



The Beach Voter

League of Women Voters Beach Cities
Serving El Segundo, Hawthorne, Hermosa Beach, Inglewood, Manhattan Beach & Redondo Beach

MONEY IN POLITICS MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

As described in July's *Voter*, the League of Women Voters is in the process of conducting an update of the League's position on campaign finance for the purpose of addressing the lack of member understanding and agreement as to whether financing a political campaign is protected speech under the First Amendment. The campaign finance position will be updated through a study and consensus process to consider: (1) the rights of individuals and organizations, under the First Amendment, to express their political views through independent expenditures and the finance of election campaign activities; and (2) how those rights, if any, should be protected and reconciled with the interests set out in the current position.

LWVBC will participate in the National study as a joint effort with the Palos Verdes Peninsula and Torrance Area chapters. Because of the complex nature of this undertaking, we have scheduled two membership meetings for this purpose. The first of these meetings will be held at the newly remodeled Manhattan Beach Library on Tuesday, October 27th from 7:00 p.m. – 8:45 pm. This meeting will be an informational meeting that provides a brief history of relevant legislation and Supreme Court decisions, as well as a description of the current state of affairs.

The second meeting will be a consensus meeting, which will be held at the Malaga Cove branch of the Palos Verdes Library on Saturday, January 16th, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. At that meeting, we will consider the questions provided to us by LWVUS and try to reach consensus as to the answers.

This subject is one of the primary issues affecting our elections. We hope that all members will choose to participate in the consensus process.

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The League affirms our belief in our commitment to diversity and pluralism. There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability. The League recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan 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. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

The Beach Voter	
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To become a member: Send check in the amount of \$60.00 (payable to the League of Women Voters Beach Cities) to Susan Grebe at 629 19th Street, Manhattan Beach CA 90266.

Name _____
 Phone _____ Email _____

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**POPOVERS in PASADENA -
Joan Arias, Harriet Chase, Jan Nathanson**

On Saturday, July 18, 2015, more than a hundred members of the League of Women Voters gathered in the Women's City Club in Pasadena for the annual Popovers in Pasadena. After a brief welcome, introductions and announcements, including the announcement of September 26, 2015 as the fall County meeting, the group attended workshops on Studies, Action/Advocacy and Voting Basics.

The Studies workshop covered a great deal of information. Pat Colby, Education Chair, LWV Palos Verdes/San Pedro, moderated and participated on the panel that included Ellen Taylor (LWV Claremont), Joanne Leavitt (LWVC), and Harriet Chase (LWVBC). Ellen Taylor explained how to conduct a Local LWV Study. Joanne Leavitt told about the two new LWVUS studies: Constitutional Amendment Study and a Review & Update of the Campaign Finance Position. She also covered how the Higher Education Study evolved and explained the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education. Pat Colby gave background information about the members on the State Higher Education Planning Committee and talked about what has changed since the inception of the Master Plan. Harriet Chase explained the formation of a Tri-League Local Study Committee (Beach Cities, Torrance Area and Palos Verdes). The session ended with a lively group discussion about the challenges to the Master Plan today.

The Action/Advocacy session was a shortened repeat of an April Advocacy meeting, with 3 of the 6 groups who participated in the April meeting. Barbara Inatsugu, LWV Santa Monica talked about the Santa Monica Airport actions taken by that League; Sally Seven, LWV Claremont, related the Claremont water bond and local water ownership issue and Joan Arias and Kathy Berlin revisited the Measure O anti-oil measure that successfully prevented the E&B Oil Company from drilling in Hermosa Beach.

Roz Tyson led a Los Angeles League committee at the voting basics workshop, the purpose of which was to acquaint other Leagues with a League education fund project to teach permanent residents and citizenship classes how to vote. Citizenship classes did not previously cover election procedures or voting specifics. The speakers emphasized that voting workshops or classes do not tell participants whom or what to vote for, just how to go about voting, from registration to using ballots including the inka-vote system and the various means of submitting votes. In an election cycle, workshops may also feature ballot measure pros and cons. The presentation used at this workshop may be given in literacy classes, at the library, a job corps center and high schools. For copies of the PowerPoint and evaluation sheet, contact Jan Nathanson or Susan Grebe, LWVBC.

