



BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY **Housing and the Bay Area's Future**

Saturday, February 4, 2012, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

[First Unitarian Church of Oakland](#), 685 14th Street, Oakland

Presented by the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area

The keynote speaker will be David Rosen, a leading expert in the field of affordable housing finance, policy, land use, lending, and investment strategic planning. Three panels will look at the problems facing housing today, including:

- How to meet regional housing needs in compliance with the sustainable communities strategy mandated by CA SB 375
- How to finance affordable housing
- How to provide housing for the poor and the homeless

There will be time for questions from the audience during each panel.

Cost at the door: \$35 (\$20 without lunch). For information, call (510) 839-1608.

LWVUS PRIVATIZATION STUDY

Tuesday, February 21, 2012, 2 p.m.

[LWVDV Office](#), 500 St. Mary's Road, #14, Lafayette, CA

The purpose of this study is to identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state, or local government services, assets, and/or functions to the private sector. It will review the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good.

The national committee will provide a history and background of privatization, a glossary of terms, legal issues to be considered when privatizing at different levels of government, current state regulations on privatizing, and case studies on successful and unsuccessful privatizing efforts. Finally, the committee will provide suggested policies and parameters to be considered when privatizing. To learn more, visit www.lwv.org/member-resources/privatization.

LWV OF CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WORKSHOP

Saturday, February 25, 2012, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, [150 E. San Fernando Ave.](#), San Jose CA

- The California State Budget – It's Broken
- The Rules Have Changed: The 2012 Elections
- Privatization – Growing Trend in Government

See page 7 for details about registration.

LWVC Initiative and Referendum Update Study

Saturday, February 18, 2012, 10:00 a.m.

[LWVDV Office](#), 500 St. Mary's Road, #14, Lafayette, CA



Last month Cynthia Landy and Joan Conely joined Lee Lawrence in the start of our participation in the LWV of California update of our position on the initiative and referendum (I-R) process in California. We considered: should we abolish the initiative process in CA? How does our process compare with other states and countries? What is the difference between referendum and veto referendum? And how can we get you involved? The I-R process has profoundly impacted our state. How would you like to see it improved? Please join us for an in-depth exploration of this critical issue, and have the opportunity to provide grassroots input into League positions.

ADMINISTRATION'S KEYSTONE STEP IS "RIGHT DECISION"

January 18, 2012

Elisabeth MacNamara, President of the League of Women Voters



"Today's step by the Obama Administration to deny the Keystone XL Pipeline was the right decision. It is a decision that puts the health and safety of Americans ahead of blind reliance on fossil fuels. The route of the Keystone XL Pipeline was a threat to the drinking water of millions of Americans. The pipeline was just too big a risk to allow it to go forward.

"Putting the Keystone XL pipeline over the Ogallala Aquifer, which provides agricultural and drinking water to so many in the Plains states, was an incredibly bad idea. The majority of any jobs created would be short term and short lived. The damage to such an important water supply would last for centuries.

"In addition, approval of this pipeline would be inconsistent with meaningful action on climate change.

"We applaud President Obama for standing up to the polluters."



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Lee Lawrence, President, LWV of Diablo Valley

We need and value your participation in our League. We currently have several important positions unfilled, and we will be consulting our membership to see if we can find a good fit between your interests and our League needs. Please look at our wish list of open positions on the following page of the *VOTER*. We want a League that is fair, vibrant, and strong! And it is much more fun when we have a real variety of perspectives in our meetings. Our members are very well informed, smart, have great ideas, and wonderful senses of humor! It's a pleasure to feel like not just a "woman voter," but also a member of a true League. We will also have lots of voters service events this spring (pros and cons, last chance voter registration, TV/live candidate forums, adopt a poll, etc.). There are so many ways to participate. We are hoping all our members will be engaged, so we can have maximum impact.

My second request this spring is that you consider who among your friends might be interested in joining our League. Engaging new members is key to a strong, healthy League, and it's also a deeply satisfying and meaningful way of participating in our community. Leagues around the country help make American democracy strong and our voters informed and engaged. I'm planning to give a neighbor a gift membership for the year, as she has attended several of our programs and would be a real asset to our League. We are also planning to make sure each local library has our brochures, membership applications, copies of our calendars and the latest *VOTER*. Are you willing to make sure these are present and up to date at your local library? If so, please call the office at 283-2235. We are also very much in need of a membership coordinator, with the key qualification of being friendly. And if you have ideas of groups that might be interested in our activities or ideas for recruiting more members, let us know!

VOTE YES ON THE COMMUNITY CLEAN WATER INITIATIVE



Our board voted to endorse the countywide initiative to protect clean water through a March vote of property owners in Contra Costa County to place a tax of \$12-\$22 on property tax bills. We will make a statement endorsing the measure at a Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors hearing on Tuesday, February 7. The tax would last ten years.

The money goes to each local community and can only be used in that community for the specified purpose of capturing, cleaning, and using rainwater to irrigate local parks and landscaping. The water is polluted by development and consequent pollutants, toxic chemicals, and bacteria and viruses. Retaining and cleaning this run-off will protect our streams, bay, and ocean. The tax is indexed for inflation. The tax is based on the amount of paved land, so it will be more for businesses and larger buildings. All tax money will remain under local control, and expenditures will be supervised by independent citizens oversight and mandatory audits. Our League positions for time-limited taxes are met by this measure, and it is consistent with our positions on water and protecting the environment.

