



ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, April 2, 2013, 2 p.m.

[LWVDV Office](#), 500 St. Marys Road, #14, Lafayette, CA

MONEY IN POLITICS

Friday, April 5, 7 p.m.

[Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church](#), 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek

Speaker: David Cobb, leader of [Move to Amend](#)

Sunday, April 7, 12:30 p.m.

[Lafayette Library Community Hall](#), 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette

Showing of "Pricele\$\$", an excellent and vivid documentary on money in politics, followed by a video presentation by Harvard Law Professor Lawrence Lessig and a live Skype interview with Lessig.

We are happy to sponsor two events focusing on two approaches to campaign finance reform, as part of our new coalition "Money Out—People In" to educate voters about possible alternatives to our current system of financing campaigns.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING WEEK SEMINAR PLANNING FOR AN INCLUSIVE WALNUT CREEK: THE WEST DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN

Tuesday, May 14, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

[Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church](#)

Bortin Fellowship Hall, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek

See additional details on page 7.

LWVDV ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, May 11, 8:45 a.m.

[Lafayette Library Community Hall](#), 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., #107, Lafayette, CA

The Health Care Movie

Thursday, May 16, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

[Ygnacio Valley Library](#), 2661 Oak Grove Blvd., Walnut Creek

Comparing the Canadian and US Health Care Systems. Discussion with **Pat Snyder**, Ph.D., R.N., Health Care Committee Co-chair for the LWV of California, and Co-chair of Contra Costa County Health Care for All.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Lee Lawrence, President, LWV of Diablo Valley

What a remarkable organization the League of Women Voters is! Serving two years as President has given me a great overview of League activities at the national, state, and local levels, and I find increasing joy in watching the League—and our members—in action. This past month has given us a deep appreciation of the League's impact in the community.

Our work on prisoner realignment in Contra Costa County has drawn recognition from one of the Board of Supervisors, discussing the impact of our League positions before budget votes. We have also been able to ally with CCISCO (Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organizing) through this effort and to engage with East County organizations, particularly with minority communities. We have met with members of the Sheriff's department to win some victories in protecting non-violent persons from ICE holds and deportation. We may join with CCISCO for an event on immigration with members of the Sheriff's department.

Our program on "Mending the Social Safety Net for Children and Families" at Diablo Valley College, ably coordinated by Voter Service Vice President Ann Flynn, highlighted the power of the League's voice in our community and our reputation as a highly trustworthy organization. Larry Sly, executive director of the Food Bank of Contra Costa County and Solano, particularly cited the power of our name in the community. Several panelists acknowledged following our recommendations on ballot measures. We are exploring further work with a county network of organizations focused on possible innovations in the Social Safety Net.

Our board just voted to join a new coalition on a major LWV-California priority, Money in Politics. Founded by LWV-Diablo Valley member Sheilah Fish—who is active in the new 501c4 non partisan non-profit Central Contra Costa MoveOn—the new coalition "Money Out –People In" will be cosponsoring events on campaign finance reform in the beginning of April (see page 1). We hope all our members will join us in looking at and learning about a variety of approaches both to disclosure at the state and federal level and to possible constitutional amendments to overcome the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision.

Working in coalition helps add to the League's visibility, strength, and alliances in the community and helps other organizations get to know and rely on us. Being an active League member means getting to learn about a lot of our public positions and getting to make many new friends. Working with friends within the League is also a great pleasure and always a learning experience. Each time I send a proposal or statement to the Executive Committee or the Board, it always comes back better!

Seeing the impact our local League has had in this community makes me eager to sign up for more League activities when my term is up. As League founder Carrie Chapman Catt said, "Service to a just cause rewards the worker with more real happiness and satisfaction than any other venture in life."

We hope you will add this happiness and satisfaction to your life by participating in our League activities. This non-election year is a great time to engage in helping with our programs and with advocating for the positions we have established by study and consensus over the years. Bring a friend to our upcoming annual meeting for an overview of League activities. Contact our Nominating Committee Chair Leslie Stewart to let her know what your interests are, and how you would most like to get involved. Come to our Action/Program meeting April 2nd or our Board meeting April 11th to see what we are up to, and how you can get involved. We will also be sending out a copy of our latest Interest Survey, which we hope you will complete by updating your interests. Let us know how you would like to serve. Acting with the League for the public good is a wonderful way to bring meaning, new learning, and new friends to your life.

