



THE SACRAMENTO VOTER

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SACRAMENTO COUNTY

MAY 2009

LWVSC Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 30, 2009, 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Adopt LWVSC Budget 2009-2010

Elect new Officers, Directors, and Nominating Committee

Casa Garden Meeting Room At Sacramento Children's Home

2760 Sutterville Road, Sacramento 95818

Reservation form will be mailed separately with the Annual Meeting Kit

\$10 per person to cover meeting expenses

Featured Speaker: Suzanne Phinney

In March 2009 Suzanne was appointed Chair of the state League off-board Energy Committee. Suzanne has been a member of the energy committee since its inception. In addition, Suzanne agreed to serve as the state League off-board Program Director for Energy. She is currently employed as the Senior Associate for Energy and Infrastructure at Aspen Environmental Group.

The 2009 Anne Rudin Scholarship

Anne Rudin will present the Award which was established by the League as Anne retired from public office as Mayor of the City of Sacramento.

EVENTS AND DATES TO REMEMBER

May 4, *Last day to register for May election*

May 11-12, LWVSC Unit Meetings, Health Care

May 12, *Last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot for May election*

May 15-17, California LWV members meet in Convention in Long Beach

May 18, LWVSC Board Meeting, 5:30 PM, League Office

May 19, *Election Day*

May 30, Annual Meeting

June 22, Global Climate Change Forum: Adapting to the Uncertain Future (See article on page 8.)

July 11, Slow Food Sacramento's Urban Ag Feast 2009, a full day of events followed by a catered dinner at the Fremont Community Garden (4th and Q) to benefit the Sacramento Hunger Coalition and the Sacramento Area Community Garden Coalition (Watch slowfoodsacramento.com for details.)

2008-2009

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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This is my last message as president. I wish to express my sincere thanks to the Board of Directors and off-board specialists, consultants and committees. I admire your commitment to all aspects of League program. It has been a joy to see the LWVSC thrive and grow in your capable hands. I must also thank all League members for your support during these past two years. You have been generous in giving your time, talent, and financial support to League programs and in supporting and challenging me in my role as president. I have also enjoyed the support of five decades of past presidents! I could not have asked for anything more.

LWVSC Annual Meeting

I shall look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting on May 30th. I will present the annual president's report which will include my valiant effort to thank everyone who has been involved in the work of the League this year. We will publish the report and the annual meeting minutes on our web site. The Call to Annual Meeting was mailed to you via first class mail on blue paper. Watch for it!

Suffragist Club

One important way you can support the LWVSC is through our annual Suffragist Club appeal. This is the primary way members support the League beyond dues. Please consider whether you are able to make a contribution as a Suffragist (\$100 or more). This year we welcome contributions to our educational activities (tax deductible) or contributions to the operation and advocacy of the League. Watch for our appeal letter in the mail.

Keeping in Touch with the League in June and July (and through the year)

Our next VOTER newsletter will be published in August 2009. In the interim, we will keep you informed our ongoing activities via our website and email. If you have not received any email from president@lwvsacramento.org, such as an occasional call to action or event reminder, we do not have your current email address in the national database. There are two ways to add your email address to the database. You may send us an email message asking us to add it for you. Or, you can update the information yourself at www.lwv.org by selecting "Update your email address and contact information" at the lower right of the screen under the heading "My League". This requires that you log in and create a password. On the other hand, if you prefer not to receive email from the League, you can check the box labeled "I do not wish to receive any e-mails related to LWVUS". Once you have logged in, take a look at the For Members section and sign up for discussion lists and "Be an e-activist".

Visit the state League website ca.lwv.org for both voter information and current League advocacy efforts. You will find "in depth" voter information re the May 19, 2009 Special Election. A new addition to the state League web site is a pre-convention video series for the 2009 LWVC Convention, May 15-17, in Long Beach.

