



ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, July 2, 2013, 2 p.m

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

ANNUAL LWVDV BOARD RETREAT

Saturday, July 13, 2013, 10 am – 2 pm

Sequoia Room, Lafayette Community Center
500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette, CA

All LWVDV members are invited to attend. Please bring a brown-bag lunch. Off-board Item Chairs and Team Members are expressly invited from 11 am – 1 pm. For more information contact Leslie, 925-765-6064.

“THE HEALTHCARE MOVIE”

a 60-minute documentary on the Canadian healthcare system, followed by a discussion

Thursday, July 18, 2013

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Mt Diablo Peace & Justice Center, Owl Room
55 Eckley Lane
Walnut Creek, CA

Presented by: Health Care for All – Contra Costa County; Physicians for a National Health Plan – California Chapter; Mt Diable Peace & Justice Center; League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley

HEALTHCARE IS A HUMAN RIGHT DAY – TOWN HALL MEETING

Panelists include: Dave Jones, CA Insurance Commissioner; Dr. Paul Song, Physicians for a National Health Program; Professor Robert Reich, UCB

Tuesday, July 30, 2013

3:00 – 4:30 pm

Gateway Club, Fireside Room, Rossmoor
1001 Golden Rain Road
Walnut Creek, CA

ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, August 6, 2013, 2 p.m.

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

OUR LEAGUE IN THE COMMUNITY:

Town Hall with Rep. George Miller, LWVDV and CCISCO on Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Three hundred people joined LWVDV and CCISCO (Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization) for a Town Hall with Rep. George Miller on June 8 in Concord at Queen of all Saints Church. Lee Lawrence, LWVDV Action VP, was asked to co-chair the meeting, and was joined in tabling for the League by Sally Germain. Leaders from several Concord and East County congregations attended, including members of the Mount Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church in Walnut Creek. Highlights of the meeting included two moving testimonials of families who had experienced "Secure Communities" ICE-holds where they were given immigration detainers after being picked up for failed license plate lights, or driving without a license. Rep. Miller talked about the comprehensive reform bill, and answered questions from community members. Many participants were in tears over the issues of family disruption caused by deportation and traumatic separation, which made 'abstract' policy issues vividly concrete and alive in people's lives. This was a highly successful event. Communities got to hear and see our League's commitment to comprehensive immigration reform.

Mark DeSaulnier's Town Hall on Healthcare

On June 20, 2013 a standing room crowd at the Walnut Creek City Council Auditorium came to ask questions about the implementation of the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare") after state Senator Mark DeSaulnier, a representative from the federal Health and Human Services administration, and the head of Covered California (our state exchange) made presentations on the fundamentals. Open enrollment, with subsidized plans for those with limited incomes, begins on October 1, 2013, and actual health coverage begins January 1st, 2014. If a person is already insured they can stay with what they have. For all uninsured, or under-insured, our state exchange, Covered California, will provide quality, affordable insurance for all Californians. DeSaulnier expects all premiums may go down, because with everyone covered, hospitals and doctors don't have to hike their fees to provide funding for all the uninsured who seek out their care. Lee Lawrence attended the Town Hall for the LWV Diablo Valley, and asked which staffer in deSaulnier's office could provide guidance to constituents with questions about healthcare and coverage. He advised contacting his staffer Emlyn Struthers at [\(925\) 942-6082](tel:9259426082) (district office) or [\(916\) 651-4007](tel:9166514007) (Capitol office). All panelists showed an excellent grasp of their areas of expertise.

Can Former Prisoners Reform? Yes!

Rehabilitation and re-entry into the community was the topic of a community meeting in Brentwood sponsored by CCISCO, with a panel of local leaders including District 3 Supervisor Mary Piepho, a representative from District 5 Supervisor Federal Glover's office, the Chief of Police of Brentwood, the Vice Mayor of Brentwood, and the Mayor of Antioch. Congregations from over 10 East County churches participated in this event, which included moving testimonials from the formerly incarcerated, with vocal support from their congregation members, and from the other 30 or so successfully rehabilitated former prisoners.

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LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW: DeSAULNIER



Every year, the League of Women Voters of California sends questions to all the Leagues in California to ask their state senators and assembly members. This year, we interviewed State Senator Mark DeSaulnier and Assemblymembers Susan Bonilla, Joan Buchanan and Jim Frazier. The following is the interview with **State Senator Mark DeSaulnier**, District 7 on March 1, 2013.

