



THE SACRAMENTO VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

MARCH 2009

SUNSHINE WEEK, MARCH 15-21, 2009

Dedicated to the importance of transparency in government

LWVSC is joining with California Common Cause, Sacramento Media Group, and Access Sacramento to host a registered site for the 4th annual Sunshine Week National Dialogue. Audience members will have opportunities to ask questions of the panelists. **Roseanne Chamberlain** will lead the local discussion.

“Opening Doors: Finding the Keys to Government Information”

An expert panel discussing the presidential administration’s “Open Government Directive”

Webcast from the Center for American Progress in Washington DC

See www.OpenTheGovernment.org for topic and panelist details.

Friday, March 20, 2009, 10 AM to NOON

Access Sacramento Television Studio, Coloma Community Center

4623 T Street Sacramento, CA 95819 (Free parking)

Space is limited. RSVP to Roseanna Torretto, president@lwvsacramento.org, (916) 719-1092

Unit Meetings, March 10, 2009, for Consensus

**LWVUS study of the advisability of using
the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV) among the states
as a method to elect the U.S. President**

See pages 4 and 5 for consensus questions and links to background papers and reading lists.

See page 7 for meeting times and locations.

BOARD MEETING: MONDAY, MARCH 23, 5:30 PM, LEAGUE OFFICE

2008-2009

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Roseanna Torretto, President

916-483-6545(h)

torretto@pacbell.net

Cheryll Moore, 2nd Vice President

Voters Service Director

916-483-5524

geroeducator@att.net

Penny Niland, 3rd Vice President

916-498-9935

pniland@earthlink.net

Virginia Kaser, Secretary

916-442-6911x26

Kaser@usc.edu

Vivian Skintauy, Treasurer

916-991-5409

Vivian_Skintauy@comcast.net

Lola Acosta

(916) 920-9414

lolaa@winfirst.com

Rick Bettis, Natural Resources

916-447-8683

naturalresources@lwvsacramento.org

Lanette Davies

(916) 502-7677

cannacare@earthlink.net

Cynthia Hutchison

(916) 395-2680

Hutchiso@comcast.net

LaVerne Ireland

(916) 371-3480

lireland@ix.netcom.com

Tom Swift

(916) 453-8707

tomswift@csus.edu

Catherine Troka, Outreach

916-446-5933

troka@sbcglobal.net

Donna Chipps, Webmaster

webmaster@lwvsacramento.org

Amber Kemp, Voter Editor

amber@alumnae.mills.edu

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who made our recent LWV birthday event a great success! The past presidents participating represent five decades and continue to support League in education, advocacy, advisory, and voter service activities. Anne Rudin, Peg Vanderlaan, Beverley Meyer (via message) represented the 1960s; Kay Knepprath and Illa Collin, the 1970s; Lois Wright, Judy Hoefling, Trudy Schafer, and Charity Kenyon, the 1980s; Kathy Souza, Trisha Uhrhammer, Suzanne Phinney, and Donna Chipps (via message), the 1990s; Barbara Hopkins and myself, the 2000s. And thank you to our Board members who arranged the meeting location and refreshments, including a birthday cake decorated with the League logo: Lola Acosta, LaVerne Ireland, Virginia Kaser, Vivian Skintauy, Catherine Troka. In addition, I would like to thank John Wesley, the facilities manager at the USC State Capital Center, who did not flinch when I requested seating for a “round table” discussion for 14. He came up with a perfect room arrangement. Look for an article about the event next month.

There is still time to participate in consensus for the LWVUS study of the **National Popular Vote Compact (NPV)**. Attend a unit meeting on March 10. See page 4 for web links to the background materials.

In a recent email newsletter **LWVUS President Mary Wilson** announced that though LWV is financially doing better than most non-profits in this country, the LWVUS Board made two decisions that change longstanding features of the League. First, after requesting and receiving feedback from State League presidents, the Board voted to hold a “virtual” Council in June 2009 rather than in “in-person” meeting. President Wilson stated that there may be drawbacks, but it will provide an opportunity for state Leagues to expand their members’ participation in the Council meeting that otherwise would be available to only 100 or so members. The second hard decision the LWVUS Board made was to suspend publication of *The National Voter* magazine (paper and digital) until the League’s finances are healthier. If you wish to receive LWVUS updates and calls to action through email, we can help you get into the system. Also, if you have not received event announcements for our League, please let Vivian Skintauy know so we can get your email address into the national data base.

CITY OF SACRAMENTO TO REVIEW CITY CHARTER

by Rick Bettis

At its February 17 meeting the Sacramento City Council voted to establish a Charter Review Committee to perform a comprehensive review of the City Charter and report to the Council by February 2010 any recommended changes to the Charter. The Council would then decide if any changes were justified and would direct City staff to prepare a Charter Revision measure to be placed on a future ballot for voter approval.

