



THE SACRAMENTO VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

801 12th Street, Suite 210, Sacramento, CA 95814

February - March 2007

Mark Your Calendar

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LWV Sacramento County
Flood Control Local Study
 Consensus General Meeting

League Members Discuss
 Flood Control Consensus Questions (see insert)
 February 13, 2007 - 7:00 p.m.

University of Southern California Capitol Center
 1800 I Street, Sacramento, 95814

Parking is available underneath USC (enter 18th St. alley)
 or on street

LWVSC Resource Committee and
 Francis "Butch" Hodgkins,
 California Reclamation Board



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LWVUS Immigration Study "Kick off"
"U.S. Immigration Today" - A California Perspective
 March 15, 2007 , 7:00 PM
 University of Southern California (USC) State Capitol Center
 1800 I Street
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Guest Speakers:
Judge Cruz Reynoso
 Professor of Law at UC Davis

Steven J. Ybarra, J.D.
 Professor of Law at UC Davis and Sacramento City College
 Author of "Changing Laws, Changing Times"

Audience Q & A

**"Give me your tired, your poor,
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"**

Emma Lazarus "The New Colossus" - Plaque at Statue of Liberty

2006 - 2007 Board of Directors

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President's Message



I am sure glad that this first hectic month has passed, with two major study projects and the office move albeit only a few blocks, but the same packing and unpacking. The new office is very comfortable with new opportunities for members to participate.

The local Flood Control Study Consensus Questions enclosed in this VOTER is an immediate opportunity for members to get involved. Kudos to the Flood Control Committee for providing members with education about flood control through the Community Flood Control meeting on January 8th with the expert panel and community partners. And also the two publications presented in the blue insert of the December VOTER and the consensus report in the February VOTER.

Members are encouraged to participate in the February 13th Consensus meeting and Unit meetings that are planned for discussion of the questions, and to capture member input for the League position on Flood Control. A mail in ballot is also enclosed with the questions for members unable to attend either meeting. The study results will become the basis for the League position that will be compiled by the committee and voted on by the membership at the Annual Meeting in May, 2007.

The LWVUS Study on Immigration is the topic of the March 15th meeting at USC with two legal experts who will present their perspectives on the issue. Do plan to attend and meet Judge Cruz Reynoso and Steve Ybarra, two law professors expert on immigration issues. Special thank you to Lola Acosta for her contribution to launching this study and meeting. The Immigration Committee also invites League members to join the study, as the national study materials are ready with many exciting opportunities for members to help the Sacramento League participate in this crucial two year study.

The Board was pleased to learn that the University of Southern California State Capitol Center agreed to become a regular cosponsor of League community meetings. It is an honored to be associated with USC and we appreciate working with their cooperative staff. The USC central location and comfortable facility are an asset for League events. Thanks to Virginia Kaser for her role arranging this for the League.

The League office moved on January 20th and it went smoothly thanks to the help of volunteers: Roseanne Chamberlain, Lola Acosta, Catherine Troka, Eileen Heaser, Rick Bettis and Kathy Souza, The new office is very comfortable although many boxes need to be unpacked. Some of the advantages of the new office are the reduced cost, sunlight and windows overlooking busy 12th street, and sharing the suite with a bright conference room, kitchen and workroom with the state League staff who are also Sacramento League members, plus the convenience of the RT Line at the front door. Plan to come during the day, or during a Board meeting, by car or RT, to the new League office at 801 12th Street, at the corner of H Street.

And of course, please consider joining the Sacramento League Board and enjoy working in this very comfortable and centrally located office. The Nominating Committee is busy working to continue the League tradition by recruiting new leaders to continue the League legacy. Ruth Range, chair of the Nominating Committee invites interested members to call her at 385-9773 or email at ruthrang@surewest.net. If you are interested you may also call the office at 447-8683 and someone will return your call.

