



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

VOTER

PIEDMONT, CALIFORNIA • MARCH 2010



Political Responsibility Through Informed and Active Participation

CALENDAR

Wednesday, March 2

Meeting of the LWVP Board
519 Magnolia Avenue
9:30 am • Open to all members

Wednesday, March 17

California State Education
Financing Crisis

Wednesday, March 31

New Members Orientation
(See page 3)

Wednesday, April 21

Foster Care System

MONTHLY EVENT

CALIFORNIA STATE EDUCATION FINANCING CRISIS



Lionel Chan

Associate Professor, UC Berkeley

Wednesday, March 17

31 King Avenue, Piedmont
9:30 am



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 and advocacy. We do not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. We do, however, take action on selected government issues in the public interest. We operate on a set of principles using our visions, beliefs, and intentions.

In the fall of 2008, the nation faced a historic economic crisis. No state government in the country was as severely shaken as California, where years of budget troubles preceded the national crisis. The situation worsened throughout 2009, and state leaders repeatedly acted to balance the state budget. And because K–12 education represents the single largest state expenditure, California’s public schools were greatly affected. Billions in funding cuts left many school districts reeling. This grim picture hits close to home: in January the Piedmont Unified School District agreed to institute seven furlough days for staff and eliminate two positions following a long series of other budget cutbacks. Unless the community can raise an additional \$700,000 for the schools, the Board faces additional layoffs in 2010–2011. Our speaker for March’s community forum, Lionel Chan, will talk about the thorny issues of the economy and financial issues in education.

Lionel Chan is a former Piedmont resident and is currently a visiting associate professor in the Graduate School of Education at UC Berkeley, teaching Resource Management. He has a Ph.D. in mathematics from UC Berkeley, a J.D. from Berkeley, and an Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Lionel is also the Buddhist Chaplain at the San Francisco County Juvenile Hall and teaches stress management mediation.

You can read his bio at <http://gse.berkeley.edu/Faculty/LChan/LChan.html>.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our League members shared a very proud moment on Sunday, February 7th when we welcomed three famous women from the past to the Piedmont Community Hall to celebrate the League's birthday: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B Anthony, and Carrie Chapman Catt—all heroic supporters of the women's suffrage movement. Ms. Catt was also the courageous founder of the League of Women Voters. Their presence was made possible by Oakland-based Stagebridge, a senior theater company, which had almost as much fun researching their scripts as performing before an audience of about 50 people.

The event also took some ambitious and creative hard work from several members who deserve our heartfelt thanks: Beth Hurwich who chaired the event committee, worked alongside the theater group and oversaw the many details of the birthday party; Susan Hill who arranged a beautiful reception table and invited past League presidents to pour tea and coffee; Karin Mai, Marella Guigou, Marlene Sakol, Dale Marshall, and Mary Ann Benson were wonderful in their supporting roles; and many thanks to the anonymous angels who brought desserts. I would also like to give a special thanks to Council Member Margaret Fujioka who gave the League an enthusiastic and kind affirmation of the civic work that

we do to encourage voter turnout, voter education, and the advocacy work we do to effect change at the local and national levels.

We are also very appreciative of having had such a good turnout from our membership and the community on a Super Bowl Sunday.

At our February Board meeting we devoted a good hour to hearing presentations about the Blair Park project. Geoff Grote, City Administrator, explained in great detail the series of noticed meetings regarding both Blair Park and Coaches Field turf and lighting that have taken place since April 2007. These projects are currently being considered together under a joint EIR. Eric Havian spoke in favor of the Moraga Canyon Sports Fields Project and Ray Catalano, representing Friends of Moraga Canyon Committee, spoke in opposition.

The Board is planning to hold a public meeting after the EIR is issued to air the different sides of this issue once all parties have had a chance to study the findings of the report. There is great value in allowing all perspectives a thorough hearing at the same venue, giving the audience the opportunity to ask questions—as a step in the right direction toward encouraging civil dialogue in Piedmont about the many-faceted issue of Blair Park.