CITY OF SACRAMENTO CAMPAIGN FINANCE ORDINANCE
ADVOCACY HELPS REDUCE IMPACT OF REVISIONS

By Rick Bettis

As reported in last month's LWVSC VOTER the City of Sacramento has made weakening revisions in the Campaign Finance Ordinance that was finally passed in 2003 following four years of continuous 'dogged' advocacy by Common Cause and the LWVSC.

The revisions were originally proposed with only one-week notification. As the result of strong response by Common Cause and the LWVSC we were given one additional week to "make our case" for the retention of the Ordinance. This permitted two weeks of intense advocacy including visits with, phone calls and e-mail to the Council members by Common Cause and LWVSC members as well as some of the other original supporters of these reforms who were contacted by e-mail when possible.

At the April 14 City Meeting representatives of Common Cause, and LWVSC as well as Dr. Robert Waste of CSUS, the former Chair of the City Campaign Finance Advisory Committee spoke in support of the Ordinance.

As a result of these efforts the Council voted to approve a "compromise" which resulted in the following revisions.

Contribution Limits Per Election Cycle

Mayor from "Persons"

Original plus Inflation Adjustments - \$1,150

First Proposal -\$4,000

Adopted -\$3,000

Mayor from PACs

Original plus Inflation Adjustments- \$5,000

First Proposed- \$15,000

Adopted- \$10,000

Council from "Persons" –

Original plus Inflation Adjustment- \$900

First Proposed - \$1,500

Adopted- \$1,500

Council form PACs

Original plus Inflation Adjustment - \$3,500

First proposed - \$5,000

Adopted - \$3,500

CITY OF SACRAMENTO CAMPAIGN FINANCE ORDINANCE, continued from page 3**Off Year Fundraising Limit**

Mayor – Original plus Inflation Adjustment - \$35,150

Proposed and Adopted - \$50,000

Council – Original plus Inflation Adjustment- \$17,550

Proposed and Adopted - \$25,000

Limits on Contributions to Independent Expenditure Committees

Previous- Same as Limits for Candidate Committees

Adopted – Hold in abeyance until court decisions are rendered on lawsuits in other jurisdictions.

Council agreed to direct city attorney to investigate possible “Friend of the Court” filing by the city in these cases.

Partial Public Campaign Financing

Original – System of matching first \$250 from each contributor up to \$75,000 for Mayor and \$30,000 for Council

Proposed - Total Repeal

Second proposal – Hold in abeyance and investigate funding special source to be submitted to the voters for approval. This would have been a “Poison Pill” due to the two- thirds vote requirements of Proposition 218.

Adopted – No change in ordinance, however no commitment to provide funds in the 2009-2010 Budget.

Efforts are being continued to convince the City to provide funding for Public Financing for the 2010 elections. Anyone interested in helping on this issue may contact this writer at the LWVSC office or Joann Fuller of Common Cause at 916-443-1792 or jfuller@californiacommoncause.org.

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM, continued from page 8

We are also coordinating with the LWVUS Climate Change Task Force that has partnered with Oxfam America to financially support the presentations of the climate change educational forums and advocacy with U.S. elected officials for issues in the “American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009” (also known as the Waxman- Markey bill). An LWVSC committee presented the League positions on this climate change legislation to the Offices of U. S. Representatives Doris Matsui and Dan Lungren. Members interested in lobbying as individuals about national climate change legislations may read the LWVUS legislative alerts at <http://capwiz.com/lwv/issues/alert/?alertid=13165406&type=CA>

If you are able to help with this forum on June 22nd please email Barbara Hopkins, barbhopskins2@yahoo.com. See you at this climate change forum on June 22nd at 6 PM.

AT-RISK AMERICANS: THE UNINSURED AND UNDERINSURED

By Janis McMillen

Data from multiple sources agree that in 2007, 47 million Americans (15.6 percent of the total U.S. population) lacked any kind of health insurance coverage. When these numbers are adjusted for age (excluding those 65 years and older), the uninsured percentage of the population rises to 17.9 percent. Moreover, it is estimated that 25 million adults under age 65 were underinsured during 2007, despite having insurance all year. In total, 42 percent of *all* adults (86.7 million) were either uninsured or underinsured during 2007.