Following the popover luncheon, the Hon. Sheila Kuehl, Los Angeles County Supervisor, 3rd District

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treated us to a terrific presentation. Supervisor Kuehl described her large district that encompasses the San Fernando Valley and surrounding areas. She described Los Angeles County as the 8th largest state in the United States and the 14th largest economy in the world. The county government has the same responsibilities as the State and includes execution of the budget plan, public transportation, 30,000 foster children, up to 20,000 families with children at risk and the largest local jail in the country. The county also contains the largest juvenile justice system, libraries, parks, beaches, parks, waste and storm water, homeless services, affordable housing issues and performance and art venues! Ms. Kuehl astonished us with those statistics and talked about the immediacy of their proposals and legislation they pass.

When asked about the change from a strong CEO that had recently taken place, she noted that “we took back the power” because “when you are elected, you should be where the buck stops!” She praised the supervisors and their collegiality and noted that despite vast differences in viewpoint, the tone of their operations is friendly. “I have never had such a wonderful job...and never worked so hard!” she commented. Having been in the Legislature as both an Assembly member and a Senator, she made a special point of noting that she had never been so happy to be free of checks and balances.

She commented that the Supervisors’ staff members had to be people who understand the issues. There really are no priorities; all the issues are big issues such as minimum wage, oversight of the Sheriff and other key areas.

When it came to questions and answers, Supervisor Kuehl was particularly expansive, responding thoughtfully to questions about crime, low-cost housing, homelessness, safety on public transportation and the changing downtown demographics. When asked about the need for additional supervisors, she commented that more supervisors would not accomplish anything. “We need more district offices, more operational efficiencies,” she commented. She is very enthusiastic about public transportation and described efforts to put in more north-south lines and the airport lines.

When she concluded, her audience gave her a standing ovation – well deserved!

THE LEAGUE NEEDS YOU!

Early in 2016, the LWVBC’s Nominating Committee, chaired by Ann Martin, will begin the process of considering a slate of Board members for the 2016-2017 program year. If you’ve ever considered taking a more active role in the League, we want to hear from you. After all, any organization is only as strong as its volunteers. If you’re interested, contact Ann at (310) 372-2823 or jmartinca@earthlink.net.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TRI-LEAGUE BRUNCH: TAX POLICY PROPOSALS IN CALIFORNIA

Barbara Arlow

California Budget and Policy Center (calbudgetcenter.org) Policy Analyst Luke Reidenbach was the guest speaker at the Tri-League Kickoff on October 3rd. His presentation addressed the following topics:

- What Proposition 30 Has Meant For California
- Major Tax Proposals: Proposition 30 Replacement Options and Commercial Property Tax Reform
- How These Proposals Should Be Evaluated.

Proposition 30, passed in 2012, includes temporary increases in the personal income tax (PIT). Three new rates for the highest-earning Californians (annual income of \$250,000 a year or more for individual filers) will expire at the end of 2018. It includes a temporary increase in the state sales tax rate by .25% that will expire at the end of 2016. The additional revenues estimated at \$6 to \$8 billion annually will decline in later years due to the sales tax rate expiration.

Proposition 30 staved off substantial budget cuts in the 2012-13 fiscal year. It contributed to reinvesting in K-12 schools and community colleges. It allowed for some reinvestment in other public systems and supports after years of cuts.

Two proposed ballot initiatives for 2016 would keep portions of Proposition 30.

Proposal #1: “The School Funding and Budget Stability Act” keeps some of Proposition 30. It extends the three Proposition 30 PIT rates for high-income earners through 2030. It allows the state sales tax rate increase to expire at the end of 2016. It does not create any new tax rates. It allocates the dollars to the state’s General Fund.

Proposal #2: “The Invest in California’s Children Act” keeps some of Proposition 30 and creates new tax rates. It makes permanent the three Proposition 30 PIT rates for high-income earners. It creates new, permanent PIT rates for very-high-income households. It allows the state sales tax increase to expire at the end of 2016. It allocates the dollars to special funds for specific programs: 44% for K-12 schools, 40% for Medi-Cal, 10% for early childhood programs, and 6% for community colleges.

The “Make It Fair” Commercial Property Tax Reform Proposal changes how the commercial property tax is calculated. It would tax commercial property based on market value each year rather than on the initial acquisition value. It phases in new taxes and provides an even longer phase-in for certain owner-operators with over 25% change in the property’s assessed value. It exempts residential properties and commercial agricultural property. It allocates the estimated \$8 to \$10

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(Tri-League Brunch, continued from p. 5)

billion that would be raised annually to school districts through a statewide special fund and to cities, counties, and special districts via existing law. Additional information on “Make It Fair” can be found in the following article.