We urge all property owners in Contra Costa to vote yes on their mail-in ballots, which will go out in the week of February 21. All ballots must be mailed or hand delivered to the Elections office at 555 Escobar in Martinez so that they are in the county's possession by April 6, 2012, at 5:00 p.m.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE



The Nominating Committee—comprised of Martha Goralka, Chris Coons, Joan Lautenberger, Jeanne Melaugh, and Gwen Watson—is beginning the task of building the slate of directors and chairs for 2012-2013. We are already aware that there are several open positions. It is vital to the health of the League that we fill these spots. There is a large range of opportunities, some requiring considerable time commitment, some very little time, some of which are meeting-intensive, and some that can be done from home. The following are opportunities for you to be involved in our League:

Vice President of Administration involves responsibilities for the Board Retreat and the Annual Meeting, some oversight tasks, and, mainly, being the go-to person for the President.

Membership Director focuses on the engagement and retention of members. She/he oversees the activities of the New and Prospective Member Secretary and the Dues Renewal Secretary. Attendance at League functions to answer question about the League and “meet and greet” keeps the Membership Director actively involved in the League.

Item Chairs monitor issues associated with their area of interest as they affect the LWVDV and provide updates and recommend action to the Action Director and the Board when appropriate. The following Item Chair positions are available:

- Death Penalty Abolition
- Energy
- Gun Violence Prevention
- International Relations
- Immigration
- Juvenile Justice
- Reproductive Rights
- State and Local Finance
- Young Voter Outreach

Voters Service activities include conducting/helping with pros and cons sessions and candidates’ forums; working at the polls; doing voter registration; and more. With a presidential election this fall, we will need all the help we can get. Please contact Sharon Burke to put your name on the list now. See page 5 for Smart Voter opportunities.

Voters Service Co-chair of Televised Candidate Forums arranges and conducts televised candidates’ forums. This is League work at its finest!

If you are interested in any of these positions or could suggest anyone whom you believe could fill any of these roles, please contact Martha Goralka.

JOIN THE SMARTVOTER.ORG TEAM!

By Ashley Coates, Smart Voter Chair, LWV of Diablo Valley



Smartvoter.org is for every voter who can access the internet (via PC or smartphone). Voters can enter their address to see a personalized ballot with links to candidates' information. The goal is to offer the complete list of all contests on each ballot, including local offices. Accordingly, we invite all local candidates to post their information (this service is free).

The Smart Voter team needs people to help with any of the following:

Non-computer jobs

- Assemble letters to candidates at a "mailing party" (during the day)
- Call candidates to ask if they received the letter, and answer questions (script provided)
- Remind candidates who have not responded
- Provide publicity

Computer jobs

- Link news articles to each race page (instructions provided)
- Read information candidates have submitted, and determine whether it meets Smart Voter appropriateness criteria
- Enter local ballot measures

Sound fun? Rewarding? Contact Ashley Coates.

SCHOOL FINANCE

By Joan Conley, Item Chair for Public Libraries and Director at Large, LWV of Diablo Valley



In an ongoing process, the California Legislature and the Governor of our state decide how much money will be divided between the County Offices of Education and the California Department of Education and among the school districts. Where do the dollars to pay for this come from? The sources are:

- Federal, about 11%
- State, about 61% (generated by business and personal income taxes, state taxes, and some special taxes)
- Local property taxes (about 21% of all funds)
- The Lottery, less than 2% or about \$150 per pupil
- Miscellaneous resources, about 6% (special election parcel taxes, contributions from foundations and businesses, and interest from investments)

The funds are distributed in a formula of two-thirds for general purposes and one-third for special purposes or categories of students. The school districts—by order of the California Legislature—must adhere to the established revenue limits, but the lottery dollars are not to be targeted for a special purpose. So, there is a little wiggle room. On the other hand, “categorical aid” must be used for the specific program for which it qualified. With the uncertain funding all this year, it is hard to know what the future holds.

LEAGUE SUPPORTS DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION INITIATIVE



Our board joins the LWV of California in supporting a proposed ballot measure that would abolish the death penalty in California and transfer all prisoners on death row to state prisons for life, saving the state \$1 billion over four years. The coalition drafting this measure is using both paid and volunteer signature gatherers to get it on the ballot, and they are close to their 750,000-signature goal. The deadline is the middle of February. If you know of group meetings or other events where signature gathering could be done efficiently, or if you would like to help, please let us know. Some of us will be collecting signatures in BART stations in our area in the next week during the late afternoon commute hours. Let us know if you would like to join us by calling the office at 283-2235.

OUT AND ABOUT

LWVDV AT THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., CELEBRATION IN WALNUT CREEK

League members Phyllis Ceaser, Ann Flynn, Sally Germain, Lee Lawrence, Janet Thomas, and Gwen Watson attended the annual celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday at Walnut Creek's Civic Park Auditorium with members of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County (ICCCC), the Walnut Creek City Council, and the Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center.

