



The Beach Voter

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

ANNUAL MEETING and Salad Luncheon

Saturday May 11th, 2013

10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

720 8th Street, Hermosa Beach

This is our annual event to wrap up the year. *Please bring a salad to share* and ideas for what you would like to see our League focus on for the coming year. It is your ideas and participation that make up our direction and focus. We need suggestions for a local study. We need to know what our members are most concerned about and where you want us to put our emphasis and energy. We are a grass roots organization and now is the time to plan for the coming year.

You are encouraged to bring a guest. Guests do not have to bring anything other than their interest in learning about League, who we are and what we do.

Parking is limited. If you would like to carpool please contact Susan Grebe rgrebe6072@aol.com or (310) 545-2097.

Materials for this meeting were sent in late April via email to all members who have email addresses. Members without email were sent materials via US Mail. If you did not receive these materials, please contact Barbara Arlow at gerbar92@msn.com or (310) 379-6663.

NON-EVENT UPDATE

We continue to be grateful for the generosity of our members who have contributed to the Non-Event. A **BIG Thank You** goes to **Velma Anderson, Jan Brittain, Joann Kennelly, Beverly Morse, Mignon Thiem-Murphy**, whose contributions were received after publication of the last Newsletter:

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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 Beach Voter

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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.

To become a member: Send check in the amount of \$55.00 (payable to the League of Women Voters Beach Cities) to Susan Grebe at 629 19th Street, Manhattan Beach CA 90266.

Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Address:

Affordable Care Act Community Forum

Joan Arias

On April 23rd, a capacity audience of 90 at the Joslyn Community Center in Manhattan Beach listened intently as a panel of experts explained how the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would affect Americans. Five health care experts made up the panel:

- Dr. Lisa Santora, Chief Medical Officer, Beach Cities Health District
- Dr. Gerald Kominski, Director, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research
- Robin Camrin, Vice President, Torrance Memorial Medical Center
- Dr. Romilla Batra, Vice President and Medical Director, SCAN Health Plan
- Dr. Barbara Carnes, medical Director, Kaiser South Bay Medical Center

Noting that the Number 1 New York Times Best Seller is *The ObamaCare Survival Guide*, Dr. Santora introduced the speakers and declared that she was excited to see the Health Care Act actually happen and was optimistic about its future.

Dr. Kominski referenced the Supreme Court decision that upheld the constitutionality of the individual mandate and pointed out that California is working to establish the exchange that will enable people to buy medical insurance. The major parts of the ACA will take effect in 2014. People currently insured by their employers will not experience any change. Current Medicare recipients will feel little change. As for Medicaid qualifications, subsidies based on people's income will be available to help individuals buy insurance and about 1.5 Million people will newly enroll in medical programs. California is working on an Exchange Board so that starting October 1, the State Exchange will regulate plans that will be the same across all insurance companies that offer plans. The only differences will be the doctors and hospitals involved in each plan.

Ms. Camrin and Drs. Batra and Carnes described how their groups are preparing for the implementation of the ACA. A main focus area was an increased emphasis on quality measurements that will affect reimbursements to health care providers. Reimbursements will be based on results such as rates of readmissions to hospitals, patient satisfaction and participation in basic preventative health care measures. The ACA requires annual wellness screenings and the Health Care providers are preparing for the population expansion.

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In addition to the emphasis on quality measurements, there is a new focus on the integration of health care including the implementation of electronic integrated medical records so that integrated health care may be delivered to beneficiaries. One highlight was that the infamous “doughnut hole” will be closed by 2022 for the Medicare population. This will enable Medicare recipients to receive their medication without fearing the sudden cost increase of the “doughnut hole.”

During the 40-minute Question and Answer period, questions ranged from the cost of coverage to the potential for alternative health care and ways to deal with the shortage of primary care physicians, now more important than ever because of the need to integrate medical care. Here are some of the answers:

1. Original Medicare will not be affected at all except for an increased emphasis on preventative care (at no cost to recipients!) and the closure of the doughnut hole.
2. The ACA requires annual wellness screenings which will be covered.
3. Dental Care must be included in pediatric programs; otherwise essential health benefits packages will be sold inside and outside the exchange and some may include dental care; others may not.
4. Medicare Advantage benefits may be reduced based on budget. People may be asked to pay something.
5. Reimbursements depend on outcomes. Money is tied to results. Added monies based on results may be used to regain some of the advantages of plans.
6. The law prohibits insurers from discontinuing insurance for any reason as long as the recipient has paid for the coverage.
7. Insurers cannot charge more based on the health situation of the individual; that is history-based premiums will not be allowed.
8. Although the Insurance Commissioner in California cannot deny health insurers their rate increases, the law provides that 80% of every dollar taken in by an insurer must be spent on benefits. Companies must account for increases. If they cannot account for the increases, they will need to provide rebates.
9. There is some level of nervousness on the part of physicians based on the quality (rather than volume) measures used for the first time. However, many physicians see this as a positive thing.