QUESTION 1: Carol Murota asked about **California's budget:** Even though we just passed Proposition 30, we recognize that this is just a first step towards financial stability for California. What measures would you support to continue the progress that Proposition 30 represents? What measures would you support to change the budget process?

DeSaulnier: It feels surreal not to be cutting. I was chair of the Health and Human Services Committee, and we have had to make thoughtful cuts, and the governor has made even more drastic cuts. We are still looking for ways to correct structural problems. We think corrections and realignment can continue to help; Proposition 30 and matching cuts will really help.

We do need a constitutional revision and possibly a two year budget process to be structurally balanced. I have for years proposed a bill for a California Constitutional Convention. I'm concerned that, while the initiative process is productive direct democracy, it has been hijacked by the political complex. You have to have \$1 million to get anything on the ballot. Media has its own ax to grind because of corporate ownership; it's harder for the public to see links between money and ballot measures. We need to be able to sunset propositions, pass a "pay-go" bill, have an indirect initiative, and have better fiscal analyses and information on costs to the budget. It's also a problem of citizen education. For example, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor says it's hard to get a "jury of peers" because the public doesn't even understand the three branches of government concept.

QUESTION 2: Election Reform Money in Politics. Lee Lawrence asked: What measures would you support to address the problem of money in politics? What improvements are needed to disclosure rules in California?

DeSaulnier: It would be cheaper to use public financing of campaigns, as in Loni Hancock's Prop 15. The public does not know this. Media is owned by Wall Street, so one cannot get fair information about who is behind the propositions. Transparency and disclosure should be pushed. Independent expenditures are still a wild card. With term limits in the legislature, the middlemen in Sacramento pull the strings. Political campaign consultants should be licensed. One should know who else they represent. DeSaulnier related experience of talking with consultant whom he thought represented small businesses, but later learned he was lobbyist for Walmart. Licensing with a code of ethics could prevent legislators being influenced by consultant's "stable" of potential donors.

DeSaulnier strongly supports public financing, using the Arizona and Maine models. Also thinks extending time for initiatives to collect signatures could allow volunteer signature gatherers to be successful. Otherwise it's \$1 million for an initiative to qualify for the ballot. DeSaulnier was a co-author of the state DISCLOSE Act last year.

QUESTION 3: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Leslie Stewart asked: During the last legislative session, efforts were made to change the California Environmental Quality Act. What is your view of CEQA? What changes do you think it needs, if any?

DeSaulnier: CEQA is good public policy in principle, but there are real problems with efficiency. Developers and businesses have been pressing for reform. The bill State Senator Rubio proposed was structured to benefit Walmart, and now he has taken a job with Chevron. We need a better understanding of technology and on how to make the whole application process simpler. There is software that would allow developers to instantly see the impact of

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LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW, continued from page 3

proposed changes on other areas (# of units, traffic, bottom line.) Also need method of ensuring out of state non-union workers who come to work for Chevron have the same level of ability and skill that our local workers have. We also need to limit the amount of time in which suits can be brought, so they are not filed to slow or sabotage projects. Regarding labor issues, we need to insure there is industrial safety, and adherence to CalOSHA. Important to get the balance of local vs state control; this may be the most difficult part to achieve.

QUESTION 4: Local League Questions about issues of particular local concern. Mary Fenelon asked about prospects for **funding for affordable housing?**

DeSaulnier: My bill SB 391 has been re-introduced. It may be a two-year bill, but I hope it will be one-year, as it would leverage federal funds and bring in more money as soon as it is in effect. It will provide 30,000 jobs with high multipliers. I have 26 votes, and need 27. It will depend upon who gets elected in Rubio's place. It has business and realtor support, bankers are neutral, but the mortgage group is not on board.

Lee Lawrence asked about **Social Safety Net and Realignment?**

DeSaulnier: Decisions should be evidence-based. We should restore cuts to safety-net and provide services to AB 109 prisoners transferred to the county after seeing outcome research studies. The website of the Washington State Institute for Public Policy is excellent. We should have a California version for discovering best practices based on research. Bills should be examined and checked against evidence-based research for viability.

QUESTION 5: What other major issues do you think the Legislature must deal with in 2013? What are your personal priorities?

DeSaulnier: Major issues are the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, our budget, and Health and Human Services programs.

