



League of Women Voters Eden Area

V O T E R

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MEET YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND CELEBRATE

NATIONAL LEAGUE'S 90TH ANNIVERSARY

**Friday, February 5
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

Hayward City Hall
Foyer and Board Chambers

Join us and meet your elected officials who represent the Eden Area—Board of Supervisors, City Councils, School Districts and Special Districts.

also meet

Senator Ellen Corbett and
Assemblymember Mary Hayashi

In addition, we will be celebrating the National League's 90th Anniversary—an organization born of the suffrage movement and dedicated to "making democracy work.

To RSVP, email LWVEA@aol.com

EDUCATION—FINANCING AND LEGISLATIVE IMPACT--

TOPIC FOR FIRST BROWN BAG LUNCH

The League will kick off its first Brown Bag Lunch series with a discussion on:

- how school district's are handling their financial crisis as the result of the changes in the State Budget, and
- the impact on local school districts of the state legislation passed in order to meet the requirements of the federal Race to the Top program and receive additional funding.

Leading the discussion will be Jo Loss, President of the State PTA and a long-time Castro Valley School District Board member with Debbie Look, CA State PTA Director of Legislation.

February 19 Noon to 1:30 p.m.

San Lorenzo Village
Community Conference Room
377 Paseo Grande, San Lorenzo

Bring your own brown bag lunch
or sandwich/salad \$5.00
(if you RSVP by 2/17/10)

Please RSVP to LWVEA@aol.com

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Happy 90th Anniversary to the League of Women Voters of the United States—celebrating a long history of “making democracy work.”

In the past nine decades, the League has continued to educate and inform voters on important issues that impact their lives and their communities.

The League remains a strong voice in influencing policy and decision makers.

From the spirit of the suffrage movement and the shock of the first World War, came a great idea. The idea that a nonpartisan organization could provide political education and experience that would educate the public about the issues of government and ensure the success of democracy. The League of Women Voters was founded on that idea.

At the first League convention, 69 separate items were voted on as a statement of principles and recommendations for legislation. Among them was protection for women and children, rights of working women, food supply and American citizenship.

In the 1930's, League members worked successfully for enactment of the Social Security and Food and Drug Safety Acts.

During the postwar period, the League helped lead the effort to establish the United Nations. It focused on individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and directed its energies to equality of opportunity. It built a solid foundation of support for equal access to education, employment and housing.

The League was in the forefront of the struggle to pass the Voting Rights Act Amendments and contributed significantly to the enactment of the Tax Reform Act, the Arms Control Act, and ratification of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty.

There is probably no other national volunteer organization in America that inspires such a great degree of

commitment from its members. The League has evolved from what it was in 1920—a political experiment designed to help 20 million newly enfranchised women carry out their new responsibilities—to what it is today: a unique, nonpartisan organization that is a recognized force in molding political leaders, shaping public policy, and promoting informed public participation at all levels of government.

I hope you will join me in congratulating the League of Women Voters of the United States as it celebrates its 90th year of “making democracy work” for all of us.

Suzanne Barba

Board Briefs –Jan. 20, 2010

- Membership - It was reported that we have 131 Active members and that the MGIK goal is to increase membership 5%. Discussed partnering with other groups with a similar mission as a way to increase our membership.
- Ranked Choice Voting – Representatives from the three Leagues—Oakland, Berkeley and San Leandro—spoke at the city council meeting in favor of implementing RCV in San Leandro. Leagues will help with educating the public about RCV and work with the Registrar of Voters in getting the information to the public.
- SmartVoter – Received a thank you letter from SmartVoter for the \$500 donation the Eden Area League made.
- Homeowner Association Election – Thanks to ten members who assisted with assembling ballots, 1608 were mailed out to Palomares residents.
- Brown Bag Lunches – Suggestion to do one on the recent legislation passed on education and its impact on local school districts.

- Change Annual Meeting Date – The Board agreed to change the annual meeting date from June 5 to June 19 to avoid the last minute election activity and National Convention date.

The next Board meeting will be Feb. 17 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the San Lorenzo Village Conference Room. All League meetings are open to the public.

Meet New Member: June Ann Cook by Connie Rusk

June Ann Cook decided to join our League after attending a recent program on climate change at Chabot College.

"It impressed me so much," she said. I thought that I should learn more about such issues, and about politics, and the League looked like the place to start."

She spent nine years developing a junior golf program, teaching, writing grants and bringing in a diverse group of experts and role models to inspire young people. This work ultimately gained her a place in the Alameda County Athletic Hall of Fame. "At the award ceremony, I dedicated the honor to my mother who died in 2008," she related.

