyman on an annual rotation. LWVC prepares questions that we are asked to pose to legislators and then to report back so that LWVC can learn which legislators may be supporters or opponents of our legislative program. This is also an opportunity for local Leagues to introduce themselves to officeholders.

On April 20th, League members Cate White, Daphne Shaw and Colleen Foster met with newly elected Assemblyman Bill Berryhill. He was informal and cordial as he answered our questions on the state budget, education and health care. Below are some of his comments from that interview:



State Budget

Readily acknowledging the state's budget crisis, the Assemblymember said he supports the measures on the May 19th ballot because, in essence, there is no choice at this juncture. His focus during this discussion was on Sacramento's 'dysfunction' - more serious than he had imagined before being elected. Although originally a supporter of term limits, he said he has come to realize that term limits are part of the problem, along with safe districts and campaign finance reform. He said that term limits restrict the ability of legislators to get to know each other and to forge coalitions that may not be along strict party lines. He said that ideological battles account for only 10% of the problems in the Legislature. Term limits contribute to the lack of institutional memory, understanding and continuity.

Education

The Assemblyman served several years on the Ceres school board and is the 5th member of his family to serve on a school board. He believes in education but said 'we do a woeful job of funding education.' His answer: "You need a gold-plated economy to sustain a gold-plated state. You need a robust economy to support a robust education." He believes the key to creating a healthy state economy lies in revamping the regulatory and tax structures of the state which relies too heavily on the top 5% of income earners and capital gains taxes, making state income subject to roller coaster ups and downs. He suggested taxing Internet sales as one source of income to consider.

In response to a question on what he meant by "We need to manage our resources better", he said that there is not a lot of fat in the education but perhaps there could be savings by eliminating unnecessary State Boards, new revenue by selling off State property or increased efficiency in technology upgrades.

Health Care

While admitting that he is 'still learning' about the complex issues of health care, Berryhill said that the health care delivery system is broken. He believes tax breaks for business would help to provide for better health care. He described himself as a 'free marketer' who would 'like to keep government out' of the health care system but he agrees that doctors should be paid fairly. He said he believes 'illegal immigrants' have an impact on the cost of health care, although he did listen when two of the interview team related personal stories about young people who lack access to health care because they cannot afford health insurance and that some people work more than one job and still can't afford health insurance.

Water and the Peripheral Canal

As a farmer in Clements, the Assemblyman is very interested in water issues. He grew up in the area and 'loves the Delta'. He is against the Peripheral Canal because of the effect it will have on the Delta—and because it is looking at the problem in "too small a box". He said he didn't know if he could stop this train, but he would try—across party lines.

He would like to see the state fully explore other engineering options such as restructuring pumping mechanisms or the feasibility of replicating the Orange County water recycling system which costs one quarter as much as desalination. He would also like to see ground water recharging, water recycling and gray water re-use systems.

He stated that he thought the lack of water storage was a "moral issue" because farmers had to let land go fallow for lack of water, costing jobs and decreasing our contribution to the world food supply.



Our League was also asked to interview newly-elected Assemblymember Alyson Huber. Cate White and Jane Wagner-Tyack got an appointment while the Legislature was still conferring on a state budget, so they were not able to meet with Huber who was not seated until after the start of the legislative session and who was concentrating on constituent contacts, bills introduced to the Assembly and, of course, the state budget crisis. They did meet with her District Director Anne Baird who indicated that Huber has an interest in water and education.



Focus on LWVUS & LWVC

LWVUS

LWVUS BACKS AWAY FROM SINGLE PAYER SOLUTION

LWVC Advocacy Director Linda Craig received a letter from Mary Wilson, President of LWVUS, regarding the request to allow continued lobbying for HR 676, the single payer health care legislation. In her letter, Wilson said "the LWVUS has not endorsed any specific health care legislation and we are not authorizing any state or local League to do so."



The letter continues: "While the LWVUS did not endorse H.R. 676 in previous Congresses, **individual Leagues were given the go ahead to contact their Members of Congress in support of H.R. 676** (*emphasis added*) if they felt that they had member understanding and agreement. Health care reform was a priority for the LWVUS in the last Congress, but the main emphasis was on reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). H.R. 676 was one of the few bills addressing comprehensive health care reform in the 110th Congress.

This year, however, we anticipate that there will be a number of competing health care reform bills in the 111th Congress and are not endorsing any health care legislation at this time, except of course for SCHIP, which has now passed Congress and been signed by the President. The key committees in the House and Senate will be considering a number of approaches to achieve comprehensive health care reform.

The League is working closely with our allies on Capitol Hill and coalition partners to set and implement legislative strategies that will ensure that we achieve the key goals of the LWVUS health care

position. We need to carefully consider our options and what makes the most sense over the near and long term. This is the first opportunity to pass meaningful health care reform in a very long time and we want to be sure we are considering all options and following the best course. HR 676 is one of many of those options."

