

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

President's Message

Let's Win Redistricting Reform with Proposition 11!

ON NOVEMBER 4, California voters will have the opportunity to finally ensure their voices are heard and help make state elected officials more accountable to voters. They can seize that opportunity by voting Yes on Proposition 11.

Why is Proposition 11 needed? Increasingly, partisan gridlock prevents our state lawmakers from effectively addressing the issues Californians care about most, including the state budget, health care reform, education funding, and water and the environment, to name a few. Contributing to this ongoing problem is the fact that legislators are allowed to draw their own district lines to guarantee their reelection. As a result, our lawmakers are not accountable to voters. In fact, even as legislative approval ratings continue to plummet, nearly 99 percent of incumbent legislators are reelected every year.

Proposition 11 will end the conflict of interest in our current redistricting system, help put voters back in control and finally make lawmakers accountable to their constituents. The initiative will change the way legislative districts are drawn by creating a 14-member independent redistricting commission that includes five Republicans, five Democrats and four members not affiliated with either major party. This commission will have to draw fair districts that protect minority communities and keep cities and counties intact. And, unlike the current process, Prop. 11 will ensure that the redistricting process is transparent and open to public review.

The League of Women Voters of California has been a key proponent of fair redistricting reform for years and supports Prop. 11 because this initiative meets all our criteria for effective redistricting. Prop. 11 enjoys broad, bipartisan support from around the state, including AARP, California Common Cause, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, former state Controller Steve Westly, Governor Gray Davis, the

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Calendar

October/November 2008

October 9
6-8 pm

Pro/Con Ballot Initiative Forum

hosted by the
Glendale
Commission on the Status
of Women
Sparr Heights
Community Center
1613 Glencoe Way
Glendale

October 23
7 pm

Candidates Forum Congress, State Senate and

State Assembly
Burbank
City Hall Chambers

November 4
General Election

LWV GLENDALE/BURBANK: October 23 Candidates' Forum

Join us for an exciting Candidates' Forum on October 23 at 7 PM,
to be held at the Burbank City Council Chambers.

We have invited all the candidates running for the following offices:

US Congress 29th District (Burbank and Glendale)
US Congress 27th District (Glendale)

California State Senate 21st Senate District
California State Assembly 43rd District

Ask a question! Call the League phone at (818) 247-2407 or go to the web site
<http://www.lwvglendaleburbank.org> to post a question

To volunteer at the candidates' forum contact Monica Marquez via e-mail at
marquezlwv@earthlink.net. She can also be reached by phone at (818) 760-3667.

Laurie Collins Accepts Position as LWVC Campaign Finance Legislative Consultant

LAURIE COLLINS has agreed to be the League of Women Voters California Campaign Finance Legislative Consultant. The LWVC Executive Committee has made the official appointment and the Board will confirm the appointment on the Consent Agenda on September 21.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER
Susan Hallgren

Presidents' Message continued from page 1

California Police Chiefs Association, the California Chamber of Commerce, ACLU of Southern California, the Sacramento Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce, and the Orange County Professional Firefighters – among many others.

The status quo is not working for California. By supporting Proposition 11, voters will help put the state on the right track by ending the redistricting conflict of interest and making lawmakers more accountable to voters. We hope you will join us in supporting this important measure on November 4. Please visit www.yesprop11.org for more information and redistricting @lwvc.org to get involved!

Monica Marquez

From the President

A Special Message

I am delighted to announce that our Board Member and Voter Editor **Linda Lammers** is expecting a baby! We have greatly appreciated her excellent work on the Voter and her other League activities. She will resign her Voter editorship with this issue to prepare for the new arrival.

We are thus in need of a new Voter Editor. The position involves pulling together and reviewing content, some of which is prepared by the State and National Leagues, and some of which is prepared by League members (and me).

This is a fun and challenging position. **Carole Dougherty** ably handles the graphic design and layout portion of the Voter, so no design experience is necessary. If you are interested in helping with the Voter, please call me at (818) 760-3667.



RECOMMENDS

NOVEMBER 4, 2008 GENERAL ELECTION

PROP 1A Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act SUPPORT

This \$9.95 billion bond act would partially fund a high-speed train project between Los Angeles/Anaheim and San Francisco, and possible extensions to Sacramento and to San Diego, at a total project cost of \$45 billion, including the additional segments. Federal grants and public-private partnerships would be needed to fund at least half of each segment. Proposition 1A would provide a transportation option that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and lessens the need to expand highways and airports. This revised proposition addresses concerns about cost and financial uncertainties by requiring a new business plan, peer review, and other accountability provisions, and it allows bond funds to be used for the other segments if there is no negative impact on the first phase.