Putting a face on persons who were uninsured or underinsured during 2007 and 2008¹

- **Age:** One of three people under age 65 were uninsured for some or all of 2007 and 2008; of the total uninsured population, 60.1 million were adults (between 19 and 64 years of age)
- **Duration:** Among the underinsured/uninsured, 74.5 percent were uninsured for nine or more months and one-quarter were uninsured the entire 24 months
- **Employment status:** 80 percent of individuals who were uninsured were in working families and only 16 percent were not in the labor force (due to disabilities, chronic illness, or serving as family caregivers)
- **Income:** Nearly 60 percent were in families with incomes below the federal poverty level (FPL: \$21,200/year for a family of four); 52 percent with incomes between 100 to 200 percent of FPL went without health insurance in 2007/2008
- **Racial and Ethnic origin:** 55 percent of Hispanics/Latinos, 40.3 percent of African Americans and 34 percent of other racial or ethnic minorities had no health insurance in 2007/2008, compared to 25.8 percent of whites. While racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be uninsured, whites accounted for 49.8 percent of the uninsured
- **Age breakdown:** The likelihood of being uninsured declines with age; 49.5 percent of those 19 – 24 years old, 36.3 percent of those 25 – 44 years old, 32.5 percent of those 45 – 54 years old and 21.2 percent of those 55 – 64 years old were uninsured over this two-year time period. The 55- to 64-year-old age group consumes more health care on average than younger adults.

For all ethnic and racial groups, lower-income families and individuals were more likely to be uninsured than lower-income whites. This disparity continues even as incomes rise in all groups.

There is a marked increase in the number of adults having difficulty paying medical bills – the most visible consequence of the weakening in insurance coverage. In 2007, 41 percent of adults (72 million people) reported problems paying medical bills, faced bill collectors or were in debt for medical care, up from 34 percent or 58 million in 2005. The majority had insurance at the time these bills were incurred² – well in advance of the economic downturn.

¹ All statistics above and below are from <http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/publications/reports/americans-at-risk-findings.html>

² The statistics in this paragraph are from <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/Content/Publications/Testimonies/2009/Feb/Testimony-Insurance-Design-Matters-Underinsured-Trends-Health-and-Financial-Risks.aspx>

Janis McMillen (LWVUS Board member and LWVKS) is chair of the LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force.

PRODUCED BY THE LWVUS HEALTH CARE EDUCATION TASK FORCE, 2009

QUICK FACTS ON HEALTH CARE COSTS

Total health spending in the U.S. reached \$2.1 trillion in 2007 – or \$7,026 per capita.

By 2016, total health spending is projected to rise to \$4.2 trillion.

Between 2005 – 2006, total health spending increased 6.7 percent, more than double the rate of the 2.9 percent increase in overall economic growth.

Total health spending remained relatively constant at about 16 percent of gross domestic product from 2003 – 2006, but is projected to increase to 19.5 percent by 2017.

Spending for home health care increased at a faster pace from 2005 – 2006 (9.9 percent) than any other category of health spending; however, its impact is limited because it accounts overall for only 2.5 percent of total health spending.

Yearly prescription drug spending growth accelerated in 2006 to 8.5 percent from a low of 5.8 percent in 2005, in part because of full implementation of Medicare Part D.

Between 2006 and 2007, premiums for health coverage offered by employers increased 6.1 percent, the fourth straight year of declines in the rate of premium growth, from a peak of 13.9 percent in 2003. Even so, this was more than twice the rate of growth in the Consumer Price Index.

Of every dollar spent on health services in the U.S. in 2006, 46 cents came directly from government sources.

Costs for program administration and the net cost of private health insurance were about 7 percent of total health spending in the U.S. in 2006 and grew 8.8 percent, a marked increase over the 3.6 percent rise in 2005.

