



### **ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Tuesday, June 4, 2013, 2 p.m.**

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

### **TOWN HALL FORUM ON IMMIGRATION Representative George Miller and CCISCO**

**Saturday, June 8, 11:30 a.m.**

[Queen of all Saints Church](#), 2390 Grant Street, Concord, CA

The LWVDV is co-sponsoring this event focusing on the comprehensive immigration reform bill currently in Congress and possible modifications suggested by the Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CISSCO), with whom we have been working. The League of Women Voters of the United States supports a path toward citizenship for the 11 million now in the country without documentation. Here is a great opportunity for an update, and to help our League make friends within the Latino community. Please join us!

### **BOARD MEETING**

**Thursday, June 13, 2 p.m.**

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

### **ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Tuesday, July 2, 2013, 2 p.m.**

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

### **BOARD RETREAT**

**Saturday, July 13, 10 to 2**

500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette, CA

[Sequoia Room of the Lafayette Community Center](#)

All board members and item chairs, please attend.

### **LWV of CALIFORNIA 2013 CONVENTION**



# LEAGUE LEADER'S LETTER



*By Leslie Stewart, Administrative Vice President, LWV of Diablo Valley*

With the LWVDV Annual Meeting and the LWV California Convention in the rear-view mirror, it may seem that the League year is coming to a close. However, like flowering bulbs resting and gathering energy for a new set of blooms, many League members will be readying themselves for a new year ahead – while some of us, like perennials, will be visible all summer at meetings and other action opportunities.

At our LWVDV Board Retreat in July, your leaders will be discussing how to do more with less, as we still need to complete the Board by filling some key positions. As Administrative VP, I will be supporting the Board, while Action Vice President Lee Lawrence and our Item Chairs carry out our Action and Program responsibilities. We will be putting together a Membership Team (which still needs a Director) and strategizing on Voters Service in anticipation of primaries in Spring 2014. By then we hope to have a new Director for that portfolio.

At the LWVC Convention, the delegates voted to work on Money in Politics, Education (preschool and K-12), Water, and Healthcare, all of which will be in the limelight at some point in the next two years. I foresee some lively Action Committee meetings ahead. Lee Lawrence and Carol Murota are participating in a local Money in Politics coalition, and they would love some company. Our Water Chair, Janet Thomas, and our Healthcare Chair, Pat Snyder, can always use committee members. Education is looking for a leader – you? (I hear everyone enthuse about universal pre-school, so I know people are interested in this topic. Please step forward!)

In addition, as you will see in the Convention Reports, LWVC delegates voted to study the higher education system including UC and CSU. This new study will probably start in 2014. If you are interested in being on the local study committee, it's not too soon to raise your hand!

I attended a very exciting fundraising workshop at Convention about a way to “raise \$25K in 6 weeks”! Other great suggestions from Convention include some new strategies for membership and increasing social media outreach. You'll be hearing more about all of these ideas in the next few months, but if they sound interesting, I'd love to talk to you at any time about getting involved.

Coming in the next *VOTER* – highlights from the Board retreat!

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM LWVC 2013 CONVENTION

*By Leslie Stewart, LWVDV Vice President of Administration*



- Networking with other Leagues, especially those nearby Leagues whose delegates sat at our table: San Joaquin County, West Contra Costa, Stanislaus and Benicia.
- Picking up a novel fundraising strategy from a workshop with nationally-known fundraising expert Kim Klein (which we could maybe also adapt to membership).
- Going to informative caucuses on climate change and the problems with Internet voting.
- Figuring out that using social media for the LWV isn't something that can be adequately covered in a two hour workshop, but the resources are there so we can work it out for ourselves.
- Watching the LWVC President and Executive Director ask each other the “hard questions” about how the League can grow and be more successful...respectfully, even affectionately, but not pulling any punches.
- Seeing the interplay of orderly meeting rules and parliamentary procedures with the energy and passion of the delegates.
- Learning that LWVC is once again publishing Guide to California Government after a lapse of over 20 years, and it's fresh-looking but just as valuable as ever!

## SMART VOTER AND THE LEAGUE

By Carol Murota, LWVDV Director at Large



I attended an eye-opening **Smart Voter** workshop at the 2013 LWVC convention. Ernie Ting (Smart Voter Senior Director), Carol Watts (LWVC Webmaster), and Kathy Armstrong (2nd VP LWVC Education Fund) demonstrated the changes that will make Smart Voter highly interactive and more smart phone, tablet, and social media friendly. The Smart Voter team envisions embedding tools like video clips and links to reliable resources to give voters accurate and engaging information. Smart Voter will continue to provide local candidates a free outlet to publicize their positions and the gravitas of association with the LWV. Recognizing the importance of the latter, Ernie wants content producers to meet certain LWV criteria like providing major funding information in keeping with our LWV “Money in Politics” position. He would like to require the removal of advertisements on embedded videos to preserve the LWV reputation for providing fact-based and balanced information.