Two web sites recommended were: KP.org/reform and Healthcare.gov . The latter is a new website for outcome comparisons to help people make decisions.

The League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities co-sponsored the Forum with the Beach Cities Health District, the City of Manhattan Beach Older Adults Program and the Manhattan Beach Senior Citizens Resources Committee.

KUDOS KUDOS KUDOS KUDOS

It was a joy working with our great Healthcare Committee to plan the Affordable Care Act Forum. I would like to thank the members: Susan Grebe, Janis Hirohama, Penny Markey, and Rita Wagstaff. And thank you Joan Arias for the Voter article (see p. 5), Barbara Arlow for timekeeping, and other stellar League members who gave us a hand: Peggy Bartlett, Fatima Malik, Jim Pollard, Margaret Thelen and John Wagstaff.

Harriet Chase
Chair, LWVBC Healthcare Committee

LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW WITH TED LIEU
Maggie Wilkinson

On March 8th, I joined Elizabeth Ralston from the LA League to interview Senator Ted Lieu. State League sent us the three questions we were to ask him. The first two questions related to the California State budget and money in politics issues. The third question addressed the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) which I posed to him. The questions are listed below along with a short summary of his response to each question.

1. California Budget

- a. What measures would you support to continue the progress that Proposition 30 represents?
- b. What measures would you support to change the budget process?

Senator Lieu noted that the State has had to make extremely painful cuts in social programs over the past few years. The revenue situation is somewhat better because of the passage of Proposition 30 and the improved economy. In this year’s budget, the priority has been to increase funding for K-12 and higher education, a priority he supports.

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In his view, the key to improving California's revenue is to grow the economy – expand the research tax credit from 15% to 20% and expand the tourist industry. He mentioned two bills – SB 500 which expanded research and development tax credits, and SB 1402, which extends the California Community College's Economic and Workforce Development Program. All of these are areas he believes are important.

In terms of the budget process, he supported a bill to require that the text of a bill be published a minimum of 72 hours before passage. He favors greater transparency in the budget process, and also has been opposed to a two-year budget process, saying that it was impossible to predict revenues that far in advance. He also felt that there would need to be a revenue source to fund the implementation of any kind of performance-based budgeting.

2. Election Reform/ Money in Politics

Senator Lieu stated that he would like to see the Citizens United ruling overturned. He is sponsoring SB2 which would require greater disclosure of the primary funders of political advertising, and require greater disclosure on state mailers. League is supporting this bill. He didn't support the two year budget process for the State because he believes California is too big. With performance based budgeting more staff would be needed and it would take a big investment. He supports an open primary and likes redistricting and term limits.

3. What is his view of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)? What changes does he think it needs, if any?

He said he likes CEQA but he feels it has been abused. He gave an example of Nordstrom's Department Store moving from Redondo Beach to the city of Torrance and Redondo Beach then suing Torrance using CEQA. He will not support any efforts or legislation that would weaken CEQA. In fact, he co-authored AB 900 which passed. The bill reduced the used the CEQA for lawsuits by streamlining the process so that a case could by-pass the trial court and be heard by the Court of Appeals. This would save time and money.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM CONSENSUS – Jan Nathanson

The League of Women Voters of the Beach Cities held two consensus meetings on the update of the Initiative and Referendum position of the California League. A well informed, though small, number of members, held a lively discussion on most questions, following information offered by committee members, Henrietta Mosley, Janelle Freeman, Jim Stewart and Jan Nathanson. Joan Arias was recorder. Results of the consensus were sent to LWVC and will be combined with all participating League reports from throughout the state. The final updated position will be approved at the state convention in May. Following is a summary of the local consensus:

1. A pre-review of draft proposals should be reviewed by a combination of judges, Bar associations, independent citizens' committee with special emphasis on the Legislative Analyst's office, but specifically not the Legislature. The pre-review should be mandatory, but no consensus except for notification of the proponents.
2. There was general agreement that the Legislative Analyst should be responsible for writing the ballot measure title and summary.
3. There was consensus that qualification requirements should include a specific number of signatures, with the number of days for gathering signatures about the same as now.
4. There was agreement that the requirements to get a measure on the ballot remain the same.
5. It was agreed that California voters should continue to have the right to amend the state constitution with changes such as review before it is on the ballot, and give the Legislature opportunity for review and change, such as the indirect initiative process.
6. It was agreed that constitutional amendments should meet a higher standard than a simple majority -- the same as now required. Post-election conflicts should not include provisions from measures with fewer votes.
7. There was consensus that a requirements for a supermajority be applied to future initiatives in the same lifecycle as the original initiative.
8. Agreed the Legislature should have authority to amend initiative statutes sometimes, only in the spirit of the original, as described therein, if it does not apply to the Legislature. Only sometimes in the case of constitutional amendments, the same as statutes, if a supermajority vote is required.
9. Two charts were presented, with no consensus on the first. As for principles: it was agreed that accessibility, amendability, comprehensibility, accountability, availability of compromise, deliberation, flexibility, integrity, respect for stakeholder rights, and transparency were critical.
10. Consensus that the citizens' initiative and referendum process be retained as is with changes.