This list (without the original endnotes) is from “A Reporter's Toolkit: Health Care Costs” (an Alliance for Health Reform Toolkit produced with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) and is reproduced here courtesy of the Alliance for Health Care. The entire toolkit can be found at http://www.allhealth.org/Publications/Cost_of_health_care/health_care_costs_toolkit.asp#keyfacts

Janis McMillen (LWVUS Board member and LWVKS) is chair of the LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force.

PRODUCED BY THE LWVUS HEALTH CARE EDUCATION TASK FORCE, 2009

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Nicole Demas

Glenn Keogh

Bob O'Reilly

MAY UNIT MEETINGS

HEALTH CARE

In June, 2008, as part of our belief that quality, affordable health care should be available to all U.S. residents, the national League Convention adopted a two year priority health care education project; the first year, delegates were asked to inform members about health care issues, and the second year, to educate the public, and the LWVUS appointed a health care education taskforce. If you haven't looked at the national League website (lwv.org), a wealth of information is posted there- a Convention presentation by former Oregon Governor Kitzhaber, "The Unfinished Business of the Baby Boom Generation: Health Care for the 21st Century," two recently- posted papers by LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force members printed in this issue of the Sacramento Voter, and a background paper from the National Voter, "Federal Health Coverage Programs: Building Blocks for Coverage of the Uninsured," printed February 2008, which describes existing models for single-payer health plans. These documents will serve as the focus of discussion at May 2009 unit meetings and planned general membership meetings. Please take the time to read them so we can build towards the second year of this project, educating our community about these issues.

Additionally, the LWV of California (LWVC) state level health care committee has been active for several years, supporting League-sponsored Senate Bill 840 by Senator Sheila Kuehl, vetoed by the Governor, and generating interest in universal coverage and a single-payer health plan. Watch the LWVC website (lwvc.org) for updates as the state League works to support Senate Bill 810 by Mark Leno, the successor legislation.

More information and planned member educational activities with partner organizations will be announced in the Sacramento VOTER.

Lola Acosta, Chair, LWVSC Health Care Committee

UNIT	DATE & TIME	CONTACT	LOCATION
Mid-City	Monday, May 11 6:15 PM	Tom Swift 453-8707	5308 Shepard Avenue Sacramento, CA 95819
Morning Suburban	Tuesday, May 12 9:15 AM	Mary McCullough 967-7382	2426 Garfield Ave. Carmichael
Greenhaven/ Land Park	Tuesday, May 12 9:30 AM	Mary Hopkins 422-6958	45 Sunlit Circle Sacramento
Elk Grove	Tuesday, May 12 1 PM	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
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MAY 2009

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GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM: ADAPTING TO THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE

By Barbara Hopkins

You are invited to a special summer community forum on global climate change, spearheaded by the Sacramento League and other organizations, **Monday, June 22, 2009**, at the SMUD Auditorium, 6201 S Street . Doors will open at 6 PM to view a video about the impact of climate change on our water resources. A special Climate Change flyer will be distributed at the LWVSC Annual Meeting on May 30.

This Sacramento community forum will discuss actions at all levels to manage the serious threats caused by global climate change to the environment, health and economy of our nation and the world. League moderator, Suzanne Phinney, Ph.D., and V.P. of Aspen Environmental Group, and a panel of experts will present varied perspectives about the climate change impact and actions. The panelists and topics include: Professor Deb Niemeier, Ph.D., P.E., UC Davis (factors causing climate change, status and adaptations in U.S. and the world); John Andrews, CA. Department of Water Resources (climate change impact on water resources), Director Genevieve Shiroma, SMUD (renewables and new energy sources); Christopher J. Flores, Office of Doris O. Matsui, (status of national climate change legislation), (partial list). Plan to come early and view the video: "California Water and the Climate Change Strategies" from 6:15 PM to 6:45 PM that Elissa Lynn, meteorologist, will introduce and to view the climate change display tables which will offer interesting materials also.

Continued on page 4