Look forward to see you at the League meetings

by Barbara Hopkins

**Welcome to New Members
and Thank You
Contributors**

*Welcome New Member
Ardith "Ardie" Andrews*

*Thank you to our
Generous
Contributors
Richard and Florence
Ross
Tom Swift*

UNIT Meetings

February 12-13, 2007
Flood Control Consensus

March 12-13, 2007
LWVUS Immigration
Study Kickoff

Mid-City

Monday: 6:15 PM
Doris White
383-0189
863 Fallbrook Way
Sacramento

Morning Suburban

Tuesday: 9:30 AM
Mary McCullough
967-7382
2426 Garfield Ave.
Carmichael

Greenhaven/Land Park

Tuesday: 9:30 AM
Mary Hopkins
422-6958
45 Sunlit Circle
Sacramento

Elk Grove

Tuesday: noon
December - Goldie Hall
8880 Mackey Rd
686-6115
January - Nancy Meyers
689-6943
La Fuente Mexican Restaurant
9631 E. Stockton Blvd.
Elk Grove

LWVSC Board Briefs...January 16, 2007

Administration

Details about the new office at 801 12th Street Room 210 were discussed with initial expense of the move but eventual savings with smaller space. The move was completed on January 20, 2007. And notices will be sent to post office about new address.

The Board approved \$525 for Moving Star of California to move the office. (Expense was \$825 because the truck could not fit in the garages and items had to be hauled long distances with extra elevator time)

Membership

Vivian Skintaury explained the reduced membership count of 268 is due to need to remove members with outstanding unpaid dues before the LWVUS membership deadline of January 31. The Board will remind all members to mail their dues.

Program

A draft of the consensus questions for the Flood Control draft was reviewed. The Board encouraged a question format that encouraged discussion in both Units and General Meeting to reach consensus.

The Board discussed the program plans for the Immigration Study meeting on March 15, Affordable Housing meeting on April 17 and Annual Meeting on May 12.

The Board expressed special appreciation to Virginia Kaser and the University of Southern California (USC) for agreeing to cosponsor all general meetings at their convenient downtown building and supportive staff.

Units

Roseanna Torretto discussed coordinating program materials with unit leaders.

Next Board Meeting will be held on February 21, 2007 at 5:30 PM in the new 801 12th LWV Conference Room, and as always is open to all members.

2007-08 Education Budget Proposal

Governor Schwarzenegger recently released the draft proposal for education funding in California. The budget proposal for 2007-08 includes full funding for Proposition 98 at \$56.8 billion, and includes \$1.9 billion to fund a 4.04 percent Cost of Living Allowance (COLA).

In a budget analysis statement communicated from Jack O'Connell, Superintendent of Public Instruction, it was noted that because of declining enrollment, the Governor's budget proposes a \$208 million reduction in revenue limit apportionments for education, \$120 million of which reflects a decline in attendance for 2006-07. Superintendent O'Connell stated that, "Declining enrollment continues to affect many districts in our state, and we will continue conversations about ways to minimize sudden impacts of this demographic trend".

The January budget proposal is not the last word on what programs will be funded in 2007-08. The budget is just the first step in the six-month process of negotiating a state spending plan.

The LWVSC Education Committee will begin meeting, and interested members should contact the league office for more information. *by Joyce Hinkson*

EdSource Forum for 2007

Unprecedented, major new research on California school funding is currently underway and will be released this spring. More than 20 studies under the direction of Stanford University Prof. Susanna Loeb are examining school finance adequacy, equity, and efficiency. Attend EdSource's 30th Annual Forum and be among the first to hear the important findings from this extensive set of studies.

Friday, April 20, 2007, Crowne Plaza Cabana, Palo Alto, California

From State LWV Update, 12/11/2006

Death Penalty Position

The LWVUS Convention in June, 2006 adopted by consensus a death penalty position based on several local League’s studies opposing capital punishment. Local leagues were encouraged to include this issue in local programs. We encourage members to attend these events.

On March 2, 2007 League members are invited to attend the 2nd Annual Capitol Awards Banquet to be held at the Radison Hotel. Sister Helen Prejean, author of “Dead Man Walking” and “The Death of Innocents” and Mike Farrell, President of the Death Penalty Focus and actor, will be the featured speakers. The event will open with a reception at 5:30 PM with Dinner at 7:00PM. Tickets are available by calling 916-452-3806 or visit to www.deathpenalty.org. This program is presented by the Sacramento Chapter of Death Penalty Focus and the Friends Committee on Legislation of CA.

“TAKE ACTION, CREATE CHANGE”

League members are encouraged to attend “Reproductive Freedom Day” on Wednesday, March 21, 2007 at the Sacramento Convention Center, from 9 AM to 4 PM . The “Take Action, Create Change” theme is reflected in the program that will provide pro-choice advocates an opportunity to attend legislative workshops to prepare for visits with legislators at the Capitol and educate them about protecting women’s health. You may register at www.ccrf.eventbrite.com. Scholarships are also available by calling 1-415-346-0563. The Reproductive Freedom Day 2007 is sponsored by the California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom, and the LWVC participated in the planning of this coalition event. Come and learn about emerging issues and caucus with women’s health advocates from all over California.