PROP 3 Children’s Hospital Bond Act SUPPORT

Proposition 3 authorizes \$980 million in bonds to fund children’s hospitals. These regional centers provide specialized care for children with serious illnesses or injuries without regard to a family’s ability to pay. They treat the majority of California’s low-income children. Eighty percent of the proceeds would go to eight nonprofit children’s hospitals and 20 percent to University of California children’s hospitals. Prop 3 will address escalating construction costs and improve health care access for children who are indigent, uninsured, underinsured or eligible for government health programs.

PROP 4 Waiting Period and Parental Notification before OPPOSE
Termination of Minor’s Pregnancy

Prop 4 requires a physician to notify the parent of a pregnant minor before performing an abortion. Mandatory notification laws may sound good but, in the real world, they put the health and safety of teens in danger. A frightened, pregnant teen who can't go to her parents may choose an unsafe, illegal abortion, or even contemplate suicide, instead of seeking the counseling and safe medical care she needs. Parents rightfully want to be involved in their teenagers’ lives, but good family communication can’t be imposed by government. California voters have rejected this proposal twice, but proponents have put it on the ballot again, adding more unreasonable provisions.

PROP 5 Nonviolent Drug Offenses. Sentencing, Parole and SUPPORT
Rehabilitation

Proposition 5 would require the state to expand treatment and rehabilitation for nonviolent drug offenders and parolees, and reduce the criminal consequences of nonviolent offenses. Additional costs of treatment would be offset by reductions in prison and parole operating costs, as well as in the need for capital outlay for prison facilities. The League’s study of juvenile justice affirmed the need to give funding priority to prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation.

PROP 6 Police and Law Enforcement Funding. Criminal Penalties OPPOSE
and Laws (Runner Initiative)

This measure requires that nearly \$1 billion annually in state general funds be used for designated local law enforcement and probation programs. This will mean an increase of \$500 million a year for these programs and for operating prison and parole systems, and a \$500 million capital outlay for prison facilities. The League opposes the further restriction on the ongoing use of general funds. Harmful policy changes in this initiative include prosecuting more 14-year-olds as adults and giving counties less flexibility in the use of drug and mental health funds for juveniles.

PROP 7 Renewable Energy Generation

OPPOSE

Proposition 7 requires all utilities, including government-owned utilities, to generate 50 percent of their power from renewable energy by 2025. While the League supports a renewable energy target, we feel this is too optimistic to be achieved, and well beyond the targets for implementing the landmark greenhouse-gas emissions reduction law, AB 32. Moreover, Prop 7 is poorly drafted. Experts say it will not achieve its stated goals and will actually disrupt the development of renewable power. It may force small renewable energy companies out of California’s market and cause higher energy bills.

PROP 8 Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry

OPPOSE

This proposed limitation of marriage as only between a man and a woman infringes on the equal rights that should be available to all people. The California Supreme Court has concluded that there is a “fundamental constitutional right to form a family relationship.” The League opposed Proposition 22 in 2000 and continues to oppose such limits on the basic civil rights that should be guaranteed to all Californians.

PROP 9 Criminal Justice System. Victims’ Rights. Parole

OPPOSE

Proposition 9 would expand the legal rights of crime victims in various ways and could undo many of the rights of prisoners and parolees to due process and speedy parole revocation hearings. This initiative asks voters to support victims’ rights that are already protected under state law and is unnecessary.

PROP 10 Alternative Fuel Vehicles and Renewable Energy. Bonds

OPPOSE

This measure would authorize the sale of \$5 billion in general obligation bonds to provide rebates to purchasers of certain high fuel economy and alternative fuel vehicles, and to fund grants and other incentives for technology development. The League favors the use of bonds to finance capital expenditures or the purchase of property for public purposes. The purposes of this bond are not an appropriate use for state-issued, bond-generated revenues.

PROP 11 Redistricting Reform: California Voters FIRST Act

STRONG SUPPORT

It is an inherent conflict of interest for legislators to draw their own districts to guarantee their reelection. Proposition 11 removes from the legislature the power to redraw district boundaries for the State Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization after each census. Instead, it provides for the appointment of a 14-member independent citizens commission to perform this process, establishes clear criteria for how the boundaries shall be drawn, and requires an open and transparent process with due notice, public hearings, and no communications outside of the hearings. This measure will hold politicians accountable and help stop the gridlock in Sacramento that keeps pressing issues from being addressed.

Because League positions do not cover the issues in Proposition 2, Standards for Confining Farm Animals, and Proposition 12, Veterans’ Bond Act of 2008, the LWVC is taking no stand on these measures.

