



LET'S TALK: PROGRAM PLANNING

Did you participate in our on-line program planning survey? Did you attend your December unit meeting and make recommendations for our Program Planning Day? Are you planning to attend our Program Planning Day, Saturday, January 7, 2012? If your answer is "yes" for any or all of those questions then you are taking action in helping to decide the programs that LWVUS and LWVLA County will be supporting in 2012-2014.

PROGRAM PLANNING DAY
SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 2012
UTLA BUILDING—ROOM 815 9:30 am - 1:00 pm
BRING YOUR LUNCH AND YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS

THE FEDERAL ROLE IN EDUCATION

The consensus process to determine the present and future role of the federal government in public education took place at our September and October unit meetings, the results of which were approved by our LWVLA Board of Directors at its November meeting.

"No Consensus" was voiced on many of the questions. Some of the comments reflected what was felt to be poorly worded, confusing or vague questions. One frequent recommendation was that children should be "means tested" before receiving special funding. Although there was general support for Common Core Standards, funding was a major concern.

REPORT FROM THE BOARD

The Los Angeles LWV board of directors meets the third Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am at the League office. All members are invited to attend.

Following is a summary of board actions at its October and November meetings which affect the general membership. Actions which apply only to board internal organizational matters are not included.

October

- Approved a request by Jean Thomson (Criminal Justice Committee chair) for the Criminal Justice Committee to join with the Empowerment Congress, the Violence Prevention Coalition, Common Cause and other interested groups to hold a forum in November to inform and educate the public regarding the "Public Safety Realignment Act." This forum will be budgeted as a League Day to allow \$500.00 for filming or other expenses in order to ask for Education Fund monies.

PRIVATIZATION

The next consensus process will take place in February and March. The topic is Privatization--that is, the policy agenda to transfer government functions, services and assets to the private sector. The subject obviously has a broad scope and the presentations and the consensus process at unit meetings will be thought-provoking and will trigger some interesting discussions.

COMING UP IN APRIL---VOTE BY MAIL

-- Ida Mae Windham, Program Chair

Table with 2 columns: In This Issue, Page. Includes items like Let's Talk: Program Planning, Report From the Board, Criminal Justice (Part 3), AB109 Realignment Community Forum, Running and Winning, Valentine Membership, Membership Application, League Lines, 2011-12 LWVLA and LWVEF Board Rosters, The League's Holiday Party, Ice Cream Social, Contributions & Memberships.

November

Elizabeth Ralston, Action Chair, spoke about the Safe California Initiative and LWVC's support of this initiative which would amend the "implementing" section of the State legislation regarding California's death penalty. LWVLA can, but is not required to, take action in this matter. It cannot oppose the LWVC position. Elizabeth explained that savings to taxpayers, if the initiative passes, would amount to tens of millions of dollars. Following the discussion,

- Approved support for the Safe California Initiative which would end the death penalty in California and substitute sentences of life imprisonment without parole. The motion also for urged LWVLA members to participate in the volunteer signature-gathering campaign to qualify the measure for the ballot.
- Approved the Program Committee's motion to send the LWVLA consensus report of the LWVLA study of the Federal Role in Education to LWVUS.
- Approved closing the League office for the week of December 26-December 30.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE (PART 3)

On November 7, LWVLA co-sponsored a community forum on the impact of the 2011 Public Safety Realignment Act. A comprehensive description of the program presented at the forum is posted on the LWV Los Angeles Members Only website.

The Act itself, which can have a significant impact on Los Angeles County, is described below.

2011 Public Safety Realignment Act (AB109)

Why should we be interested in this particular Act?
How does it (and its many trailer bills) affect your life?
It is an historic shift of responsibilities from the state to

the local counties in the corrections system.

"No inmates currently in state prison will be transferred to county jails or released early. All felons sent to state prison will continue to serve their entire sentence in state prison. All felons convicted of current or prior serious or violent offenses, sex offenses, and sex offenses against children will go to state prison. In addition to the serious crimes outlined in penal codes, there are nearly 60 additional crimes that law enforcement officials requested be served in state prison rather than in local custody." There is no sentencing term change in this legislation, only how and where the sentence is to be served.

Background

Several lawsuits have been brought against the state prison system:

1. 2001– alleging inadequate medical care for inmates;
2. 2005– federal court establishes receivership to oversee medical care;
3. 2009– Federal Appellate Court rules overcrowding is chief barrier to adequate medical care and overcrowding must be reduced;
4. May 2011– California Supreme Court upholds ruling and stipulates that prison population must be reduced to 135% of capacity within two years. (prisons, built to house 70,000 inmates had reached a high of 173,000 in October 2006. In September they were at 166,000). The general number to be released has been estimated between 35,000 and 40,000.