As always, members of the LWVC staff and Board are alert to the responsibility of vetting information, security issues, and customizing sections to be locally relevant. As you can imagine, all this is expensive. Kathy was excited to report this new on-line tool is only \$10,000 shy of its fund raising goal of \$50,000. You can send tax-deductible donations to “SmartVoter.org” or LWVC Education Fund.

The Smart Voter staff is looking for volunteers, especially those with editorial skills. It is hoped this powerful on-line tool can be fully deployed in time for the 2014 state elections. This time-limited, volunteer opportunity is a way to get involved with the League. If you have suggestions or questions, you can reach them at [ernie@smartvoter.org](mailto:ernie@smartvoter.org) or [karmstrong@lwvc.org](mailto:karmstrong@lwvc.org).

## PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION, INTERNET VOTING, AND THE LEAGUE

By Carol Murota, LWVDV Director at Large



Two issues produced particularly lively discussions at the plenary sessions. The first was a call from the membership in the form of a non-recommended study so that the LWVC can have a **position regarding public higher education (UC and CSU)**. LWVC already has a position on California community colleges, but not a League position on UC and CSU systems, so League members cannot respond to higher education policies. The two votes on the study, both of which went beyond the customary voice vote to using voting cards, were very close. The study lost by one vote on the first ballot, but after reconsideration and the switch of two votes, the Convention adopted a LWV study on California public higher education.

The second issue was on **internet voting**. On April 23, 2013, LWVC President Jenny Waggoner sent Representative Phillip Ting a letter explaining the League’s opposition to his internet voting measure AB19 which would set up a pilot program in local elections testing the efficacy of internet voting. Many members felt a resolution passed at Convention would underscore President Waggoner’s letter. While the resolution did not pass, internet voting will doubtless be a recurring concern.

In addition, a second tier of focus to be acted on as opportunities arise, if they do not interfere with activities on the higher priority issues, and it appears that the League of Women Voters of California can make an impact.

- **Health Care:** Education about the Affordable Care Act and continued education and advocacy on a single payer option for California.
- **Water:** Community education and advocacy in preparation for the expected water bond measure on the 2014 ballot

# 2013 LWV OF CA CONVENTION REPORT

By Lee Lawrence, LWVDV Action Vice President



“**Money in Politics**,” as well as Education, was a major theme of the League of Women Voters of California Convention in San Jose May 17 to 19. I was able to attend both Friday and Saturday, but left Sunday, the liveliest and most contentious day, to Leslie Stewart and Carol Murota.

Money in Politics is a major priority for both the state and national League. The Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United*, and the mysterious \$11 million dollars donated by a nonprofit in Arizona to a California group opposing Proposition 30 (tax raise for schools), and supporting Proposition 32 (banning union contributions) has made money in politics a top priority, as big money in elections threatens the democratic process and contributes to corruption and public distrust of government.

A Friday workshop led by LWVC Vice President for Action Helen Hutchison and Chris Carson (our representative on the LWV-US Taskforce re Money in Politics) outlined the legislation in California that the League will be supporting regarding disclosure (see below). They also led a caucus on Friday night, set up a state-wide League email list (which many joined), and discussed ideas, speakers, op-eds, letters to the editor, and other ways of raising awareness and educating voters. Chris and Helen said the main strategy would be to link money in politics to the issues it impacted most, such as insufficient votes for Cap and Trade or for Gun Control.

Our Saturday Luncheon speaker was Ann Ravel, chair of our state's Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), who has two more years in her term. Describing herself as pragmatic, she noted that public trust in government has plummeted from 85% in 1960 to under 20% today, and that robust campaign disclosure laws regarding contributions could help reverse this dramatic change in attitudes and increase the public's engagement in our democracy. She noted thousands of Californians had contacted her regarding the mysterious \$11 million, which she traced through numerous non-profits it had “passed through.” The original sources have still not been identified. She noted that the 28% approval rating for Congress is lower than the approval rating for root canals and colonoscopies.