1. Implement the Affordable Care Act. I predict there will be "sticker-shock" re premiums.
2. Passing SB 52 (the DISCLOSE Act) and putting it on the 2014 ballot.
3. Water is an important priority; the CA water problem can be fixed.
 - Opposes tunnels -- conveyance should be within the Delta to insure protection
 - Any bill needs triggers
 - Increase water storage in places like Los Vaqueros
 - Eliminate subsidies
 - Agriculture needs to be more efficient: re do water distribution with better conservation
5. Education: Poor performing districts a concern, need to address out-of-school environment for students. Should be driven by "client outcomes," not just testing. Notes that father's occupation is best predictor of educational success. Support must go beyond academic support, for example, nutritional support. Cites Summer slumps, loss of academic gains when socio economic support is absent.
6. Transportation: upcoming spending cliff, federal funds are ending, now Caldecott Tunnel is 300% underfunded; DeSaulnier is not in favor of the bullet train.

THANK YOU!!

Thanks are due to two dedicated members who are stepping down after many years of service. The first is **Annabelle Cloner**, who managed the office for ten years and then became a dependable staffer for five or six more years before a broken hip interfered with her ability to volunteer. The second loyal member is **Peggy Huston**, who kept track of our membership list, both new members and renewals, for at least ten years, and until recently managed our annual fundraising appeal letter, including organizing a party to stuff and mail them. Our League depends on its members to keep us strong and effective.

We couldn't do the outstanding work we do if it weren't for volunteers like Annabelle and Peggy. Thank you both! (*And thanks to Barbara Owens for submitting this to the Voter!*)

LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW: BONILLA

The following is the interview with **Assembly Member Susan Bonilla**, District 14: Martinez, Concord, Clayton, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Benicia, and Vallejo on February 28, 2013.



QUESTION 1: Carol Murota asked about **California's budget:** Even though we just passed Proposition 30, we recognize that this is just a first step towards financial stability for California. What measures would you support to continue the progress that Proposition 30 represents? What measures would you support to change the budget process?

Bonilla: The last two years have seen significant improvement in California's budget process. We have had two budgets meet the budget deadline. Democrats have had to make drastic cuts, with Republicans blaming them. Last year the governor used the line-item veto heavily, particularly in regard to children and education. The process is much better than it has been.

Prop 30 will bring up revenue for limited time. It has restored the voters' faith in government, showed the Legislature could make cuts, and be fiscally responsible. However, education needs more money (school bonds are good debt), and the Governor won't go further until deficit reduction is accomplished.

QUESTION 2: Election Reform Money in Politics Lee Lawrence asked: What measures would you support to address the problem of money in politics? What improvements are needed to disclosure rules in California?

Bonilla: Joined with Common Cause in opposing Prop 32, voted for the DISCLOSE Act last year, and will support it this year. Strong support for transparency and disclosure. Need stronger enforcement, but thinks it really comes down to the integrity of the candidate in timely reporting. Notes timely reporting leaves the ethical candidate vulnerable to attack by opponent who may delay disclosure. Mentions AZ \$11 million in Prop 30/Prop 32, says there is no way to prevent money coming into the state; disclosure is critical so voters know who is funding which candidates and initiatives.

QUESTION 3: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Leslie Stewart asked: During the last legislative session, efforts were made to change the California Environmental Quality Act. What is your view of CEQA? What changes do you think it needs, if any?

Bonilla: CEQA reform is stalled due to Rubio's resignation. Steinberg will take the lead with SB 731. Rubio did not feel supported by Senate leadership who put many environmentalists on his committee. Bonilla thinks CEQA is onerous but necessary and very effective. Regulatory reform is necessary: businesses and developers have to go through numerous agencies, there are numerous forms to fill out, and lengthy delays before permits are issued. Concerns re lawsuits based on CEQA used to delay or kill projects. Agencies need to be more responsive, less bureaucratic, and time frames shorter. Didn't like Rubio's "reform," as it is too open-ended and would base decisions on General Plans, some of which are often of poor quality. Thinks large reforms unlikely after Rubio's departure for Chevron.

QUESTION 4: Local League Questions about issues of particular local concern: Ann Flynn asked about education, prospects for the year.