Voter Affidavit Volunteers

Voter Affidavits may be picked up at the new office, 801 12th Street, Suite 210, (corner of H St) Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm Jennifer Joesph of the LWV of California will let you into the office. Parking on H Street is convenient, but meters require twenty-five cents for fifteen minutes. If this scenario is too difficult please contact Elizabeth Byerly at 979662, or me, as we have extra forms at our homes.
Eileen Heaser
278-6797 (home); 456-2154 (work)

Immigration Committee

Volunteers are needed!! Members interested in being part of the Sacramento Study Committee on IMMIGRATION are invited to join by calling the League office at 447-8683, or committee members listed below. Your time and effort are needed to help with the study activities which include reading the national League publications and recommended literature, preparing summaries, assisting in identifying and visiting with local experts, and leaders, and inviting guest speakers. The LWVUS study guidelines are listed below.

This League study will culminate at the LWVUS Convention in 2009 with the presentation and adoption of the national League position on immigration. This policy position will be the basis for action and lobbying at all levels. This Sacramento Committee reflects the League grassroots study across the country and members are encouraged to become informed and involved in this study process.

We are pleased to present the first speakers on immigration, Judge Cruz Reynoso and Steve Ibarra at the March 5, 2007 community meeting to be held at USC at 7 PM .

If you would like to volunteer or receive email copies of various reports and information from other Leagues, please contact one of the committee members:

Judy Hoefling (judithhoefling@comcast.net);
Lola Acosta (lolaa@winfirst.com) and
Barbara Hopkins (barbhopkins2@yahoo.com).

**National League of Women Voters
Immigration Study Focus**

1. Immigration underlying values and principles
2. Reasons for migration from other countries, not limited to
 - Effects of global interdependence on migration
 - Motivation of refugees and asylees
 - Motivation of other immigrants
3. Current federal immigration policy, not limited to
 - Overview
 - Effectiveness in uniting families
 - Effectiveness in meeting needs of businesses
 - Effectiveness of enforcement
 - Human rights concerns
4. Impact of immigration, not limited to
 - Economic effects of authorized and unauthorized immigration
 - Diversity
 - Inclusion of immigrants in American society

Flood Control Forum - January 8, 2007

The title of the forum was "Is there a flood in our future? What can we do?" According to Stein Buer, Executive Director of SAFCA, the answer has to remain largely an educated guess. The "100 year flood", "200 year flood", etc. predictions are just big extrapolations of the available data on known floods in our past, and every new flood changes those extrapolations. That is largely the reason why the Natomas Basin flood protection is changing from 144 year protection to less than 100 year protection, with significant consequences for those who own property there.

Mayor Heather Fargo began the forum presentations by noting that she has been a member of the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, SAFCA, since its inception right after the 1986 flood, and continues to be deeply involved in the flood issue. In response to one audience question she noted that the City of Sacramento has never issued building permits for housing in an area that did not have 100 year flood protection. However, when new flood data is added to the chart used to project flood risk, some city areas, with built up housing, find themselves in high flood risk areas. The Pocket area is one area that dropped below 100 year protection. But, the Natomas Basin is expected to achieve 200 year protection by 2010, as a result of levee improvements now in process. She also pointed out that flooding is the major risk we face living in this area.

Lester Snow, Director of the California Water Resources Board, pointed out that even a 100 year protection level means that an average mortgage holder will face a 26% chance of a flood during the life of his mortgage! This, Mr. Snow said, means the 100 year protection level, even though considered the minimum acceptable level, is not, in fact, acceptable. Stein Buer mentioned that SAFCA's goal is to raise the protection level to 200 years as soon as possible, using a mix of federal money, state money, and local money from flood district property assessments. SAFCA will propose that development fees be assessed to finance improvements that will result in a continuously improving level of flood protection into the future.

Mr. Snow said there is more money available now than ever before for flood protection work, thanks to Propositions 28 and 84, which provide a total of \$4.9 billion dollars. To put that in perspective, Mr. Buer said a serious flooding event in the county would cost about \$17 billion in damages.

Suzanne Phinney, who moderated the forum asked an audience question about the effect of earthquakes on the flood risk. Mr. Snow pointed out that only the Delta levees, which allow the water in areas of the Delta to be pumped out to create farmland, are constantly holding back water. Those levees face an enhanced risk due to earthquakes, but the river levees only hold back water for brief times during a typical year, so there is little chance of an earthquake causing a flood in urban areas.