Luke Reidenbach suggests that the following questions be asked when evaluating these proposals. Do these proposals provide adequate revenue to fund public systems and services? Do they make the system less fair or more fair? Who pays the proposed taxes? Do low-income households pay an outsized share of these new taxes? How would the dollars be spent? Do the tax proposals allow policymakers to fund the public systems and services that are most needed? Do dollars go to the state government or to local governments?

MAKE IT FAIR – Joan Arias

On July 9, 2015, the League of Women Voters of California and Make It Fair held a teleconference to introduce Make It Fair to League members. The California League has joined Make It Fair, a coalition of organizations dedicated to reforming California’s tax code by phasing out loopholes in Proposition 13 that, according to the Coalition, have allowed a handful of giant corporations and wealthy commercial property owners to dramatically lower their obligations to California’s families.

The teleconference goal was to help League members understand the Make It Fair principles and to engage League members in the work of informing the community and working to pass Senate Constitutional Amendment 5 (SCA5). Introduced on June 10, 2015 by California State Senators Holly Mitchell (30th District, Los Angeles) and Loni Hancock (9th District, Berkeley). SCA 5 would make California’s property tax code fair by assessing commercial and industrial properties at their market value, after a phase-in period. It would also provide significant tax relief for small businesses, protect homeowners and renters from any changes to their property tax status, and create strict new accountability measures for new revenues.

In counties across California, closing the commercial property tax loopholes could provide millions in new revenue that will allow us to continue to invest in important local priorities such as our schools and community colleges, public safety and affordable housing, our roads, transit, small businesses tax relief, parks and libraries and other vital services.

Since the passage of Proposition 13, the tax burden has shifted away from giant corporations and wealthy commercial property owners to middle class homeowners and renters. The reform measure proposes to reverse this trend and raise billions to help rebuild California. The reform measure also proposes to protect homeowners, renters and owners of agricultural land, provide tax relief for small businesses, and include tough transparency and accountability measures so that everyone can see how additional funds are spent.

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Make it Fair is building a strong grassroots coalition to spread the word about the need for commercial property tax reform and is particularly excited that the League of Women Voters California has joined the [Make It Fair coalition](#). Some of the other organizations that have joined the Coalition are California Federation of Teachers, SEIU (Service Employees International Union), ACLU and the California Professional Firefighters.

More information about the coalition is on the Web site www.makeitfairca.com. Additional training is planned. The recording of the LWVC Make It Fair training webinar is now posted and linked to on <http://archive.lwvc.org/lwvonly/action/makeitfair.html>. Anyone who would like to receive further information about the Coalition and the LWVC collaboration with the Coalition will find additional links on the California League of Women Voters Members Only and the Make It Fair websites.

Goals for the Webinar included:

- Educating and Motivating Our Own Base
- Educating the Public
- Continuing to Build a Large Coalition
- Moving Our Policy Solutions Through the Legislature
- Develop a shared understanding about services, programs and amenities we want & need in our communities which have been cut due to lack of resources
- Identify a shared vision of the California we want to have.
- Learn about problems with California's commercial property tax system and Proposition 13
- Learn about our campaign & action plan to Reform Commercial Property Taxes

League positions that supported the LWVC joining Make It Fair are:

- State and Local Finances Position (in Brief): Support measures to ensure revenues both sufficient and flexible enough to meet changing needs for state and local government services; that contribute to a system of public finance that emphasizes equity and fair sharing of the tax burden as well as adequacy ...
- Property tax equity: Require all types of property . . . bear a fair share of the property tax burden; Separate residential from commercial/industrial properties
- Property tax assessments: Regular, frequent reappraisals; Use of market value as the standard with alternatives to preserve agricultural land and open space

The Coalition would like LWVC members to:

- Train our base and get our people fired up.
- Educate the public and broaden our coalition, including reaching out to social media networks.
- Endorse our Senate Bill and the Reform Principles.
- Actively work to pass our Senate bill:

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- Gather endorsements from community organizations and elected and community leaders
- Attend public events
- Lobby legislators with visits, petitions, postcards, phone calls, etc
- Watch the press
 - Respond to radio shows; call in questions
 - Speaking opportunities
 - Local press
 - Help collect endorsements
 - Coordinate with other organizations

The following LWVC members coordinated the Webinar:

Helen Hutchison – hhutchison@lwvc.org

Joanne Leavitt – jleavitt@lwvc.org

Trudy Schafer – tschafer@lwvc.org

Lea Grundy -- lgrundy@groundworkscampaigns.com

SENATOR FEINSTEIN ON VOTING RIGHTS

Recently, LWVBC member Joan Arias wrote a letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein on the subject of Voting Rights. She thought that the membership might be interested in the response she received from Senator Feinstein, which is reprinted here in its entirety.