Additionally, while direct contributions to campaigns can still be limited, “independent expenditures” cannot be limited, as the current Supreme Court does not see them as corruptive. And as comedian Stephen Colbert commented, campaigns are prohibited from coordinating with independent groups, “except by phone and email!” Ann Ravel announced that, under her direction, CA's FPPC had brought the first enforcement action of this rule, charging a campaign consultant who was also a consultant to “independent” organizations. SuperPACs and their regulation is now a challenging aspect of campaign finance reform. With undisclosed monetary contributions by 501(c)(4) organizations, it is much more difficult to trace illegal coordination.

FPPC Chair Ann Ravel also noted creative projects engaging volunteer computer programmers who could demonstrate what using “live data” instead of scanned pdfs whose data cannot be compared, rearranged, or creatively analyzed to report campaign contributions, judges' gifts, etc. One team opted to arrange clusters of reported gifts around each judicial candidate, including the donors. It made a vivid portrait of otherwise inaccessible data. The public, using live data, can easily see how influence is being wielded.

The Brennan Center has found SuperPACs contributing to public distrust. Ann Ravel suggested in the long run public financing of campaigns might be the solution, although currently lacking sufficient public support.

The League of Women Voters of California currently sponsors SB2 and SB3, “the Sunshine Act”; it supports SB26 and SB27 (Correa) strengthening disclosure laws; and it supports SB 52 (Leno), the Disclose Act, which would require clear, visible disclosure of the top financial contributors to ballot measure campaigns, including television ads. We will be working to support these bills this summer.

*Continued on page 5*

## **2013 LWV OF CA CONVENTION REPORT, continued from page 4**

Briefly noted: Cheryl Graeve, national Membership Director, announced that the League is growing in membership within 23 states. She suggested regularly doing small things that are effective recruitment ideas, such as participating in naturalization ceremonies with voter registration, participating in the annual September 25 National Voter Registration, conducting voter registration in minority communities, providing leadership development, and other volunteer opportunities that are one day only—"One day and you are done!".

Our League joined others in reporting our activities. We seem to be among the more active Leagues and are ahead of most Leagues in participating in poll observations, outreach to minority communities with our emphasis on realignment and immigration, and having a head start on most in the area of Money in Politics, having already joined a community coalition. Helen Hutchison commented particularly on how much Diablo Valley was doing.

Finally, our Saturday night banquet after-dinner speaker was Chris Hoene, the new Executive Director of the California Budget Project. We were riveted by a power point presentation of the highpoints of the current proposed budget, and the possible moral and policy choices it involved. We then watched the lines behind the two audience microphones swell with question-askers. As Leslie Stewart noted, only the League would love it.

## **LWVDV SUPPORTS EVIDENCE-BASED BEST PRACTICES IN COUNTY REALIGNMENT BUDGET**

At the May 21, 2013 Board of Supervisors meeting, just before the vote on the AB 109 realignment budget (where \$23 million dollars from the state was allocated among the Community Correctional Partners (CCP) and their Community Advisory Board (CAB)), the League was the only organization commenting. League Action Vice President Lee Lawrence made the following statement:

"The League of Women Voters of the United States supports exploring alternatives to incarceration. 30 years of severe incarceration methods have proved both costly and ineffective with a 72% recidivism rate at the state level. The Legislative intent of AB 109 is to reduce recidivism for prisoners transferred from state prisons to counties for rehabilitation using evidence-based, proven strategies.

Reviews of studies with control groups and adequate research design has found the following methods most effective in lowering recidivism rates: vocational education and correctional education in confinement; cognitive behavior therapy in confinement and in the community; alternative sentencing for drug offenders; electronic monitoring; intensive supervision in treatment oriented programs; drug treatment in community and in confinement. The Community Advisory Board is a major step in the right direction, but many proven services are not yet funded.

We suggest the Board of Supervisors and the CCP might save taxpayer money and obtain significantly greater public safety by transferring moneys allocated for unproven purposes to, for example, effective vocational education programs for AB 109 prisoners, and to allow other funding streams to support victims rights, and work with domestic violence, which have not been proven to reduce recidivism. Vocational Education is one of the most effective methods of reducing recidivism, but does not appear yet in the CCP budget. We hope it and other rehabilitation measures with evidence-based, proven track records will appear in the future. Thank you."

Before the vote, Supervisor Mary Piepho interjected that she agreed with the points made by the League and wished to follow up our recommendation about vocational education in the future. The CCP budget was passed unanimously.