9/1/08

VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ON NOVEMBER 4!

League of Women Voters California Denounces Budget Deal as Dishonest and Irresponsible

The Legislature and Governor have enacted a budget deal that is dishonest and irresponsible. It not only fails to set priorities and address serious problems at a time when we face economic uncertainties, but also sets the stage for further and deeper budget problems in coming years.

This is a dishonest budget. It relies on an assortment of gimmicks—including accounting tricks, early collection of tax revenue, and speculative borrowing—to obscure the fact that the money to support the budget really isn't there. As one example, although the claim is made that the plan does not rely on borrowing, in fact it counts on borrowing, through the future issuance of bonds to be repaid from lottery revenue. This speculative scheme depends on voter approval of changes to the lottery system, the hope of increased lottery sales, and the cooperation of skeptical financial markets in tough economic times.

The budget is also irresponsible. By including the Governor's plan to build up the reserve, it reduces flexibility and makes it far more difficult for future legislatures and governors to adjust priorities within limited resources. Moreover, including this provision requires a constitutional amendment that must be approved by the voters. Passage of a future ballot measure should never be the premise on which a budget is based.

The budget deal calls for reducing the reserve fund for this year to less than a billion dollars, shifting this year's shortfall into next year through a variety of accounting changes, and opening major new loopholes in the corporate tax that businesses will pay in future years. Meanwhile, it does nothing to address the continuing structural deficit caused by previous tax reductions and spending decisions.

The budget also includes a proposal giving the Governor new authority to make unilateral midyear budget cuts. Mid-budget adjustments should only be made through joint action of the executive and legislative branches so that our system of checks and balances—an essential component of responsible government—is maintained.

Still, despite these serious defects and the painful impact of the severe cuts it makes to essential services, a budget had to be passed. Without a budget, many important programs were jeopardized because they were not receiving the funding they depend on. The budget impasse deprived schools, medical providers, nursing homes, and child care providers of the money they need to continue to provide vital services.

The state also faced cash flow problems that could mean borrowing at a time when money is less available than usual, and likely to be more expensive. The state could not wait any longer for a budget, especially when the minority in the legislature had made it clear that they would not budge from their pledge not to raise any taxes. That pledge has once again enabled a minority to hold the entire budget process hostage to their wishes. This is not responsible representative government.

While there is plenty of blame to go around, there is a silver lining to the mess in Sacramento. The voters will be able to pass judgment on at least two components of the budget deal in a special election. More important, many people are now saying that it's time to look at *real* budget reform, particularly at eliminating the two-thirds vote requirement to pass a budget. Now that the people of our state have been treated to a stark example of the utter dysfunction in the budget process, we hope they will join us in fixing this broken system and replacing it with a process that really works. The people of California deserve no less.

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Top Five Tips for Debate Watchers

1. Think Ahead. Before the debate, ask yourself which issues are most important to you, and jot down what you'd like to learn from each of the candidates.

2. Are They Answering the Question? Pay attention to how the candidates answer the questions. Are they specific? Sincere? Knowledgeable?

3. Keep Track of Topics. Are the candidates being asked about your priority issues? Are the questions fair and pertinent?

4. Talk it out! Afterwards, talk about the debate with your friends & family. Did the debate sway your decision? Did you learn something new about the candidates' positions?

5. VOTE on November 4th. It is your best opportunity to make your voice heard and help shape the issues that affect all of us! VISIT VOTE411.org to prepare yourself.

from the League of Women Voters/US

From LWVUS

Debate Watching 101

INTRODUCTION

Candidate debates have a long history in American politics. At every level of government—from city council to state legislature, from Congress to President of the United States—candidates participate in debates to help voters understand who and what they stand for.

Watching debates is an important way for voters to learn more about the candidates and the issues before the election, so that they can cast an informed vote. At the same time, voters need to view debates with a careful eye to get the most information. Candidates rehearse thoroughly for debates, making it hard to get candid, spontaneous answers. Debates can emphasize form over substance, such as the candidates' appearance instead of their stands on the issues. You may watch a debate and still not get answers to the questions you have about the candidates and issues.

You can get the most out of a debate by thinking about the issues and candidates in advance, by viewing the debate with care, and by continuing to research the issues and the candidates after the debate. Debate Watching 101 provides background information and tips to help you get the most out of watching a candidate debate.

What Is a Debate?

A debate is an event at which candidates who are running for an elected office meet face-to-face to answer questions that are asked of them. This gives the candidates a chance to state their views and to respond to their opponents' statements. It gives viewers a chance to directly compare the candidates and their

positions.