This decision was prompted by a proposed ballot initiative that would change the Sacramento governmental structure from a council-manager form to a mayor-council or "strong mayor" form of governance. The proponents of this initiative have reportedly paid approximately \$134,000 to signature gatherers to obtain what they indicate to be 37,000 signatures. However the proponents have not submitted these signatures to the County Registrar of Voters for verification. They have until June 2009 to submit these signatures so the Registrar can verify if the required approximately 32,400 valid registered voter signatures have been obtained. If an adequate number of signatures are verified, the City Council would be required to place the initiative measure on a future election ballot probably in June or November 2010. A measure resulting from the Charter Review Committee process could be paced on the same ballot.

At the February 3 City Council meeting the City Attorney presented a detailed in depth analysis of the proposed "strong mayor" initiative measure and compared it to the four other California cities, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, and Fresno, that currently have mayor-council forms of government. It was determined that the Sacramento proposal would provide more power to the mayor than any of the other cities. These powers would include budget preparation, the hiring and firing of the City Manager, Attorney, Clerk, and Treasurer, and more than 500 additional management staff, veto power over City Council decisions requiring a 2/3 vote to overturn, in addition to the right to vote until a 9th Council District was established in 2012 following the 2010 Census. Numerous groups and individuals spoke at this meeting, all except the Attorney who authored the initiative spoke critically of the lack of public input. Many spoke critically of the initiative as well. The LWVSC spoke in favor of a public process such as the Charter Review Committee.

The Charter Review Committee will consist of eleven Sacramento resident voters, one each appointed by the Mayor and Council members, and two with relevant professional qualifications appointed by the entire council.

The Committee will meet monthly with all meetings open to the public and there will be additional public workshops. The subjects to be evaluated include: (1) Governance structure—mayor-council versus council-manager (2) Delegation and reservation of City Budget process powers (3) Appointment and removal of City officers and employees (4) Budget process (5) Green waste disposal (6) Full-time status for Council members (7) Term limits (8) Ethics Commission (9) Election schedule and process including Instant Runoff (10) other issues as indicated by the Council.

National Popular Vote Consensus Questions

Amending the Constitution

1. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. Action to alter a basic element of the Constitutional framework, which is achievable by amendment to the Constitution, should be accomplished by amendment to the Constitution.
- b. Action by states through a compact process is an acceptable way to alter the method for electing the President and Vice-President.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

2. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. Because a compact has never before been used to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the chance that it might set a precedent for the future leads to the conclusion that it is better that the League continue to work for an amendment to the Constitution to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College.
- b. Despite the novelty of the use of the compact approach to address a fundamental constitutional issue such as voting, the League should support the NPV Compact as a way of achieving an important goal.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

Congressional Consent

3. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.

- a. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is not of sufficient concern to block the implementation of the plan.
- b. The possibility that the NPV Compact will require congressional consent is sufficient to conclude that the plan should not be implemented without obtaining such consent.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

The LWVUS NPV Study Committee posted general information, background papers, and a reading list in the For Members section at lwv.org. Login using your personal email address and password. Or use the link provided on our web site www.lwvsacramento.org.

- The text of the Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by Nationwide Popular Vote
- NPV Compact Consensus Questions for League discussion meetings
- National Popular Vote Compact Suggested Resource List
- LWVUS Study on the National Popular Vote Compact Background Paper
- LWVUS National Popular Vote Compact Paper Supporting the NPV Compact (Pro)
- LWVUS National Popular Vote Compact Paper Opposing the NPV Compact (Con)

Enforcement**4. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.**

- a. The NPV Compact contains sufficient enforcement provisions to assure smooth operation of the plan.
- b. Although it is not possible to determine whether the enforcement provisions will be sufficient to assure smooth operation of the plan, the plan should be passed anyway.
- c. Enforcement of the plan is likely to add uncertainty and bring the courts into the presidential election in ways that raise substantial concerns.
- d. The lack of adequate enforcement provisions is sufficient to conclude that the NPV is not a viable plan.
- e. The group could not reach consensus.

Uniformity**5. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.**

- a. The uniformity of voting systems is more important to American democracy than the possibility that the NPV Compact can be adopted.
- b. The NPV Compact is more important than uniformity of voting systems because it would succeed in achieving the popular election of the President.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

Popular Election of the President**6. Which statement best reflects the consensus of the group? Select one.**

- a. It is more important to achieve the goal of national popular election of the President than it is to achieve the goal of abolition of the electoral college.
- b. It is more important to amend the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College than it is to achieve the goal of popular election of the President by alternative methods, such as the NPV Compact.
- c. The group could not reach consensus.

7. Which statements reflect the views of the group?

- a. The NPV Compact will have problems being passed because of the need for congressional consideration and the need for action by so many states.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

- b. A constitutional amendment to establish the direct popular election of the President and the abolition of the Electoral College will continue to have problems being passed.