One of the most basic tenets of the League's set of public policy positions is our national organization's

statement about the citizen's right to know and participate in government: "The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government. The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible."

And as a reminder to our members that there are important, urgent issues being addressed at the national level—here is news about LWVUS' support for the passage of a critically important campaign finance law. In response to the Supreme Court's decision in the Citizens United case, League President Mary G. Wilson sent a letter to the Senate urging them to update campaign finance laws, with particular attention to requirements governing corporate and union spending. Lobby Corps members are visiting key Senate offices this month to discuss legislation. Mary also sent an email yesterday reminding members and supporters that her Congressional testimony from earlier this month is available in webcast format online, and pointing to a new nationwide ABC News-Washington Post poll showing that the League is not alone in this fight: 80 percent of Americans of both parties oppose the Court's decision.

Lianne Campodonico, President
League of Women Voters of Piedmont

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF PIEDMONT**
2009–2010

BOARD

Lianne Campodonico
President

Beth Hurwich
Vice-President, Administration

Marj Blackwell
Vice President, Program

Sue Kawaichi
Susan Schroeder
Carol Brown
Program Committee

John Matzger
Treasurer

Marella Guigou
Membership

Cathy Dinnean
VOTER Editor

Peggy Phillips
Voter Service

Carole Levenson
Action

Tam Hege
LWV Bay Area Liaison

BOARD SUPPORT

Ann Chandler
Agenda Introduction, KCOM

Kay Cheatham
Louise Linford
Diversity

Mary Ann Benson
Communications

Karen Christensen
Hospitality

Debi Fitzgerald
Luncheons

Susan Freeman
High School Liaison

Trisha Gorman
Affidavits (voter registration)

Julie McDonald
Publicity

Betsy King
Smart Voter

Gayle Sells
City Council Observer

Ann Trutner
School Board Observer

Members old and new are invited to the
NEW MEMBERS ORIENTATION MEETING

Introduction and Welcome to New Members

John Chiang	Alexandra Slatoff
Bruce and Karen Joffe	Cory Smegal
Teddy King	Andrea Swenson
Lynne Mosier	Winifred Walters
Peggy Phillips	Julie Watters
Penny Robb	Lois Westmont
Joannie Semitekol	

WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?

A presentation about the Ins and Outs of the League

Wednesday, March 31

519 Magnolia Avenue, Piedmont

7:30 pm

RSVP to Lianne:

liannecampodonico@comcast.net, or call 510 654-8723



DIVERSITY FILM SERIES

Speaking In Tongues

What would it be like if your parents put you in a school where the teacher spoke a foreign language?



The Appreciating Diversity Committee, DiversityWorks, the Piedmont League of Women Voters, and Piedmont Adult Education proudly present *Speaking in Tongues*. This Audience Award winning film follows the diverse stories of four San Francisco public schoolchildren enrolled in Chinese and Spanish language-immersion programs while grappling with the debate over bilingual education.

Thursday, March 18

Wildwood Auditorium • 301 Wildwood Avenue

6:30 Refreshments

7:00 Film Showing and Community Discussion

Piedmont celebrates!!

On a Sunday afternoon in February, Piedmont citizens gathered to celebrate the founding of the League of Women Voters by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920. Guests not only enjoyed the traditional tea service, but the attendance of Carrie Catt herself, accompanied by Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the best known of the 19th c. women who paved the way.



Suzanne Talmy, Peggy Kelsay, and Trudy Rubinstein from STAGEBRIDGE brought the suffragists to the tea party.

90th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters



Hostesses Susan Hill, Karin Mai, and Dale Marshall

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the first woman to run for the House of Representatives, although she was not eligible to vote.



Josiah Polhemus, Co-artistic Director of STAGEBRIDGE introduced the suffragists.



Susan B. Anthony gave nearly 100 speeches every year on the subject of women's rights.



Carrie Chapman Catt founded the LWV in 1920 following the passage of the 19th amendment giving women the vote.