Tri-League Spring Meeting

Joan Arias

The Tri-League spring meeting was held at the Buffalo Fire Station in Torrance on March 16th. It featured Congressman Janice Hahn who fascinated the attendees with her reflections on her first experiences in Washington, DC after a lifelong career in local politics. She said that Washington politics were very different from local government where she had “grown up.” “In local politics you had to work with everyone to get anything done;” Washington is a “team sport – us against them,” she added. In an effort to make friends across the aisle, Ms. Hahn approached Texas Republican Congressman Ted Poe, a fellow graduate of Abilene Christian University, and invited him to work with her on a bi-partisan ports caucus. The effort has been successful and since that time the American Association of Ports Authority have honored both Congressmembers and Abilene Christian University in Texas invited both – alumni of the University – to give a talk on “Civil Discourse in America!”

Congressmember Hahn lamented the very low turnout at the last Los Angeles election and charged the League with the task of getting people to remember the importance of voting. “I have never missed an election,” she noted as she praised the League for our work on elections.

Ms. Hahn invited us to a reception on Thursday April 4 at the Warner Grand Theater in San Pedro, to honor Eugene Daub, San Pedro Artist and Sculptor. The Daub and Firmin Studio created the historic Rosa Parks Statue unveiled last February in the U.S. Capitol. The statue is the first of an African-American woman to be placed in the Capitol and the first statue commissioned by Congress since 1873. Since this is Women’s History month, the statue was of particular importance.

She also talked about sequestration the effects of which will affect all of us. She had voted against sequestration as the first vote she took when she went to Congress. The cuts were a result of the deal made when the debt ceiling was raised. “I thought it was a bad idea then and now...it was a self inflicted wound and comes from our inability to find common ground,” she said. She hopes to find a smarter, more balanced way to cut expenses to replace sequestration.

On a positive note, she pointed to the passage of the Violence Against Women Act and the success of an effort to keep the bill from excluding groups such as the undocumented, LGBT, Native Americans and others.

County Convention Report

Janelle Freeman

The 51st Annual Convention of the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County was held March 30, 2013 at the Rio Hondo Event Center in Downey. LWV Beach Cities was represented by delegates Janelle Freeman, Harriet Chase, and Maggie Wilkinson, as well as our County representative, Fatima Malik.

There was a light turnout for the Convention, possibly in part due to the limited amount of business that needed to be conducted. After all the reports, the budget was adopted as proposed. The nominated slate was elected, including two new officers, Margo Reeg (Whittier) as 2nd VP and Kay White (Torrance Area), and four directors. Other officers, including President Nancy Mahr, continued the second year of their terms. Finally, changes to the bylaws and articles of incorporation supporting the process of converting the LWV/LAC to a 501(c)(3) were adopted.

Our Convention speaker was the Hon. Don Knabe, LA County Supervisor, 4th District. He had a list of issues that he wanted to make points about. He started with the impact that Federal budget issues and sequestration are having on the County's ability to protect the most vulnerable. It is estimated that 225,000 jobs will be lost in the County as a result. Realignment of prisoners from the state to the County has also had a big impact on County finances. The State said they would pay for the costs, but the state is 7 months in arrears at a cost of \$385 million. There have also been spikes in crimes. Although the state said they would not transfer violent offenders, many transfers came with blank folders and no information on medications needed. Probation issues and spikes in crime have accompanied the Realignment.

Another big financial issue is from the Affordable Care Act. There is some good coming. The biggest problem is that few people have read all 2400 pages of the ACA.

Supervisor Knabe has also been working the Maternity hotels issue. These "hotels" encourage pregnant women to pay \$40k and travel late in term to the US to have their babies so they have US citizenship and can come back later to access the education system. Knabe's concern is not anti-immigrant but pro-baby.

The MTA is expanding the rail system into the airport.

10th anniversary of safe surrender just passed. 104 babies have been saved.

Supervisor Knabe has a TV show on Charter Cable where he tells people about County government. This can also be viewed on Knabe.com.

Coming back to the microphone for one last issue – Term limits: He does not like them. Within a couple of years 4 of the 5 County Commissioners will be new.

CALENDAR

Date	Time	Subject	Place
Saturday May 11	10:00 am – 1:00 pm	Annual Meeting	Home of Joan Arias 720 8 th Street Hermosa Beach
Friday, May 17 to Sunday, May 19	All Day	State Convention	Dolce Hayes Mansion San Jose
Saturday July 27	9:30 am – 2:00 pm	Popovers in Pasadena	Women's City Club Pasadena
Saturday August 3	TBD	Board Retreat	Home of Penny Markey 1534 Ruhland Avenue Manhattan Beach



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