Agree Disagree No Consensus

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS FILES AMICUS BRIEF OPPOSING PROPOSITION 8

The League of Women Voters of California filed an amicus curiae (“friend of the court”) brief on January 15, 2009, with the California Supreme Court in the case of *City and County of San Francisco, et al. v. Horton*, which challenges the validity of Proposition 8. The LWVC board approved filing of the amicus brief at its January 11 meeting. Proposition 8, passed by the voters last November, provides that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California, thus eliminating the right of same-sex couples to marry.

You can read the amicus brief online on the Web site - www.lwvc.org. The press release is reprinted here.

SACRAMENTO, CA – The League of Women Voters of California filed an amicus brief with the California Supreme Court today supporting the legal challenge against Proposition 8.

Proposition 8 amends the California Constitution to provide that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. The legal challenge to Proposition 8, which passed on November 4, 2008, seeks to invalidate the proposition. Among those spearheading the challenge are the City and County of San Francisco, the County of Santa Clara, the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, and numerous individual Californians.

LWVC President Janis R. Hirohama said: “The League believes that Proposition 8 is unconstitutional and should be invalidated. It sets a dangerous precedent by singling out a particular group and depriving that group of a fundamental right. In doing so it threatens the rights of us all.”

The League’s amicus brief argues that Proposition 8 is an invalid amendment to the California Constitution because it violates the overriding, fundamental constitutional principles of protection of equality and human dignity. The League also argues that Proposition 8 does not apply retroactively to invalidate same-sex marriages that took place before the measure took effect, because there is no clear indication of voter intent that it apply retroactively.

The LWVC has long opposed measures that threaten individual rights, including Proposition 22 in 2000, which also limited marriage to only being between a man and a woman. “We oppose Proposition 8 because we believe in protecting individual rights and no person or group should suffer legal discrimination,” said Hirohama.

The law firm of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP provided pro bono representation to the League in the filing of the amicus brief.

Contact: Elizabeth Leslie, LWVC Communications Manager, 916-442-7215, elleslie@lwvc.org

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Chris Hansen and Adam Morrison

Vicki Wright

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTOR

Virginia Mueller

(In honor of the League's birthday)

MARCH UNIT MEETINGS

LWVUS study of the advisability of using the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV) among the states as a method to elect the U.S. President

The Morning Suburban and the Elk Grove units will continue the discussion of the NPV and will answer the consensus questions this month. (The Mid-City and the Greenhaven/Land Park units completed the NPV discussion and questions at their February meetings.)

UNIT	DATE & TIME	CONTACT	LOCATION
Mid-City		Tom Swift 453-8707	5308 Shepard Avenue Sacramento, CA 95819
Morning Suburban	Tuesday, March 10 9:15 A.M.	Mary McCullough 967-7382	2426 Garfield Ave. Carmichael
Greenhaven/ Land Park		Mary Hopkins 422-6958	45 Sunlit Circle Sacramento
Elk Grove	Tuesday, March 10 1 P.M.	Pat Justice 391-9439	8622 Shasta Lily Drive Elk Grove 95624

Eileen Heaser, unit coordinator, 916-456-2154 or eheser@csus.edu



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

1107 9th Street, Suite 300

Sacramento, CA 95814

Phone: 916-447-VOTE

Fax: 916-447-8620

www.lwvsacramento.org

E-mail: lwvs@lwvsacramento.org

MARCH 2009

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL

FIRST CLASS

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

SACRAMENTO, CA

PERMIT NO. 193

FIRST CLASS MAIL

LOCAL ACTIVITIES FOCUS ON THE MEDIA

Sunday, March 22, 2009, 2 PM film screening, Broadcast Blues, a documentary on the American media, at the Crest Theatre, 1012 K Street, Sacramento

Access Sacramento and Sacramento Media Group with California Common Cause, in association with the Sacramento International Film Festival, present the West Coast Premier of this Public Interest Pictures film by Susan Wilson. Info 456-8600 or 443-1792 ext. 11.

Film Tickets \$10 (students \$5) at box office or www.tickets.com.

**April 2, 2009, Community Discussion on Local Media, 6:00 to 8:30 PM
Coloma Center Auditorium, 4623 T Street, Sacramento**

Sacramento Media Group and California Common Cause with Access Sacramento invite interested individuals, community organizations, local media outlets and elected officials to participate in a community discussion designed to hear opinions, stories and suggestions about our local media. The new presidential administration wants to create a more democratic media system and promote universal access to communications technologies. The evening offers an opportunity to share ideas that can contribute to these goals. It will also help us better understand how well our local media, print, television, radio, and Internet, serve their audiences.

Info 456-8600 or 443-1792 ext. 11