"Kids will learn and listen. It only takes one person to influence them," is her philosophy. She holds a bachelor's degree in International Relations from San Francisco State University, and a master's in sports psychology from JFK University. One of her students will soon graduate from West Point. "Not bad for a kid from inner-city Oakland."

Now she's working as a consultant to businesses and athletes on goal setting. "They have similar goals. Business people want financial success, and athletes want to win a game, a season, an award. Both enjoy the fun of the game." The league is an inspiration to her. "I want to be strong and wise like the women I have met in the League," she said.

SUPREME COURT DECISION SETS OFF REVOLUTION IN CAMPAIGN FINANCE-- *Court Erred, Decision Undermines Basic Pillar of Democracy*

Washington, DC –The following is a statement by Mary G. Wilson, national president of the League of Women Voters on the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*. The League filed an amicus brief in this case:

"The Supreme Court has made a tragic mistake. Their decision announced today in *Citizens United v. FEC* is onstitutionally irresponsible and will surely bring about an anti-democratic revolution in how we finance elections in this country. Today, basic pillars of American democracy have been undermined – that elections should not be corrupted by vast corporate wealth and that the voters should be at the center of our democratic system.

"Justice Stevens had it right when he said, in his dissent, 'The Court's ruling threatens to undermine the integrity of elected institutions across the Nation. The path it has taken to reach its outcome will, I fear, do damage to this institution.'" "In creating a new constitutional right for corporations to spend unlimited amounts of their shareholder's money to determine the outcome in candidate elections, the Court has unleashed into our elections tremendous sums of money from for-profit corporations that cannot possibly be matched in quantity by contributions from ordinary citizens.

The only possible outcome of this is that big money and special interests will have an even tighter grip on our democracy. "Congress and the President enacted campaign finance laws over a series of decades for a reason – to protect our democracy from the perverse influence of big money in our elections. In making this decision, the Court has ignored the best interests of the American public and our representative form of government."

PROGRAM PLANNING RECAP

The Program Planning meeting on January 23, was completed successfully thanks to the 19 members—some veterans, some new—who came out on a rainy Saturday morning to participate in perhaps, one of the most important meetings that Leagues hold.

Program Planning is focused on the positions on issues at all levels—national, state, Bay Area and local. It is a time when Leagues review these positions to make sure they are relevant, need updating, should be used to educate or advocate or to prioritize what action should be taken.

Most of these positions are based on two or more years of study, input by experts in the field, and final consensus.

The group came to consensus on two of the 75 LWVUS positions—Health Care and Climate Change for continued public education and advocacy.

Attendees also reviewed three proposed studies, which were submitted by three other Leagues who recommended that the LWVUS consider them for study. None of the three were approved although most were considered important issues.

One was to study the Federal Role in Education. The group felt that education is a local and state issue and should be dealt with on that level.

A second was to consider a Peace Department at Cabinet Level. Although there were some favorable opinions, it was agreed that the proposal was not written clearly and it was hard to determine what this position would do.

A third was to consider Adult Civic Literacy. Again, the participants thought this was a commendable idea, but the proposal was not clear on how it was to be accomplished and that some local Leagues are already working on this.

The Bay Area League's positions were reviewed and no changes suggested. The attendees approved the

LWVBA proposed plans for monitoring, education and advocacy for 2010-2011.

Our local League's positions were also reviewed and it was agreed that we should update our Mental Health position. There was also consensus that we should implement some of the items in our Boards and Commissions position such as finding out and publicizing appointed position vacancies that Boards and Commissions have.

There was also a recommendation to establish a committee to discuss State and Local Finance issues. Volunteers included Nancy Van Huffel, Sara Lamnin, Rene Besold, Evelyn Gertler and Shelia Young.

Thank you to Nancy Van Huffel who coordinated the Program Planning event including the delicious breakfast and printing of materials. Also thanks to Eleanor Parker, June Cook and Rene Besold who helped with the room set up and distribution of materials. Rene also contributed her time and talents to developing the Leagopoly exercise.

Suzanne Barba

FEB. 12. DEADLINE TO APPLY FOR CA CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COM—

Are you a good listener? Are you a leader in your community? Can you be impartial? Do you have experience working with diverse communities? Do you have strong analytical skills? If you answered yes, then you should apply to a seat on the California Citizens Redistricting Commission. The deadline is Feb. 15.

Basic qualifications are: you must be a registered voter in California for at least the last five years with the same party; you must have voted in at least two of the last three statewide general elections; and you must have relevant analytical skills, be impartial, and appreciate California's diversity. For more information and to view the application form, go to www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov.