MEETING WITH REP. GEORGE MILLER AND LOCALLY WITH THE SHERIFF'S DEPT. RE IMMIGRATION REFORM



The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley continues our collaboration with CCISCO (Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization) in advocating for immigration reform following our League principles. The League supports a path to citizenship, family reunification, economic, business, employment, education and training needs in the United States for those without a history of serious criminal activity. League President Lee Lawrence joined CCISCO community organizer Claudia Jimenez, four ministers, and three members of CLOUD (a group of Dream Act recipients) to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform last week at Representative Miller's office. He indicated a possible compromise with Republicans was very near, although this was a touchy subject due to strongly held differences of opinion. We hope all League members will be watching the news on this issue.

The Sheriff has decided on a final policy regarding detainment of undocumented workers for ICE holds. We had advocated that he not put ICE holds (for deportation) on anyone not guilty of serious crimes, but he insisted on putting holds on all felons, not just violent ones. However, he had made significant steps forward in deciding not to detain anyone with minor misdemeanors. We have felt we have established a working relationship of mutual respect with Assistant Sheriff Matt Schuler and Special Assistant Robert Nelson and look forward to working with them in the future. We are planning a conjoint public meeting this spring with CCISCO and the Sheriff's Department to discuss the change in immigration detention policy.

SAFETY NET INNOVATION NETWORK QUARTERLY MEETING

By LWVDV Voter Service Director

The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley has been invited to participate in the Safety Net Innovation Network, a consortium of non-profit groups, faith-based and philanthropic organizations (like the Leshner, Kaiser Permanente and TJ Long Foundations) and county agencies dedicated to mending the gaps in Contra Costa's social safety net programs. The entire group meets quarterly, with ad-hoc sessions for specific project workgroups. I was pleased to represent LWVDV at the March 14 quarterly meeting in Concord.

With the recent recession, many County residents are having trouble meeting basic family food, clothing, and shelter needs. The groups that serve this population have agreed to pool their talent in order to work collaboratively and share best practices to increase efficiency. The League is warmly welcomed to participate and share our expertise. (Note: our own Gwen Watson is a rock star among this group.)

The March 14 meeting focused on identifying accomplishments, planning new projects, and continuing to energize teams and the overall community. I will be happy to share the current team projects and help brainstorm areas where League expertise might be able to support this needed effort. For example, the County registers people in need for the federal food stamp program; currently Contra Costa serves only 50% of the qualified population. Why are these federal dollars not being taken up? Does the League have expertise in registering voters that may be applied here? With the goal of collaboration, we might be able to support this important work.

If you have ideas to contribute to this effort, please contact us at (925) 283-2235.

MENDING THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Report of the public forum held March 2, 2013, by LWVDV Voter Service Director

In our continuing series highlighting gaps in the Contra Costa County social safety net, in a March 2 meeting, held at DVC, we featured professionals from agencies dedicated to shoring up the safety net for a growing population of families and children. The Contra Costa Times printed an excellent [article](#) on the forum.

Larry Sly, Executive Director of the **Contra Costa Food Bank** since 1979, described his agency's striking transition from serving food only in crisis situations to today's ongoing food distribution program serving 149,000 people each month in Contra Costa and Solano Counties. Since our Great Recession began in 2008, the need has increased 50%, and affects many more families with children than ever before. Larry was pleased to speak to our League audience in order to educate the public on this fundamental and growing basic need. More information can be found on their website: www.foodbankccs.org/

David Gerson is the Executive Director for **Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa**. His organization operates five dining rooms, serving 1,200 hot lunches per day. Locations are in churches, an American Legion Hall, and public buildings that have kitchen facilities, in Martinez, Bay Point, Pittsburg, Antioch and Oakley. The population served includes 10% veterans, 33% homeless, but 25% are employed, with the only hot meal program in central and east county. During school vacations, the number of school-aged kids swells. In an effort at collaboration between agencies to better serve their populations, Loaves and Fishes distributes groceries from Food Bank stocks, brings in Opportunity Junction to provide office skills training, counselors for seniors to de-code the Medicare, Social Security and Senior Housing bureaucracies. Loaves and Fishes is actively seeking volunteers: www.loavesfishescc.org/.