About 70 people crowded the auditorium at the USC Capitol Center to listen to the presentations, and Channel 3 News covered the forum for that night's news.

Sunshine Week - March 11-17, 2007

The League of Women Voters will celebrate "Sunshine Week" with people around the nation the week of March 11-17, 2007. This week gives California members an opportunity renew their commitments to open government, made in 2004 with the passage of Prop 59 that elevated our right to know from the government code to a fundamental constitutional right. "Sunshine Week" is cosponsored by news media and open government groups. The purpose of this focus is to stimulate public discussion about why open government is important to everyone. And, it reminds members of the League belief that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.



Suzanne Phinney



Heather Fargo



Lester Snow



Stein Buer

by Vaughn Hopkins

AFFORDABLE HOUSING – AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE*By Rick Bettis*

On January 23 the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors (BOS) took a significant step on the path toward meeting needs for affordable housing in the County, by authorization the Housing and Redevelopment Agencies to negotiate an agreement with Mercy Housing California for a project that will include units that will be affordable to those with Extremely Low Incomes (ELI). This writer was privileged to represent the League in joining a diverse coalition of affordable housing advocates that testified to the Board in support of this landmark project. This coalition was brought together by the Sacramento Housing Alliance and included the recently homeless now in transitional housing, the disabled, ethnic minorities, faith based organizations, social service providers, attorneys who specialize in assisting the disadvantaged, and academia.

In December, 2005 the BOS passed an Affordable Housing ordinance that included strong inclusionary provisions that require each new housing development in the unincorporated area of the County with five or more units, to make fifteen (15) percent of the units affordable to those with extremely low, very low, and low household incomes. The ordinance does provide that this requirement can be met; in certain cases; by means of land dedication, and in-lieu and affordability fees.

This ordinance was passed following over two years of unrelenting advocacy by the coalition mentioned above. "Market rate" developers and homebuilders opposed the ordinance. One very prominent developer testified that it would not be possible to implement the ordinance since affordable housing did not match the developers and builders "cookie cutter" used for their projects. The Building Industry Association of Superior California has filed a pending lawsuit in an attempt to invalidate the ordinance.

The ordinance requires the following:

Low income- 6% of units for those with household incomes of less than 80% of the median for the County, which is approximately \$52,300 for a family of four.

- Very low income- 6% of the units for those with household incomes of less than 50% of the median for the County, which is \$32,700 for a family of four.
- Extremely low income- 3% of the units for those with household incomes of less than 30% of the median income, which is \$19,600 for a family of four.

Based on the above, and 35% of the family income dedicated to housing the home purchase price and monthly rental rates affordable for a three bedroom unit are:

- Low income- \$190,144 and \$1308
- Very low income- \$116,840 and \$818
- Extremely low income- \$71,304 and \$490

The proposed Mercy Housing project is located adjacent to Bradshaw Road between Florin and Gerber Roads, an ideal location to help achieve the goals of distributing the affordable units throughout the County. The project will be on 4.1 acres that were dedicated by market rate development owners in lieu of providing affordable units within their development. The project consists of 89 rental units including 32 units for low-income households, 27 for very low income, and 30 for extremely low income. The project design consists of a courtyard configuration, which will help promote a sense of community. Site amenities include two playgrounds, a community room, social service office, computer lab, landscaped community areas, and an onsite daycare center. Social services proposed are well above minimum requirements and include after-school classes, affordable childcare, adult education, community workshops, recreation and social activities. Federal and State grant applications have been made to acquire the funding needed for a per unit subsidy of \$45,089.

Mercy Housing was selected following a rigorous and detailed two-step qualification and proposal process. Mercy is a non-profit corporation associated with the Sisters of Mercy, and has extensive experience in the development, renovation, and operation of multifamily housing including 106 developments with over 6060 units in 31 communities in California including Sacramento County.

The BOS vote of approval was unanimous, however two members who were not members of the Board when the Affordable Housing ordinance was adopted in 2005 did raise questions about the ordinance requirement for meeting prevailing wage standards and the use of grant funding for social services. It will be important that the advocates for affordable housing stay engaged so that the ordinance is not "watered down".

The Sacramento Housing Alliance is now advocating for an affordable housing ordinance in the City of Rancho Cordova, and for the strengthening of the ordinance that was adopted by the City of Sacramento approximately five years ago. To learn more concerning this very critical issue league members should attend the Affordable Housing panel discussion General Meeting to be held on April 17 at 7 PM at the University of Southern California Sacramento Center.