Legislation

After a great deal of debate, legislative discussions, and amendments, the Governor signed AB109 and several trailer bills, e.g., AB117, authorizing the 2011 Public Safety Realignment Act to assist in its immediate implementation. This legislation set in motion the "realignment" of inmates in several ways.

1. Prisoners who meet specific criteria (whose crimes are deemed non-violent, non-serious, and non-sexual offenses= 3Ns) and have completed their sentence in prison will be returned to their home counties for further supervision by the probation

department rather than remaining with the state parole department.

2. After October 1, 2011, offenders who are sentenced to specific crimes (3Ns listed previously) will be incarcerated in the county jail system rather than sent to state prison. The allowable sentences may range up to three years in jail.
3. Although those “realigned” to the counties are neither parolees nor probationers, they will be subject to community supervision under the probation department and called Post-Release Supervised Persons (PSPs). If they violate the terms of their supervision, they will be subject to the equivalent of parole revocation. The probation department has the authority for “flash incarceration” for up to 10 days without court interaction (missing appointments, supervision resistance, etc.). Otherwise with court interaction, they may be incarcerated within the county for up to 180 days. Sentences for new serious crimes will continue to be served in state prisons.

Implementation

Reporting to the Board of Supervisors, a committee of 14 official county and local agencies was involved in outlining the process and responsibilities of the implementation of this realignment. The official “County of Los Angeles, Community Corrections Partnership, AB109/117 Implementation Plan, August 2011” is available on the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee website.

http://www.ccjcc.info/cms1_164890.pdf

With the timing so tight, one can understand the confusion of setting up a totally new system in the county for dealing with an influx of an estimated 9,000 new offenders between October 2011 and June 2012 as well as an addition of perhaps 7,000 who previously would have been sent to state prison.

Since 30% of the state prisoners came from Los Angeles County, it is estimated that one-third will be returned to the City of Los Angeles, 21% to unincorporated areas, 19% to independent cities, and the rest would be considered homeless and need temporary housing.

The first step was for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to prepare

individual pre-release packets for those whose prison release dates were coming up and send them to the probation department at least 30 days prior to release. Addresses to which PSPs were to be released were checked and verified by the sheriff’s department.

Probation

The probation department reviewed over 3600 of these packets prior to the first releases to determine risk levels and appropriate level of supervision and monitoring required. Packets deemed incomplete or not eligible under the program stipulations were returned to CDCR for further review. Those whose files indicated additional conditions of supervision that probation may impose prior to their release (such as participation in substance abuse counseling, drug testing, etc.) were asked to sign an agreement prior to their release.

When these packets are completed, the offender is released on his or her scheduled release date and given a probation department HUB address to report to within 48 hours. Anticipating 2% will not report as required, they have protocols in place to alert the sheriff’s department to track absconders.

Report to HUB

The Probation Department has established five HUB locations throughout the county for the first appointment for the returnees. Their eligibility is confirmed, supervision conditions may be added, further contact is established, address verified, mental health history determined. The management of the PSPs begins with an orientation with the Probation Department officers, representatives from the Department of Mental Health and Department of Public Social Services who are available to assist in evaluations and referrals to appropriate services. At this time they identify emergent issues, initiate risk level and behavioral screening (extent of mental health or substance abuse); whether there are problems with current IDs, need for housing, social security cards, etc.; or what type of community supervision is required.

Sheriff’s Department

Prior to release, the sheriff’s department verifies the home address indicated in the packet and determines that they are expected to report there. Additionally the Department has established a tracking database which will indicate the personal information of the offender, release date, the actual reporting date to the HUB, and all subsequent movements, assignments, treatments, etc.

If the person does not report as required, a notice will be sent to all other law enforcement and relevant official agencies.

Although this realignment does not move prisoners directly from the state prisons to the county jails, there may be those who will need incarceration at some point and there will be those whose sentence will now be served in the county jail who would have been sent to state prison prior to AB109. There are many conflicting numbers for the number of available jail beds, but the sheriff's department is looking into the possibilities of opening available facilities, contracting with publicly managed Community Correctional Facilities, using the Fire Department camps, using Community Based alternatives to Custody (CBAC) such as electronic ankle bracelets, work release, or station workers.