## **LWVDV COSPONSORS COMMUNITY FORUM ON IMMIGRANT DETENTION POLICY IN C.C.C.**

*by Lee Lawrence, LWVDV Vice President for Action*



On Thursday, May 23, League Action Director Lee Lawrence and Secretary Martha Goralka attended a Community Forum on Immigration Detention Policies in our county, organized by our ally, Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO) in Pittsburg, CA, at the Community Presbyterian Church on Leland Way. We have been in negotiations with the Sheriff's office about the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)'s "Secure Communities" program. All people arrested in Contra Costa County have their fingerprints taken and they are sent to the FBI for processing, and referring to ICE. ICE can then request the Sheriff's office place a "hold" on a suspected undocumented worker so they can be assessed for possible deportation. ICE announced "Secure Communities" as a method of deporting dangerous felons; however, 80% of deportees have low level misdemeanors or no criminal offenses at all. The League, CCISCO, and other community groups including churches have advocated that ICE "holds" only be placed on serious, violent felons, and that the goal of preserving family unity be placed above the deportation of non-violent offenders whose charges may well be dismissed.

The forum featured a panel of negotiators from the Sheriff's office, including Special Agent Robert Nelson, Assistant Sheriff Matt Schuler, Police Chiefs from Pittsburg, Antioch, and Brentwood, as well as officers from Richmond. Mary Rocha, Mayor of Antioch, and a City Council Member from Richmond rounded out the panel. Community voices included testimony from Nati Flores of the Michael Chavez Center in Concord, Johnny Perez from Safe Return, Grisel Ruiz, an attorney from the Immigration Legal Resource Center, and others who have experienced the traumatic deportation of family members. The fear created by ICE's Secure Communities program has stopped many from contacting the police to report crimes, fearing their undocumented status will be discovered. In Contra Costa County, over 2,000 people have been deported including 774 immigrants who had committed no crime.

Currently the Sheriff is awaiting CA Legislative action on A.B. 4, the TRUST Act (Ammiano, D-San Francisco), which would limit ICE holds to those with serious, violent felonies. It has passed the Assembly and awaits action in the Senate. It was vetoed by Governor Jerry Brown last year.

League policies support family unification, a path to citizenship, and oppose the deportation of workers with no criminal record. We are proud to have co-sponsored this event, and provided delicious cookies (appreciated by the community), along with information about the League.

## **LWV UPCOMING AGRICULTURAL UPDATE**



The Agriculture Update will focus narrowly on:

1. Current technology issues in agriculture including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and
2. Current agriculture finance issues including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process.

In August 2013 the national Study Committee will formalize consensus questions, post study materials on the national website, and open a discussion list. The deadline for completing consensus questions by local Leagues will be in early April 2014. The consensus result or new position will be announced before the national Convention.

**DONATE**

To support our newsletter and other activities, please donate online by clicking on this button or visiting our website at [www.lwvdv.org](http://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!

## CHANGING eSCRIP

*By Carole Woods, LWVDV Treasurer*



Recently I had to get new debit and credit cards, so I had to change my account with eScrip. LWVDV benefits when I use my debit or credit cards at their "family of merchants."

1. It was easy to change. Here's how to do it: go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com).
2. On the first page is a bar menu: FAMILY OF MERCHANTS, ABOUT THE PROGRAM, WELCOME, MY ESCRIP. Click on MY ESCRIP.
3. The next page is ID OR USERNAME (it was already filled in). Put in PASSWORD (there's a button if you've forgotten it).
4. Menu: WHAT CAN I DO IN MY ESCRIP, click REGISTER CREDIT & DEBIT CARDS.
5. Menu: DELETE CARD TYPE CARD NUMBER
- Put in new CARD TYPE and CARD NUMBER, click UPDATE,
6. Sign off.

It takes about five minutes and the next time you shop or eat out, LWVDV will automatically get a little benefit. Some of the local restaurants are: Memo's, El Morocco, Jack's, Black Bear Diner, Una Mas, Black Angus, La Veranda, Dragon's Pond, Ike's Lair, Il Giardino, Duck Club, Hamachi, Mehran, and Extreme Pizza.

## GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT

The new Guide to California Government from LWVC can be ordered for a discount through June 30. The pre-print discount is \$11/copy for orders over 25 copies. Retail price is \$18.95. These make great gifts and library reference tools. Please call Leslie Stewart, or leave a message at the LWVDV office if you want to participate in a bulk order.



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 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
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- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$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.

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 LWVDV, 500 St. Mary's Road #14, Lafayette, CA 94549

**CALENDAR**

- June 4 Action Committee**  
 2 pm [LWVDV Office](#)
- June 8 Town Hall Forum on**  
 11:30 Immigration  
[Queen of all Saints Church](#)  
 Concord, CA
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