Carol Carrillo, Executive Director of the **Child Abuse Prevention Council of Contra Costa** shared how her non-profit group supports families in our area. For example, they provide kits for new parents coming home from the hospital and they mentor families that have had a child removed from the home -- leading to quicker family reunification and fewer returns to the foster care system. A large part of CAPC's work is in training, both for mandated reporting of suspected child abuse as well as "Nurturing Parenting" classes aimed at stopping abuse before it starts. Now, CAPC has added a comprehensive program of training in Moraga, Lafayette and Orinda to bring a whole community together to understand legal requirements for reporting suspected child abuse, and helping school staffs to create curriculum on safety, anti-bullying and harassment. Learn more about CAPC on their website: www.capc-coco.org

Paul Buddenhagen works in the **Human Services Department of Contra Costa County**, supervising public benefit programs such as Cal Fresh food stamps. Paul brought us up to date on County budget cuts since 2008, which have resulted in the layoff of 33% of child welfare workers. This means the County can't provide enough services to meet our needs. He described an independent County-wide Safety Net Task Force that meets quarterly, composed of County agencies, interfaith groups, non-profit agencies, and philanthropic organizations, with the understanding that taxpayer funding will never provide enough support to eliminate poverty. It is clear we must all join together to become efficient and avoid overlap of services. Groups are working on projects such as changes to policy, education to change attitudes toward poverty, financial empowerment, and a tactical effort to develop credit history for rent payments. The League has been invited to join this Safety Net Task Force. If you are interested in the collaborative work, please contact Ann Flynn (925) 935-1643.

OUR VOTER REGISTRATION WORK IS HEADED TO THE SUPREME COURT

By: Elisabeth MacNamara 03/18/2013



The fate of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) now lies with the Supreme Court. For the second time in as many months, the justices are hearing arguments on vital legislation that has encouraged active participation in our democracy for nearly two decades. The League of Women Voters of Arizona is a plaintiff in the case and the LWVUS has submitted an amicus brief to the Court.

If the Supreme Court rules against the NVRA, states would be free to pass laws that could restrict voter registration activities and thereby prevent eligible citizens from registering to vote. [Pledge](#) to support new voters and the organizations that bring them into the political process.

The National Voter Registration Act, commonly known as “Motor Voter,” became law in 1993 and streamlines the voter registration process. It requires states to provide voter registration opportunities when citizens get a driver’s license or seek government services at other agencies and provides for voter registration by mail, which is particularly important for citizen-led voter registration drives. In so doing, it protects voters against state restrictions on voter registration for federal elections. The League was a key player in the passage of the NVRA – we worked on the initial bill and later co-chaired a national coalition that brought together over 60 organizations dedicated to improving the voter registration process.

What’s more – if the NVRA is not upheld, *the work of the League of Women Voters is at risk!* Take action today and pledge to support organizations like ours that seek to engage new voters in the political process.

If the opponents of the NVRA have their way, the mission of our organization is in jeopardy. The case endangers the League’s work of running independent voter registration drives. The NVRA streamlined the numerous state laws that hindered citizen-led registration drives, and a decision against the NVRA would leave the voter registration process vulnerable to new forms of political manipulation. The League and our community partners are often the only effective way for many new voters to get registered to participate in our great democracy.

Restricting voter registration is just one way to limit the right to vote and altering the NVRA could reverse years of progress. **Join us as we fight to protect the NVRA and [pledge](#) to support organizations like ours that are dedicated to registering new voters so that all eligible citizens are encouraged and able to participate in our elections.**

VOTER REGISTRATION MOVES ONLINE IN CALIFORNIA



Shortly before the November election, the Secretary of State initiated online voter registration in the state. Many last minute voters used this way to register to vote. In the last 6 weeks before the election, over 6000 new voters registered in Contra Costa County, more than registered using the traditional application. Rep. George Miller reports that over 80% of young voters use online registration, and low income voters are registering online at a rate higher than other economic groups. We will continue our traditional methods but also will publicize the online voter registration website, registertovote.ca.gov.

COMMENT ON THE DRAFT PLAN BAY AREA



Attend an Open House in Contra Costa County

Open House Hours: 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Public Hearing Hours: 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Monday, April 22, 2013

Contra Costa County: Marriott Hotel, 2355 North Main St., Walnut Creek

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) later this month will release for public review and comment the Draft Plan Bay Area and the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). This will start the public comment period for the long-range plan that has been discussed and developed over the past two years.