With the goal of reducing recidivism and preparing the inmates to become productive citizens once released, the sheriff's department is planning to open a type of charter school to prepare the inmates for a GED, and to teach anger management, parenting skills, etc.

The sheriff's department will also provide monitoring within the county for those not incarcerated by assigning 50 deputies to cover their five established zones. (LAPD is expected to assign 150 officers to monitor within the city.)

A database is being designed to share with all departments and agencies involved to track each offender, address, offenses, supervision arrangements, date to report/and when not reporting, information. It will also be designed to determine successful best practices and ongoing evaluation of the program.

PSP Release

Once the PSP has completed six months without any violation and has completed the program, he or she may be released. When PSPs have completed the program and 12 months without any violation, they are automatically released.

Conclusions

Since this is a massive upheaval to the criminal justice system, it will take some time to work out all of the flaws unearthed as it progresses. One of the major flaws, of course, is that funding for this Act, estimated initially at \$367 million, only covers the setup and implementation through June 2012. Although this

program is expected to proceed through 2014 when the transfer should be completed, the future funding source has not been approved by the legislature. It appears that the governor may seek a constitutional amendment to guarantee the funding.

In October, the county CEO indicated that "there are a number of uncertainties in the plan", but that the county assumes it will initially receive \$33 million and suggested the following potential allocation:

Department	\$ allocation	# needed additional personnel
CEO Dept	10,000	
LASD	18,000,000	278
Probation	8,600,000	172
District Attorney	227,000	
Public Defender	494,000	7
Alt Public Defender	396,000	4
Mental Health	4,200,000	26
Public Health	823,000	4

*-- Jean Thomson and
the Criminal Justice Committee*

AB109 REALIGNMENT COMMUNITY FORUM

Partnering with the Violence Prevention Coalition, we held a Community Forum on the 2011 Public Safety Realignment Act (AB109) and its impact on our communities. There was a magnificent crowd, planned for 70 but nearly 120 attended. It was very encouraging to find so many people interested in this program.

There were two panels: one specifically related to the implementation of AB109, the other specific to an ongoing community based outreach program.

Our first speaker, Reaver Bingham, has been involved in the planning of AB109 since the beginning and preparing for the implementation once the county's proposal was approved in August.

Beginning with “How did we get here?” he provided the background of the skyrocketing costs, overcrowding, class action suits, lawsuits, state and federal rulings, culminating in the Supreme Court decision to reduce prison population to 135% of capacity within two years. It was determined that the best way for the state to accomplish this reduction would be to “realign” many of the state parolees convicted of non-serious, non-violent, or non-sex offender crimes to be released to the counties for supervision, and to change the laws to allow the



Reaver E. Bingham,
Deputy Chief
Adult Field/Juvenile
Placement Services
Div
LA Cnty Probation
Dept

newly convicted low-risk, non-serious, non-violent, and non-sex offenders to serve their sentences in the local jail facilities rather than be sent to state prison (up to a 3-year term). He emphasized that prisoners will not be released early from prison, nor will they go directly from prison to county jail. The realignment actually determines where they will serve their sentences/supervision, but will not change the sentence itself.

The determination of those not eligible for county supervision is based on Penal Codes 1192.7© or 667.5©. Examples of those who must serve their sentences in state prison are convictions for felony physical abuse of an elder or dependent, assault on a peace officer, bribing a legislator. Also those who have been defined as mentally disordered, or serving time for three strikes are not eligible for this program.

Once the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) has determined a release date for an offender, an informational packet is sent to the Probation Department for review at least 30 days ahead of release. Corrections and stipulations are made and returned to CDCR. The offenders must agree to any additional conditions of supervision that Probation may impose prior to their release such as participation in substance abuse counseling, drug testing or keep away from certain persons. If they fail to sign, CDCR will hold them in custody until such time as they sign or up to their maximum sentence.

Those accepted into the AB109 program are not parolees, not probationers, but are in a separate class called Post Release Supervised Persons (PSPs). Once approved for the program, they are given 48 hours to

report to their assigned HUB (Probation offices) where they will be evaluated by representatives of the Probation Department, the Department of Mental Health, and Department of Public Social Services to determine their needs and the management of their supervision.

Funding is currently allocated only through the end of June, 2012 for the implementation of this plan though the realignment will continue indefinitely. Many proposals have been suggested for making the funding permanent but none have been established.