Beth Hurwich, Lianne Campodonico, Ann Chandler, and Lynn Saunders looking over the DVD of the movie *Iron Jawed Angels* about the struggle for women's suffrage.

A REPORT ON BAY AREA LEAGUE DAY

The Annual Forum of the Bay Area League of Women Voters of California, held in Oakland on January 30, focused on efforts in California to reduce greenhouse gases.

During the morning session, *Redesigning Communities to Reduce Greenhouse Gases*, speakers addressed issues surrounding SB 375, a bill passed in the fall of 2008 with the goal of achieving reduction in CO2 emissions specified in the State's historic AB 32, *The Global Warming Solutions Act* of 2006. This act sets specific targets for reductions to be met by 2020 and 2050. One of the many goals specified in AB 32 is to reduce the number of miles we drive, and SB 375 encourages local communities to plan housing and other development so as to reduce sprawl, shorten commutes, and facilitate the use of public transportation.

Although the basic concept is clear—good regional planning is essential to energy conservation—implementation will be complex. There are a number of elements involving state, regional, and local planning entities. It's not clear how planning standards set by the state are going to be reconciled with existing or proposed local standards. Some think the bill has the potential to create a bureaucratic nightmare, others think it is a tremendously important breakthrough taking more than a piecemeal approach to urban planning for the first time.

Five speakers represented various governmental agencies; the sixth was from the nonprofit organization

Greenbelt Alliance, a pioneer in working with cities to achieve the concept of smart growth. All speakers supported SB 375, but acknowledged complexities and uncertainties such as how it will operate. Actual texts of the presentations will be available on the LWV of the Bay Area web site www.lwvbayarea.org.



The afternoon program entitled *Success Stories*, included reports from the governments of three cities (Berkeley, San Francisco, and San Jose) and one county (Sonoma) of programs succeeding in reducing greenhouse gases while reducing costs and creating new jobs.

The program in San Jose is called *Green Vision* and has the goal of reducing per capita energy use 50% by 2022. Currently 67% of the city's waste is being converted to energy; the future goal is 95% or more! At the same time they hope to create 25,000 new "clean" jobs. The city has committed to no new outward growth, emphasizing instead cooperation with local neighborhoods and infill of underutilized areas.

Sonoma County presented their *Sonoma County Energy Independence Program*, SCEIP. The county loans

funds at a 7% rate to businesses and individuals for energy savings projects such as installing solar panels, improving insulation, and increasing water efficiency. 900 new jobs have been created, and the program has the potential to be self-sustaining. Programs similar to this are cropping up all over California with help from California FIRST, AB 811, a new law that allows municipalities to develop financing for energy savings in buildings via loans that are repaid with temporarily increased property taxes.

Overall I came away inspired not only by the successful programs that are underway, but by the number of smart people trying to address climate change at all governmental levels. I was also sobered by the complexities, including the number of potentially conflicting and overlapping governmental organizations involved. I can see how these efforts make natural targets for enemies of "big government." Part of the confusion and complexity of SB 375 is that it attempts to reach state standards by working collaboratively with local governments rather than enforcing new state rules. California is bravely pioneering in the area of reducing carbon emissions. Let us hope that our innovative spirit and efforts at collaboration will succeed and will inspire other states to follow.

—Mariquita West
LWV Southwest Santa Clara Valley

Excerpted from the full report available at <http://www.lwv-sw-santaclara-valley.org/voternews.html>

CAMPAIGN TO PASS CALIFORNIA FAIR ELECTIONS ACT GATHERS STEAM



LWV California is a co-sponsor of the California Fair Elections Act, to be presented to voters on the June ballot as Prop. 15. The California Fair Elections Act was put on the ballot after the legislature passed and Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 583, authored by Assemblymember Loni Hancock (D-East Bay) and sponsored by the California Clean Money Campaign.