What's Being Released for Public Review:

- **Comment on the Draft Plan Bay Area** (release date Friday, March 22, 2013; close of comment period, 4 p.m., Thursday, May 16, 2013).
- **Comment on the Draft EIR**, which examines the proposed plan and four alternatives and analyzes the range of potential environmental impacts that could result from the implementation of Plan Bay Area (release date Friday, March 29, 2013; close of comment period, 4 p.m., Thursday, May 16, 2013).
- **Comment on the Draft 2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**, which implements Plan Bay Area by identifying surface transportation projects over the next six years that are regionally significant or will receive federal funds (release date Friday, March 29, 2013; close of comment period, 4 p.m., Friday, May 3, 2013).
- **Comment on the Draft Transportation-Air Quality Conformity Analysis** for Plan Bay Area and the Draft 2013 TIP (release date Friday, March 29, 2013; close of comment period, 4 p.m., Friday, May 3, 2013).

Plan Bay Area looks forward to the year 2040 and charts a course for the Bay Area's first ever Sustainable Communities Strategy, accommodating needed housing growth within our nine counties while at the same time decreasing greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks.

Attend an **Open House** to view displays and learn about the Draft Plan Bay Area. Provide oral comments on the Draft Plan at the Public Hearing or leave written comments at the comment station during the Open House. No registration is needed. Go to www.OneBayArea.org to view or print a copy of the Draft Plan.

Plan Bay Area Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Three public hearings are scheduled as an opportunity to provide oral comments. The closest one to us is Tuesday, April 16, 7 to 9 p.m., at the Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter Auditorium, 101 8th Street, Oakland. Oral comments on the Draft EIR also can be made at the Plan Bay Area public hearings listed above.

Submit Comments Multiple Ways

- Provide written or oral comments at any of the open houses or public hearings.
- Submit your comments via [email](mailto:) by close of comment period.
- Participate in an online forum, Plan Bay Area Town Hall, at www.OneBayArea.org.
- Send comments via mail to MTC-ABAG, Plan Bay Area Public Comment, 101 8th Street, Oakland, CA, 94607.

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

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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!

SAVE THE DATES



MAY 14—PLANNING FOR AN INCLUSIVE WALNUT CREEK: THE WEST DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN

Speakers Include

- **Rev. Leslie Takahashi Morris**, Co-Minister, Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church
- **Sean Potts**, Children and Family Minister, St. Paul's Episcopal Church: Role of Faith Communities in Pursuing Affordable Housing in Redevelopment Plans
- **Laura Simpson**, Housing Division Manager, City of Walnut Creek: What are the City's Responsibilities (and Plans) for Affordable Housing Development?
- **Sen. Mark DeSaulnier**, California 7th District: California's role in supporting housing for all economic levels.
- **Emily Chang**, Executive Director, Downtown Business Association: Business and City Advantages to a Close-by Labor Pool and New Consumers
- **Dan Sawislak**, Executive Director, Resources for Community Development: How Does Affordable Housing Fit Into and Enhance the Community?

Sponsors: Social Justice Council, Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church; East Bay Housing Organizations; League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley; Social Justice Alliance, Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County; St. Paul's Episcopal Church; St. Paul's Trinity Center

LWVDV ANNUAL MEETING

When: May 11, 8:45 a.m.

Where: Lafayette Library Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., #107, Lafayette, CA

This is an opportunity for the membership to vote on our local priorities for 2013-2014 and elect their new board and new president. We will also vote on new bylaws, which will include our decision to change our status from a 501(c)(4) to a tax-deductible 501(c)(3) organization. We hope all League members will mark their calendars now. A quorum of our membership is necessary for us to conduct business. We are hoping we can retain the excellent caterer who supplied outstanding food for this event last year.



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**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 ___
 (For a student or non-citizen non-voting member)
- \$ _____ 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. Marys Road #14, Lafayette, CA 94549

CALENDAR

- April 2 Action Committee**
2 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- Apr. 5 Money in Politics**
7 pm [Mt. Diablo Unitarian
Universalist Church](#)
- Apr. 7 Money in Politics**
12:30 Lafayette Library
[Community Hall](#)
- Apr. 11 Board Meeting**
2 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- May 11 Annual Meeting**
8:45 am Lafayette Library
[Community Hall](#)
- May 14 Planning for an
Inclusive Walnut Creek**
7 pm [Mt. Diablo Unitarian
Universalist Church](#)
- May 16 Health Care Movie**
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