Mary Marx represents the Department of Mental Health for the AB109 implementation. Their staff will be located at the HUBs for the prescreening and assessment of each returnee. They may need to request further information prior to the evaluation of placement.



Mary Marx
District Chief
Countywide
Resource Mgmt
Dept of Mental
Health

They contract with ten agencies dealing with these types of individuals and they will review any public safety concerns. PSPs may be referred to a Community Assessment Service Center (CASC) for assessment.

The Department of Mental Health oversees state hospitals, step-down residential facilities and 1400 beds in various levels of service referrals. They are assigning 10 individual staff members for this program, eight social workers.

CDCR has been under receivership for quite a while, for the medical treatment and the overcrowding which the federal government determined was unconstitutional. For prisons built for 70,000, the population had reached 166,000. You may have seen some of the photos of the three-decker bunks filling all spaces such as recreation rooms.

The sheriff’s department is charged with verifying returnee address prior to the release of the offender. All 58 counties are involved in this realignment. 30% of those being released will return to LA county (one-third to city of LA, 21% to unincorporated cities in county, 19% to independent cities). Approximately 24% have no permanent residence and will need to have temporary

housing. They will assign 50 deputies into the five zones they have established for monitoring the PSPs. Those who commit another crime will be dealt with accordingly. If convicted of a serious crime, they will go back to state prison.

We must remember that 98% of those in state prison have always been returned to their home counties. This only changes where they will complete their sentences.

LASD will be notified if any PSP does not report as required to the HUB and will begin tracking individual. The department has been coordinating with the other participants in a computer tracking system which will indicate every step of the PSP.

It is estimated that 7,000 offenders convicted of the less serious offenses under the new rules will serve their time in the county rather than in state prison this year. To help the reduction of recidivism rate of 70%, the sheriff is planning a charter school for those to be incarcerated with GED, anger management, parenting skills, etc.



**Flintridge Center
Dir of Community
Organizing
Pasadena/Altadena
Reintegration
Council**

Victim Information Notification notifies victims of Domestic Violence whenever a release is imminent. LASD's primary concern is the safety of the victim. Deputies can access database of shelters and community based organizations to assist.

Flintridge Center: Pasadena/Altadena Reintegration Council

The next panel represented a live, functioning Reintegration Council in the Pasadena/Altadena area. The Flintridge Center, in partnership with the Pasadena Police Department, formed this council to meet the needs of previously incarcerated folks who were returning to their community and to help them transition back into society. The council is composed of 40 public agencies, faith based, community, nonprofit agencies, local service providers offering resources and support programs such as housing, employment and medical, mental and dental health care.

Resource fairs are held monthly with service providers and law enforcement for support and resources for jobs, substance abuse, mental health, HIV screenings, etc. They feel strongly that each person needs one on one support which they obtain with case management. To set up such an organization they suggest 1) accessing individual before release; 2) share information with other organizations; 3) set up tracking system. They have 450 returnees in Pasadena now; 4) funding is vital to maintain the system.



**John E. Perez
Commander
Criminal
Investigations Div
Pasadena Police Dept**

To establish this council, the council looked at homeless problems increasing in their area and checked out what other cities have done to handle this problem and reduce recidivism. It was determined that they wanted to reintegrate not re-entry programs. The Flintridge Center is a home for nonprofit organizations which coordinated them into a community with a high level of interest in educating the community. Law enforcement in the area developed options instead of incarceration. Gang patrol personnel began calling on doors, worked with parolees to refer them to services. Their goal is to reintegrate those previously incarcerated into productive residents of the community.



**Mary Weaver
Executive
Director
Friends Outside
in Los Angeles
County**

Friends Outside is one of the organizations who handle individual case management. Almost all returnees need a job but are not really ready for work. Sometimes they have no ID, sometimes they need treatment and education. Case management is the glue that holds everything together. They work together on motivation, available services, even bus tokens when necessary. Most returnees want to change, they need help. There was a lot more discussed. Many of these

implementation plans are still in the investigation stage and may be amended or enhanced in the future. Please feel free to view the complete AB109 Community Forum: [Part 1](#) | [Part 2](#) on the web. Or you can view it through the link on our website, www.lwvlosangeles.org

-Jean Thompson
and the Criminal Justice Committee

RUNNING AND WINNING FIVE YEARS

This was the fifth year of LWVLA's Running and Winning Forum. This annual event is designed to provide a meaningful and unique civic engagement experience to motivate high school students from diverse backgrounds to get involved. This year lots was new and powerful.