Dear Dr. Arias:

Thank you for writing me to express your support for the "Voting Rights Advancement Act" (S. 1659). I appreciate hearing from you and welcome the opportunity to respond.

As you may know, in its decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, the Supreme Court invalidated Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act, which contained a formula prescribing which states and jurisdictions with a history of discrimination are required to obtain preclearance from the U.S. Department of Justice before implementing any changes to their voting laws. The Court found that the provision is no longer grounded in current conditions.

I strongly disagree with the Supreme Court's decision to essentially nullify a core provision of the Voting Rights Act. The Voting Rights Act successfully countered a century of aggressive, discriminatory limitations on voting rights, and I believe the Court's decision to strike down Section 4 of the Act is a major setback for voting rights in this Nation.

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You will be pleased to know that I am an original cosponsor of Senator Leahy's (D-VT) "Voting Rights Advancement Act," introduced on June 24, 2015. The legislation would replace the preclearance formula struck down by the Supreme Court in *Shelby County* with a new preclearance requirement. Under this legislation, a state would be required to obtain preclearance for a ten-year period if 15 or more voting rights violations occurred in the state during the previous 25 years. If a local jurisdiction has committed three voting rights violations within the last 25 years, that particular locality would be subject to new preclearance requirements. The bill also contains a number of other reforms to ensure that voting rights laws are enforced.

Please know that like you, I believe voting is at the heart of any democratic society, and Congress must do everything it can to ensure American citizens can exercise their fundamental right to vote. S. 1659 is currently awaiting consideration in the Senate Judiciary Committee, of which I am a member. Be assured that I will keep your support of S. 1659 in mind as I work actively with my colleagues to restore the protections that were overturned by the *Shelby County* decision.

Again, thank you for writing. If you have any additional questions or comments, please feel free to contact my Washington, D.C., office at (202) 224-3841. Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Further information about my position on issues of concern to California and the nation are available at my website, feinstein.senate.gov. And please visit my [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for more ways to communicate with me.

ELECTION 2015

This year is an "off-year" election. This means there are no national or state elections being contested. However, some of our communities are having important elections for local offices on November 3rd. LWVBC is hosting several events in those communities. On September 22nd, National Voter Registration Day, we registered voters at the Hawthorne Community Center. Also in Hawthorne, three Forums for candidates running for Hawthorne City Council and Mayor were scheduled. Two have already occurred, but one remains. That Forum is co-sponsored by the Ramona Homeowners Association and will be held on Thursday, October 22nd.

Finally, a Forum for candidates running for the Hermosa Beach School Board will also occur on October 22nd. If you are interested in assisting with the Hermosa Beach Forum, please contact Joan Arias at [310-798-8797](tel:310-798-8797).

More details about these events can be found in the Calendar on page 10.

CALENDAR			
Date	Time	Subject	Place
Thursday, October 15, 2015	7:00 pm – 9:30 pm	Board Meeting	Home of Susan Grebe 629 19 th Street Manhattan Beach
Thursday, October 22, 2015	7:00 pm – 9:00 pm	Candidates Forum: Hawthorne Municipal Election	Ramona Elementary School 4617 W. 136 th Street Hawthorne
Thursday, October 22, 2015	6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Candidates Forum: Hermosa Beach School Board	Hermosa Beach City Council Chambers 1315 Valley Drive Hermosa Beach
Tuesday, October 27, 2015	7:00 pm – 8:45 pm	Membership Meeting: Money in Politics	Manhattan Beach Library 1320 Highland Avenue Manhattan Beach
Thursday, November 12, 2015	7:00 pm – 9:30 pm	Board Meeting	Home of Maggie Wilkinson 430 Loma Vista St. El Segundo



League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities
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