Thanks to Gwen and ICCC Social Justice Chair Natalie Russell, the League had a table for voter registration, Smart Voter, and other League materials. We were delighted and proud to see Janet Thomas and Phyllis Ceaser holding a banner which said, "*Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane,*" Martin Luther King, Jr.

We were pleased that State Senator Mark deSaulnier came to our table to chat. Dr. King's contribution to voting rights through the Voting Rights Act continues to support League values today. Our presence was also part of our commitment to diversity, as we hope to engage many more members of our community in the League. It was good to participate in such an inspiring program.

LWVDV PARTICIPATION IN AAUW'S HUMAN TRAFFICKING PANEL

January 29, we tabled and participated in a panel on Human Trafficking sponsored by the AAUW Contra Costa Interbranch Council, the Contra Costa Commission on Women, and the Soroptimists at Lafayette Library. The League was asked to sort questions and then pose them to Cindy Liou, a staff attorney with Asian Pacific Islander Outreach, and Jennifer Alderete, Special Agent for Homeland Security Investigations' Smuggling and Human Trafficking Group. Joan Conley, Ann Flynn, and Judy Jacobs did an excellent job of sorting the questions, and Lee Lawrence presented the questions to the panelists.

We also collected signatures at our table for the proposed ballot measure abolishing the death penalty in California and spoke with many AAUW members. It was a very informative panel and a productive experience.



To support our newsletter and other activities, please donate online by clicking on this button or visiting our website at www.lwvdv.org.

**The League of Women Voters
of Diablo Valley Voter**
Published monthly except
June and December

LWV of Diablo Valley
500 St. Mary's Road, #14, Lafayette, CA 94549
925-283-2235 www.lwvdv.org

Acting Editor: Jeanne Melaugh
Acting Associate Editor: Lee Lawrence

Email delivery is free, but delivery by U.S. mail is \$10/year.
Current/past issues are posted on our [website](#).

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS AND DIRECTORY UPDATES

If your name appears below, then it is time to renew your membership. Please use the form on the back cover, and send it with your dues to the League Office. If you already have renewed, thank you!

League of Women Voters Invites You to Attend a LWV California Regional Workshop

Saturday, February 25, 2012, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, 150 E. San Fernando Ave., San Jose CA 95112

- **The California State Budget – It's Broken**
What the League and the Public Can Do to Fix the Problem
- **The Rules Have Changed: The 2012 Elections**
Preparing for the State 2012 Elections and Anticipating a Flood of Ballot Measures
- **Privatization – Growing Trend in Government**
Let's Take a Closer Look from Two Perspectives

Please register and pay by credit card at the LWVC website www.LWVC.org by February 18; or write check payable to LWVC and mail form to be received by February 18 to:
LWV San Jose-Santa Clara, PO Box 5374, San Jose, CA 95150

Questions? Call Shelly Saini at (408) 460-0320 or email shellyksaini@gmail.com.



-----Cut here and return reservation form-----
____ I will attend & buy lunch: \$25 (\$30 after 2/18) ____ I will attend & bring lunch: \$15

Name: _____

League: League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley _____

Phone and/or Email: _____

Enclosed is my check to **LWVC** for \$_____. Reservations held at door.
Event hosted by LWV San Jose-Santa Clara & with support from the Santa Clara Council Leagues.



LWVDV VOTER
 Published ten times per year
League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley
 500 St. Mary's Road, #14
 Lafayette, CA 94549

**ADDRESS SERVICE
 REQUESTED**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Membership: Join Us or Renew!

Membership is not based on ability to pay. To pay alternate dues or to request a scholarship, please contact Carole Woods at the League office: (925) 283-2235.

\$ _____ \$65 Individual Membership. Indicate NEW ___ or RENEWAL ___
 \$ _____ \$95 Family Membership (2). Indicate NEW ___ or RENEWAL ___
 \$ _____ \$35 Associate Membership. Indicate NEW ___ or RENEWAL ___
 \$ _____ GIFT MEMBERSHIP (circle appropriate category above)

Gift Membership from: _____
 (Please write recipient's information below.)

\$ _____ \$10 included to receive printed copies of the *Voter* by US Mail
 \$ _____ Additional Donation to LWVDV (not tax deductible).
 \$ _____ **TOTAL** of ALL above enclosed to LWVDV (not tax deductible).
 \$ _____ TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION to LWVC.
 Please make separate check payable to LWVC - Education Fund.

Name(s) _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State ____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Email _____

Please print, complete, and mail this form along with your check to:
 LWVDV, 500 St. Mary's Road #14, Lafayette, CA 94549

CALENDAR	
Feb. 4	Bay Area League Day 9 am - 2 685 14th Street, Oakland
Feb. 7	Action Committee 2 pm LWVDV Office
Feb. 14	Board Meeting 2 pm LWVDV Office
Feb. 18	I.R. Study Meeting 10 am LWVDV Office
Feb. 21	Privatization Study 2 pm LWVDV Office
Feb. 25	LWVC Regional Workshop 9-3 pm 150 E. San Fernando Ave., San Jose CA