New Venue: This year's excitement really began at the end of last year's forum which was held at USC. As he was leaving, City Councilmember Tom LaBonge said with his characteristic enthusiasm, "This was great! You should have this at City Hall. I'll see to it!" And he did...



City Councilmember Tom LaBonge talking to a group of students during the forum.

New Agenda: The new setting provided unique opportunities for more powerful experiences for students and the faculty reps who accompany them. We kept the best of the old—the small group discussions with individual elected officials—at each of 10 tables, 10 high school students and an intern facilitator engaged with one elected official, with students asking questions about the officials' personal experiences with running and winning an election campaign. For each of three sessions, the students interviewed a different 'elected,'

each with different background, elective office, level of government, etc.

And we added new components designed to take advantage of our new setting—tours of City Hall were as exciting to the faculty reps as they were to the students. Most had never been in this iconic building, and they were impressed. They were even able to look out from the Bradley Tower to see Occupy LA on the lawn. The tour for each school group, students and faculty rep, culminated in a visit to the office of the City Councilmember representing its school community. Each group had prepared questions or issues of local concern to present to the City Council staff members with whom they met. First-hand civic engagement....



Students from 10 high schools filled the Bradley Tower in City Hall.

And we had a new agenda for faculty reps. Thanks to R&W Committee members Carryl Carter, Kimberly Willis and Ida Mae Windham, this year's special faculty session included a presentation of the League's positions on education and another on the City Attorney's Office Schools Initiative. Faculty reps also had a training tour of City Hall, led by staff from Tom LaBonge's office, to prepare them to be docents for the eventual individual school tours with their students. Finally, they reviewed what to expect from their visits to their City Council members' offices and considered what they might do as follow-up to their visit.

And this year, we may even have a documentary film of the event! New League member Stephen Fitzmaurice, who is a media professional, arranged with two of his colleagues to act as a pro-bono production team.

Transportation Provided! Transportation, which has always been a challenge, was provided this year, free of charge, by the Clean and Green program of the LA Conservation Corps. Individual vans with drivers were provided to transport students and faculty from each of the 10 participating schools.

Outcome: Exciting, substantive, meaningful, relevant? Comments on students' evaluations were remarkably confirming. This experience made a difference for them—and their responses are what make the difference for all of us.... Thanks to all the workers on the R&W Committee, to the wonderfully supportive office staff, and with special thanks to Joy Picus and Robin Meyers, who always manage to corral the elected officials, we ran and won!

*-Zhita Rea,
Running and Winning Chair*

Running and Winning Forum, November 17, 2011 Project Participants

High Schools and Faculty Reps

Arleta (Karen Gonzalez), Cortines (Tom Lee), Dorsey (Donald Singleton), Fairfax (Dave Cope), Grant (Kevin Kruska), King Drew (Lemel Durrah, Michelle Woods), Leonis (Jim Kilroy), Marshall (Marcia Slaten), Newmark (Heather Sandoval), Thoreau (Sheryl Kolker)

Elected Office Holders

Mona Field, immediate Past President, Community College Board; Valerie Fields, former LAUSD Board member; Monica Garcia, LAUSD Board President; Mike Gipson, Carson Councilmember; Jackie Goldberg, former California State Assembly member, City Councilmember, and LAUSD Board member; David Holtzman, LWVLA President, former Neighborhood Councilmember; Bennet Kayser, LAUSD Board member; Tom LaBonge, LA City Councilmember; Joy Picus, former LA City Councilmember; Stephanie Romero, Field Rep, Betsy Butler's Office; Carmen Trutanich, LA City Attorney; and Steve Zimmer, LAUSD Board member.

Facilitators

Priscilla Calleros, Rosa Campos, Esteban Cardoso, Sara Enciso, Gladys Espinoza, Joann Horta, LaShawn Kelly, Annie Shapiro, Moya Smith, and Ashley Wilson.

Filmmakers, Photographers

David Dibble, Stephen Fitzmaurice, and Jim Kuo.

City Hall Sponsors and Arrangements

City Council District 4: Tom LaBonge, Isabel Mayfield, and Lisa Schecter.

R&W Committee

Carryl Carter, Stephen Fitzmaurice, Fran Lapidés, Adriana McNally, Robin Meyers, Moya Smith Ojagiri, Joy Picus, Zhita Rea, Kimberly Willis, and Ida Mae Windham.

LWVLA Staff

Special thanks to Marilu Guevara, Raquel Beltran, and Joann Horta.