Bonilla: questions timing of Governor's proposed new funding formula which would target funds to low income, low achieving schools. Proposes keeping funding the same as schools recover from cuts, then target increased funding of disadvantaged schools. Questions if Dept. of Finance is best agency to determine funding formula. Has a spot bill in to maintain current funding formula until 2015, also to fund common core standards, focus quality training in

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LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW, continued from page 5

developing school leadership, found to be the key to successful schools. Also supports Smarter Balance testing, suspending grade two testing and high school subject matter testing, which will save us a lot of money.

QUESTION: What other major issues do you think the Legislature must deal with in 2013? What are your personal priorities?

Bonilla: Water, Women's Health, and Cap-and-Trade

- Water: concerns regarding how next Water bond is structured; supports Delta restoration, feels outnumbered by non-Delta legislators in Legislature
- Women's Health: a bill to overturn ban on women selling their eggs, support for reproductive health research, freezing eggs, and a second bill regarding mid-wifery, focused on allowing doctors to admit women in home births that aren't going well to hospitals without fear of liability or malpractice suits.
- Cap-and-Trade: (AB 32 follow ups) AB26 proportional regional reinvestment of funds to reduce carbon locally and to support or create jobs in industry that are comparable to existing jobs in industry buying creation credits. Also AB 153 offsets, gain transparency, use for job creation. A win-win situation that includes the economy.

We will report on our interviews with Assembly Member Joan Buchanan and Assembly Member Jim Frazier in our August VOTER.

PUBLICITY REGARDING IRS AND §501(c)(4)

By Tom Carson, Manager of the LWVC §501(c)(3) Group Exempt Request

As a result of the relentless recent publicity about the IRS and §501(c)(4) organizations, I have had inquiries as to whether any of the IRS' issues or activities can impact on the LWVC group exemption request for local Leagues converting to §501(c)(3). The bottom line answer, as further discussed below*, is that these issues and activities are totally unrelated to our conversion request, and the only impact we should feel is a lengthening of the time it will take the IRS to process our request. Actually, we have already been suffering from this delay—but the good news is that the IRS has at long last begun assigning agents to applications filed in April 2012, the month our group request was filed. So we're getting much closer!!



Perhaps one important consideration coming from all of this hoopla is that since the long 2012 election season, §501(c)(4) organizations have gotten a bad name in the public mind, and this taint has been even more heightened by the recent publicity. Understandably Leagues may want to escape from this cloud of suspicion, and accordingly be even more interested in converting to §501(c)(3) status.

*[*This is an excerpt from the full document. LWVDV is part of the LWVC application for conversion from 502(c)4 to 501(c)3 status. If you are interested in seeing the detailed discussion of the conversion request and how the IRS is handling it, please contact the LWVDV Treasurer, Carole Woods. - see "Contact" page.]*

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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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Current/past issues are posted on our [website](http://www.lwvdv.org).

Can Former Prisoners Reform? Yes!

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Seven different pastors participated, and described meeting prisoners before their release to provide a path for them to re-integrate into society. The AB 109 realignment bill which finances services for inmates transferred from state prisons (where the recidivism rate is 72%) to local county jails and community based facilities (where the recidivism rate is below 25%) has transformed the county budget, using evidence-based, tested best practices and services to prevent the expensive re-incarceration of former prisoners, instead of expanding the size of local jails. Piepho and the Chief of Police in Brentwood said they had been deeply moved by the meeting.

MONEY AND POLITICS – A PRIORITY FOR 2013-2014

Money in Politics is a program priority for LWV Diablo Valley, LWV California and LWVUS in the coming year. New board member Carol Murota has joined Action VP Lee Lawrence as item chairs for Campaign Finance Reform/Money and Politics. We will be exploring state and federal legislation, ways to mitigate the Supreme Court's *Citizens' United* decision, and ways to combat corruption and undue influence. We have established a "lwvdv-campaign finance" email group and hope to establish a committee for action in this area. Please let us know if you would like to join us: call the office at 283-2235.

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!

Annabelle Cloner
Sheilah Fish
Elizabeth Karplus

Lee Lawrence
Mary Lembke
Joan Mancuso-Adai

Gail Murray
Linda Waters
Gabiella Zacco



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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)
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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.

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

July 2 2 pm	Action Committee LWVDV Office
July 13 10 am	Board Retreat Sequoia Room Lafayette Comm. Center
July 18 7 pm	Healthcare Movie Mt Diablo Peace & Justice Center
July 30 3 pm	Healthcare Town Hall Fireside Room, Rossmoor
Aug. 6 2 pm	Action Committee LWVDV Office