Debates usually take place in front of a live audience and may also be televised or broadcast on the radio or the Internet. A televised or broadcast debate allows many more people to watch and learn about the candidates and issues.

Debates can follow different formats, or a combination of formats. The most common formats are:

- **Single moderator:** one moderator asks the questions;
- **Panel:** a panel of journalists or experts questions the candidates;
- **Town hall:** questions are submitted by members of the audience or randomly selected voters, in person or by phone or email. The Town Hall format allows for questions to be submitted in advance or during the debate.

The debate usually begins with an introduction of the candidates, who may also be given time to make opening statements. The heart of the debate takes place when the candidates are asked questions and they respond. There usually is a time limit for responses. The questioner may ask follow-up questions to get the candidates to explain or clarify their responses. Some debates give candidates an opportunity to “cross-examine” or ask questions directly of each other. At the end of the debate, the candidates are usually given time to make closing statements.

Debate Watching 101

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Before the Debate

Thinking about and preparing for the debate before it takes place will enable you to get the most from watching it. It will familiarize you with the candidates and issues. The preparation will help you focus on what to look for in the debate so that you will get the information you need in deciding who to vote for.

It will help if you take some time before the debate to:

- Follow the campaign to learn about the candidates and their backgrounds;
- Find out what the important campaign issues are;
- Decide what issues are most important to you;
- Think about the questions you may have and the information you want to get from the debate to help you in your decision making;

After the Debate

It will help clarify your thoughts about the candidates and the issues if you take some time after the debate to reflect on what you have just seen and heard.

You can do this by:

- Comparing your impressions with others who watched the debate;
- Asking yourself, based on the information you got from watching the debate, which candidate appears most qualified for the office;

- Identifying the issues on which you agree with a candidate and those on which you disagree, and deciding whether that makes you more or less likely to vote for a particular candidate;
- Asking yourself if you learned something new about the issues or the candidate;
- Thinking about whether you have more questions about the issues or the candidates that you want to follow up;
- Getting more information about the candidates' positions from news reports, candidate Web sites and nonpartisan voter information Web sites such as VOTE411.org.
- Watch later debates for more information or to confirm your current impressions of the candidates

Conclusion

Candidate debates give voters a chance to hear the candidates speak and respond to their opponents. They give candidates a chance to present their message directly to a wide audience. As a voter, asking yourself the right questions before, during and after the debate can help you make the most of this opportunity to learn about the candidates and the issues.



Membership Application

It is easy to join the League of Women Voters of Glendale/Burbank. All Citizens of voting age are welcome. Associate Membership is open to all others.

YES! I want to add my voice to yours by joining the League of Women Voters as part of your voice for citizens and force for change. I enclose: (please check one or more of the following)

- \$60.00 for a one-year individual membership (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$100.00 for a one-year household membership for two members who share the same address (includes a copy of our VOTER, nine times per year)
- \$30.00 for a one-year student membership

Name/Names _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

I would like to receive my VOTER by email.
My email address is _____

Make check payable to League of Women Voters. Mail to Vera Naylor, 7714 Via Capri, Burbank CA 91504

I am unable to join League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$ _____

Gifts made payable to "LWV Education Fund" are tax deductible.

The Voter

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President: Monica Marquez

Editor: Linda Lammers

Production: Carole Dougherty

Circulation: Anna Rundle

The **League of Women Voters**, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education advocacy.

The League never supports or opposes any political party or candidate. We advocate only on issues that members have studied and come to a consensus on. In an era of proliferating and powerful special interests, the League's advocacy in the public interest is increasingly recognized as an essential voice of democracy.

LWV Non-Partisan Policy

The League of Women Voters has a special history of maintaining its non-partisan approach. While we encourage our members to run for office, participate in party politics and help with campaigns, the League remains non-partisan by providing no support nor opposition to any candidate for office. Board members have restrictions on what they may do politically. Officers are further restricted to help maintain this reputation and to foster broad dialogue on issues. Policies exist at the local, state and national levels. The LWVGB Board wants you to know that the League at all levels does not and will not support or oppose any candidate.

249 N. Brand Blvd.
Glendale, CA 91203
Corner of Brand/Calif.
tel: 818.244.4448
fax: 818.244.4795
M-F 8:30-6, Sat. 10-4
1125 E. Broadway
Glendale, CA 91205
Btwn Chevy Chase/Adams
tel: 818.242.4270
fax: 818.242.0525
M-F 8:30-6:30
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7714 Via Capri
Burbank CA 91504
(818) 247-2407

League websites:
LWV Glendale/Burbank
<http://www.gb.ca.lwvnet.org>

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