VALENTINE MEMBERSHIPS 2012

Gift Valentine memberships to the LWVLA are one way to celebrate the founding of the League of Women Voters on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, 1920. For \$25 you can give a half-year membership to friends and family members. It's a great way to get the newsletter into their hands, and for them to receive the Monthly Highlights with the location and topic of the unit meetings.

This half-year membership expires on July 1, 2012. The application form can be found on page 9 of this VOTER newsletter. Take advantage of this opportunity to show others why you value the League.

*--Sandra Trutt,
Membership Chair*

VALENTINE HALF-YEAR MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

YES, PLEASE SEND AN INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP TO:

Name of recipient _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Name of Donor _____

Phone # _____

Address of Donor _____

City _____

CHECKS SHOULD BE MADE OUT FOR \$25 TO LWVLA. IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD, PLEASE FILL OUT INFO BELOW:

Card # _____

Exp. Date _____

Circle Type of Card: Visa Mastercard American Express

Security Code (3 or 4 digits on back) _____

Phone # of Donor _____

Card Holder's Name _____

Street _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____

- Bill my credit card \$25**
- Bill my card \$25 now and automatically on July 1, 2011 for a full year renewal at \$85**

Please mail to: **League of Women Voters Los Angeles**
3303 Wilshire Blvd. Ste. 310
Los Angeles, CA 90010-1700



THANK YOU!

LEAGUE LINES

NEWS FROM OTHER LEVELS OF THE LEAGUE

United States - LWVUS

NEW WEBSITE

On December 12, LWVUS released its new website, which was developed to modernize the way the League informs and interacts with the public. Susan Wilson, LWV Communications Chair, said that the League wants to showcase the work of its members at all levels.

The new site has improved search functionality, is more simply organized, and does not require members to log in to access most of the content. To help members get started and oriented to the new members area, the League created a [welcome video](#). In it are some of the important “must do”/“must have” information areas, such as national studies, where to register for national convention, and how to access your League’s member roster.

Soon the League will be making a website template available to any interested League (including the League Easy Web team), so that local, state and national Leagues can have similar looking or branded sites.

As we look forward to 2012 and our ability to attract and engage more people around the country, the new website will provide more useful and compelling information to assist in leading the League, and help local Leagues effectively share your impact.

Access this link to see the League’s [new website design](#).

A WAR ON VOTING...

Elizabeth McNamara, President of the LWVUS, wrote in the League’s October 2011 E-newsletter, “In 1920, a major effort to register newly enfranchised voters was prominent on the agenda of the just formed League of Women Voters. A few years later, state Leagues were challenged to increase voter turnout by 25 percent, leading the Alabama League to note: “...it is a very difficult matter to qualify for the vote in Alabama...”

“Today, states are taking steps that will profoundly affect the number of qualified voters in the 2012 Presidential Election. This year, voter ID requirements, limits on third-party voter registration drives, eliminating Election Day registration and curtailing early voting are all measures that have been proposed or passed in a disturbing number of states. Coupled with dramatic budget cuts that are closing driver’s license offices and [post offices](#), democracy is growing increasingly unsafe for the nation.”

More information on this topic is available on President McNamara’s blog and in the archives of National Public Radio where Ms McNamara participated on October 2011 in an NPR program titled “The War On Voting.”

For additional information on how LWVUS and Leagues around the country are implementing the LWVUS goal of Improving Elections, see <http://www.lwv.org/our-work/improving-elections>.

State - LWVC

June 5, 2012 Election - Two Primary Systems on One Election Day

The November Newsletter of the LWVC contained information on changes in the California election laws that will impact all voters in the state.

In next year’s June 5 Primary election, voters will see [Presidential Primary](#) candidates on familiar partisan ballots according to political party affiliation. However, for statewide offices (i.e., state constitutional offices, U.S. Congress, and state legislative offices), all candidates running in the Statewide Primary Election for these offices will appear on a single primary election ballot and voters can vote for any candidate. In this [Top-Two Open Primary](#) system the top two overall vote-getters – not the top vote-getter from each qualified political party – will move on to the general election. Between now and the June 2012 election California voters can look to the League for reliable information about the changes in the election system, the newly redrawn districts, and overall election news in various ways

- [The League's Education Fund website](#)
- Local Leagues' Candidate and Pros and Cons Forums
- [Easy Voter website](#)

LWVC Says There Are Two League Events You Must Attend This Year

They are: LWVC Council in Sacramento and LWVUS convention in Washington D.C.