The League's 87th Anniversary and You. How You Can Make a Difference

Join with us to celebrate the League of Women Voters (LWV) 87th Anniversary at the general meeting on February 13, 2007. We are reminded of the suffragists who campaigned for more than seven decades so women would have the right to vote. One of their first actions was to establish the LWV so volunteers could educate women to use the right to vote responsibly. During the years countless members have continued this civic tradition of studying the issues and educating others. Lifestyle changes since 1920 are obvious, but the political issues continue to demand informed citizen participation in government.

Women gained endless opportunities in every field. Today women juggle many responsibilities and have made amazing contributions in every position and today electing the first woman president in 2008 seems possible. But the low voter turnout in 2004 with only 54% of the women, and 49% in total, casting ballots is not encouraging, but a reminder that the League voter service is still needed.

How is the League relevant today? Can a nonpartisan volunteer citizens organization address any of the complex issues effectively when the 24/7 communications elicits immediate responses? The need for reasoned discussion of the complex issues instead of emotional, deceptive sound byte positions on health care, education, immigration, global climate change, military buildup, etc. is definitely indicated.

The founders developed the League organizational structure to be under the leadership of an elected working board with ten to fifteen directors to share the workload. Many longtime members remember the efficiency and fun of working together on issue campaigns, projects, newsletters and fundraising events. In 2006 the board is too slim with only five directors, a few trying with mixed success, to juggle a major workload that they would prefer to share. This is an unhealthy condition for the organization and the board members. But member attendance at events demonstrates there is still interest and support of the League program.

The LWVSC Board of Directors has open positions for all board portfolios from administration, such as Co-president, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Membership, to specific program portfolios of government, social policy, natural resources, and board members at large. We invite all League members who are physically able to consider joining the League board, or be willing to do part of a job when contacted. If no one calls you, but you are interested and able, please call and self-nominate. Self-nominations reflect the best of motivations.

Please call Ruth Range the chair of the Nominating Committee, at 385-9773, or Email Ruth at ruthrang@surewest.net. She is eager to answer whatever questions you may have - and better still, discuss your self-nomination. Or you may leave a message at the League office, 442-8683 (VOTE) or contact other

Nominating Committee members: Doris Olson, Nancy Lapp, Vivian Skintauy, Roseanna Toretto and Barbara Hopkins. We look forward to meeting all of you at League meetings. Wouldn't you enjoy meeting in the large, comfortable meeting room at the new office?

LWV Diversity Policy

The LWVSC affirms, in both its values and practices, its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation on the basis of national origin, race, gender, creed/religion, age, sexual orientation or disability. (Adopted 2001)

LWV Mission

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.





**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY**

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For information leave a voice mail message at 916-447-VOTE (8683).
The Sacramento Voter is published 10 times a year by the LWVSC.
Membership is open to all US citizens, 18 years of age or older. Non-citizens and youth under 18 may join as associate members. Membership dues, payable to the LWVSC, are \$50 per year (\$75 for families). Contributions to the LWV and membership dues are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes. Joining LWVSC makes you a member of all levels of League (local, state and national).

LWVSC Calendar

February - March 2007

- Feb. 12 & 13 - Unit Meetings - see list
- Feb. 13 - 7:00 p.m. - LVSC Consensus Meeting-Flood Control
USC - 1800 I Street
- Feb. 14 - LWV 87th Birthday
- Feb. 21 - 5:30 p.m. - LWVSC - Board Meeting at new office
801 12th Street, Suite 210
members welcome to attend - door locked at 5:00 p.m.
- March 2 - Capitol Awards Banquet - see page 4
- March 5 - 7:00 p.m. Community Meeting on Immigration
USC - 1800 I Street
- Mar. 11-Mar. 17 - Sunshine Week - see page 5
- March 12 & 13 - Unit Meetings - see list
- March 15 - 7:00 p.m. - "Immigration Today" General Meeting
USC - 1800 I St.
- March 21 - 5:30 p.m. - LWVSC - Board Meeting - 801 12th St.
- March 21 - Reproductive Freedom Day - see page 4
- April 17 - 7:00 p.m. - Affordable Housing General Meeting
USC - 1800 I St.
- April 22 - Earth Day CSUS

We moved to:
801 12th Street, Suite 210
Sacramento, CA 95814