LEAGUE ENCOURAGES CLEAN ENERGY POLICY

The League of Women Voters joined the League of Conservation Voters, Union of Concerned Scientists, Sierra Club, NRDC and several other organizations in support of clean energy policies. A letter to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee urged them to ensure that their bill would include:

- Strong renewable electricity standards
- Strong safeguards for sourcing biomass
- Energy efficiency resource standard
- Efficiency in buildings, appliances, and equipment
- Avoids risky investments in nuclear power and other technologies that exacerbate global warming
- Includes electric transmission reform that is tailored to advancing necessary renewable energy development and only goes forward as part of a comprehensive clean energy policy

LEAGUE A PARTNER IN CENSUS 2010

The League of Women Voters announced its role as a national partner in the 2010 U.S. Census. "Our goal is to work with others to eliminate the 'undercount' that occurs, particularly within low income and minority populations," said national League President Mary Wilson.

LWVC

League Speaks at Constitutional Convention Summit

The California Constitutional Convention Summit was held on Tuesday, February 24 in Sacramento, attracting more than 300 people, including state and local elected officials, political party representatives, academics, and citizen organizations. The summit was organized by the Bay Area Council and cosponsored by the LWVC and other organizations. The event focused on what changes were needed in the state constitution, and the process for convening a citizens' convention to make such changes.

Speaking on behalf of the LWVC, Advocacy Director Linda Craig proposed retaining the initiative process, but with preference for an indirect process including legislative review; extending or removing term limits; eliminating the two-thirds vote requirement for budget adoption, tax increases and removal of tax deductions and exclusions; and providing adequate revenue options for local governments so funding is aligned with provision of local services.

In order for voters to convene a constitutional convention, an initiative amendment to the Constitution would be required and details about the scope of the convention and how delegates would be selected would then need to be set by another ballot measure. While the League will continue to participate in the dialogue, it has not decided at this time whether to support a convention.

Related: Trudy Schafer, LWVC Senior Director for Program, spoke at a joint hearing of the Assembly and Senate Elections committees on February 25 to express the League's views on reforming the initiative process.



LEAGUE NEWS

Running for Office: True Tales from the Campaign Trail

March's program was one of the most popular that we've given in recent years. Several members and a few visitors from the public heard Ann Johnston, Van Ha To-Cowell, Alyson Huber, Mary Ann Cox and Anne Baird discuss their experiences running for office. With the exception of Alyson Huber, all women were candidates for local nonpartisan office.



Panel and Audience



Stockton Mayor and League member **Ann Johnston** tells the audience what being a candidate is really like.



Lincoln Unified School Board Trustee and League member **Van Ha To-Cowell** relates her campaign experiences



Assemblymember Alyson Huber tells the audience how much it costs to run for State office. (Way too much!)



Delta College Trustee Mary Ann Cox outlines the various tasks confronting a candidate for office.



Legislative District Office Manager (for Alyson Huber) and former candidate for office **Anne Baird** emphasizes how important it is for good people to run for office.

Member Note:
League member and former Board-member **Ursula Meyer** is in Meadowood recuperating from a fall. You can contact her at 956-3444 or 3110 Wagner Heights Road, Rm 104, 95209.

Susan Loyko Honored by UOP as Woman of Distinction



League member Susan Loyko was selected as one of five Women of Distinction by the University of the Pacific in honor of her many contributions to the community. Women of Distinction awards have been presented by the University since 2002. Each year one community member is recognized along with UOP faculty, staff and students. Susan will receive her award on April 7th in conjunction with the opening of the new Women's Center on the Pacific Campus.

Congratulations, Susan!

Gloria Allen Honored as Woman of the Year by Assemblymember Galgiani



Gloria Allen, Stockton Community/Family/Child Activist and former League member, was honored for outstanding volunteerism. Eighty women, one from each Assembly District in the state, are selected annually.

A press release from Galgiani's office stated that "Gloria Allen has served her community as an outstanding educator, community leader and visionary for thirty-plus years. She is dedicated to building coalitions between parents, teachers and the community. I admire Gloria's passion, vision, and commitment to the City of Stockton."

Gloria was recognized during a special session of the Legislature, during which she was presented with a resolution honoring her numerous contributions and years of service to her community.



League of Women Voters
of San Joaquin County
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www.sjc.ca.lwvnet.org

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Saturday, April 18, 2009, 9:30-noon—Impact of the State Budget on Local Services

Hospice of San Joaquin, 3888 Pacific Avenue, Stockton. Panelists will speak on health care, education and other local services that are impacted by the crisis in the California State Budget.

Earth Day: Sunday, April 19, 2009—Volunteers welcome! Contact Peaches Ehrich

Asparagus Festival, April 24-25, 2009

LWVC Convention: May 15-17, 2009: *Catch the Wave to the Future.* Long Beach.



Annual Meeting, Thursday, June 18th, 6:00 p.m. Bud's Seafood Restaurant, 314 Lincoln Center, Stockton

Board Meetings

All League members are welcome to attend Board meetings. Board meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at Hospice, 3888 Pacific Avenue, Stockton . Meetings start at 5:30 p.m.

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 and advocacy.