Prospective, new, and longtime members exchange ideas and develop plans for the future at the League's conventions and councils. Joining the League and coming to these events gives you the kind of access, experience, and connections that can't be met by any other association or group. In 2012, you will:

- meet passionate leaders from across the state and across the country
- build your skills and be inspired by workshops, luncheons, and dinners featuring provocative experts in civic engagement, voter service, advocacy, fundraising, leadership development, communications, and more
- experience democracy at work during the plenary-and, if you're chosen as a local league delegate, your vote will set the course for our grassroots organization!

Learn more about [LWVC Council in Sacramento, May 19-20 on the LWVC Web site](#).

Learn more about the 50th [LWVUS Convention in Washington DC, June 8-12 on the LWVUS Web site](#).

End the Death Penalty with SAFE California Initiative

Volunteers gathering ballot-qualifying signatures

The League of Women Voters of California believes it is past time that we halt executions. That's why it endorses the SAFE California Initiative, which is presently being circulated to collect the necessary signatures to qualify it for the November 2012 ballot. (SAFE stands for Savings Accountability & Full Enforcement).

If it passes, the initiative will replace the death penalty with permanent imprisonment (life without the

possibility of parole), including the conversion of existing death sentences to that alternative.

This endorsement is in accord with the LWVUS position supporting the end of the death penalty. The initiative is functionally equivalent to SB 490, a legislative bill endorsed by the LWVC. Besides being ineffective and subject to error, the death penalty is a serious fiscal drain. Replacing it with permanent imprisonment would save the state a significant amount of money, estimated at \$1 billion over five years.

A study released in July 2011, by U.S. Appeals Court Judge Arthur Alarcon and Paula Mitchell, professor at Loyola Law School, found that death penalty cases, including legal costs and additional costs of housing inmates on death row, cost California taxpayers more than \$184 million every year. An average of \$308 million has been spent for each of the thirteen executions that have been carried out since the death penalty was reinstated in California in 1978.

While we waste millions on the death penalty, about half of serious violent crimes (homicides and rapes, at 46% and 56% respectively) go unsolved every year owing to limited law-enforcement resources. The SAFE California Act would use some of the savings from ending the death penalty to create a fund to increase the rate at which the serious crimes of homicide and rape are solved by funding additional law-enforcement capacity and would require that convicted murderers work behind bars and pay restitution into a victims' compensation fund.

The SAFE California Act and the campaign to gather qualifying signatures on its behalf are supported by a coalition of law-enforcement professionals, family members of murder victims, and individuals exonerated of wrongful conviction, as well as religious and civil rights groups. Sign up for email alerts, make a donation, and find more ways to get involved on the campaign site (www.safecalifornia.org).

LWVC Joins "The Children's Movement"

The LWVC board at its November meeting unanimously agreed to join *The Children's Movement* which is organized by its frequent partner Children Now. According to Ted Lempert, Children Now chair and a past member of the legislature, it is much more effective for children's issues to be taken seriously by state electeds when we can leverage respected representation

across fundamental children's health and education policy issues. The LWVC is joining this *Movement* on an opt-in basis, meaning that we will continue our traditional analysis of bills relating to children, and will sign on for specific bills when warranted. By joining we become part of a coalition with dozens of other respected child advocacy organizations. More information available at: www.childrennow.org.

Jean Cohen, Working Party for Children chair and LWVLA Children's Issues consultant, asks that anyone wishing to get involved locally to contact her at JCohenLWV@aol.org.

County - LWVLAC

Winter League Day

Those of you receiving the VOTER electronically might still have time to make a reservation for the County Winter League Day on January 28 at the Taix Restaurant on Sunset Blvd.

You'll hear comments on California's initiative and referendum presented by Bob Stern, President of the Center for Governmental Studies. He is very knowledgeable – a true political expert--and he said that he loves speaking on this topic. You'll have a chance to ask your questions and get some answers. Reservation \$25 before January 14, \$30 after. Checks go to LWVC Treasurer: 3970 Sepulveda Blvd. #201, Torrance, CA 90505. Call Nancy Mahr, 310-377-0735, if you have questions.

NATURAL RESOURCES NOTES

Cap and Trade

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) unanimously adopted cap-and-trade regulations on 10/20/11. These regulations put a price on heat-trapping pollution. Firms and utilities who get below the cap limits can sell permits to firms that are unable to lower their emissions. These regulations are the centerpiece of AB 32 passed by the Legislature in 2006. The goal of AB32 and these regulations is to reduce carbon pollution to 1990 levels by 2020.

Both business and environmental justice groups oppose aspects of this program. Business groups argue that the regulations will result in a loss of jobs. Some

environmentalists argue that it will allow refineries and businesses to continue to pollute in poor neighborhoods by purchasing permits from firms that have reduced their emissions.

CARB will run the pollution trading market and firms will not be able to purchase off-sets from non-US sources. Many possible consequences of these regulations are not yet known. For example, will the regulations result in "leakage" of California jobs to other states? Will pollution shift to other states? In addition, the cost of energy is expected to rise, but no one knows by what amount. Finally, some argue that any "leakage" of jobs to other states will be offset by the creation of "green" jobs in California.

AQMD RECLAIM Program

It is important to keep in mind that the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) Board has had a cap-and-trade program for volatile organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen for some time. More can be learned about the AQMD program at aqmd.gov/reclaim/reclaim.html.

San Diego-IID Water deal in peril

A few years ago, the City of San Diego and the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) signed an agreement in which IID agreed to fallow farmland and to transfer 200,000 acre feet of water to San Diego.

In the original negotiations, the State of California agreed to find a way to deal with the consequences of the transfer for the Salton Sea. Reducing the amount of agriculture in IID meant that less water would seep in the direction of the Salton Sea and the Sea could shrink in size.

The original agreement is now in peril because the State has failed to find a way to deal with the Salton Sea problem. If the deal is undone by the courts, IID will lose the revenue from San Diego and San Diego will lose 200,000 acre feet of water. It is questionable whether San Diego would be able to get an additional 200,000AF of water from Northern California or from the Colorado River. In any event, the failure of the transfer deal will likely add fuel to the ongoing water wars in California.

John Sullivan,
LWV/LAC Natural Resources Director

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The League's awards dinner is only months away.

For information visit

<http://lwvlaeducationfund.wordpress.com/>.



THE LEAGUE'S HOLIDAY PARTY AND NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

League members and friends of the League came together to celebrate the start of the holiday season on December 1, 2011 at the LWVLA office. There were plenty of tamales and mimosas to go around! In case you missed it, here are some great party memories we would like to share with you.



All smiles (*Ida Mae Windham and Helen Katz*).



In a festive mood and dressed in their best holiday colors (*from left to right: LWVLA members Renee Chanon, Jane Goichman, Cecilia Schlesinger and JoAnne Aplet*).



Good stories and catching up all around (*from left: Nancy Arnheim, Sydelle Freeman, Jean Thompson, Thea Brodtkin, Adriana McNally*).



Tamales anyone? (*Harriet Borson and Sydelle Freeman*).



Friends, comraderie and delicious food (*members of HACLA with League members*).





ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Celebrate 92 years of the League of Women Voter by having fun. On Saturday, February 11, 2012, from 2 to 4 p.m. we will gather at the home of Sidonia Lax in Sherman Oaks to make our own favorite sundaes and party. We'll have different flavors of ice cream plus toppings galore so you can enjoy your own sundae creation. Bring your favorite toppings to share, if you wish.

During the event, Susan B. Anthony will entertain us with a 30 minute presentation about life before women had the right to vote.

I hope you'll be there for this charming, old-fashioned party from the past. R.S.V.P. to Sandra Trutt, membership@lwvlosangeles.org. I'll send you the address and directions when you do.

--Sandra Trutt
Membership Chair

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In celebration of Hermalee Schmidt's birthday from
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It's easy to join the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles

NAME _____ E-MAIL _____
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TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP DUES	ANNUAL DUES	TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP	ANNUAL
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$85	<input type="checkbox"/> Household (2 members, 1 address, 1 mailing)	\$120
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual *Associate	\$85	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Student (currently enrolled, under 25 years)	\$40	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Student *Associate	\$40		

*Associate: A person under 18 years old or a non-citizen who may fully participate in the League as a member except in organization elections

I am paying my dues by check: Amount: _____ Please make payable to: League of Women Voters of Los Angeles

To pay by credit card: please go to www.LWVlosangeles.org and click "Join the League"

I'd like to do more: Here is an additional gift and separate check to support the League's activities for:

General Fund \$ _____ (Payable to LWVLA) **Education Fund \$ _____ (Payable to LWVLA Ed Fund)

Contributions, gifts and dues to the League of Women Voters are not tax-deductible; they support our member based advocacy and lobbying efforts.

**Contributions to the LWVLA Education Fund are tax deductible and support the League's voter information and education efforts.

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