If it passes, Prop. 15 will establish a pilot project in 2014 and 2018 to provide voluntary public financing for candidates running for Secretary of State who qualify and comply with strict spending prohibitions. Candidates who opt for public financing will receive enough public funds to compete with candidates backed by corporate or special interest funds. The Secretary of State makes an ideal test for public funding at little cost

and will show how it will open up the political process for statewide elections in California. It will assure voters that the elected official guarding the integrity of elections has no need to raise private campaign contributions. CFEA is patterned after the successful Clean Money systems now working in Arizona, Maine and Connecticut. The State League says, “We strongly support the California Fair Elections Act so that elected officials can focus on governing instead of fundraising.”

How does a Secretary of State candidate qualify for Fair Elections funding?

Candidates must show a broad base of public support by gathering 7,500 \$5 contributions and signatures from registered California voters. Then they must reject private fundraising and agree to limit spending to the amount provided by the public.

How much funding does a qualified Secretary of State candidate receive?

Qualified major party candidates become eligible to receive \$1,000,000 in Fair Elections funds for the Secretary of State primary campaign. Upon winning their primary, a qualified candidate would receive an additional \$1,300,000 for the general election. This is about the same as winning candidates spent in the 2006 election.

Who pays? Will it affect my taxes?

With the California Fair Elections Act, no taxpayer dollars will go to candidates. The California Fair Elections act is funded primarily by a \$350 annual registration fee on lobbyists, lobbying firms, and lobbyist employers. Currently lobbyists only pay \$12.50 per year in California, among the lowest the nation. Californians who support fair elections can also make voluntary contributions on their state income tax return.



What effect will the recent US Supreme Court ruling on campaign financing (“Citizens United v Federal Election Commission”) have on the California Fair Elections Act?

California has never put any restrictions at all on what corporations can spend on campaigns. The Citizens United case only starts to make Federal law as bad as California’s. Corporations already can and do spend massive amounts to influence state elections here. The Citizens United ruling will have no impact on California’s ability to implement Prop 15’s voluntary system of public financing for Secretary of State candidates. The Supreme Court has consistently upheld public financing provisions like those contained in Prop 15.

What if a Fair Elections candidate is outspent by a privately funded candidate?

The California Fair Elections Act provides “Fair Fight” matching funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis when a candidate is outspent by privately funded candidates, up to four times the initial allocation, so candidates who opt in to the Fair Elections system can be competitive even in the most highly contested races.



What if outside groups attack a Fair Elections candidate or support their opponent?

The California Fair Elections Act provides matching funds on a dollar-for-dollar basis within 24 hours when independent expenditures by outside groups attack a Fair Elections candidate or support one of their opponents, up to four times the initial allocation amount, allowing them to respond.

What about third party or independent candidates?

Qualified independent and third-party candidates are eligible for partial funding. They can receive full funding in the general election if they show they have a broad enough base of support by gathering twice the normal number of \$5 contributions and signatures.

What will prevent fringe candidates from getting public money?

The California Fair Elections Act sets a high threshold of public support that must be met in order for a candidate to receive public funding. Each qualifying candidate must gather thousands of \$5 contributions and signatures to be eligible. The same kind of requirements have stopped fringe candidates from receiving public funds in other states.



Does the California Fair Elections act put any restrictions on candidates who opt not to participate?

No. Candidates who chose not to participate will have no more spending restrictions at all than under current law. Candidates and independent expenditures are required to disclose spending more quickly when pitted against a Fair Election candidate.

Will wealthy self-funded people be stopped from spending their own money to run for office?

No. The California Fair Elections Act respects every citizen's right to run for office and fund their campaign with their own money. The California Fair Elections Act doesn't stop anybody from spending money on their own campaign if they don't take public funding.

What effect does Fair Elections have on negative advertising?

Fair Elections doesn't place any restrictions on the content of political speech, but negative advertising has actually decreased in states that have Fair Elections systems.



What about last minute campaign attacks on Fair Elections Candidates?

The California Fair Elections Act allows Fair Elections candidates to respond to last minute attacks because they receive matching funds within 24 hours.

What about debates?

Fair Elections candidates are required to engage in at least one debate in a contested primary and two debates in a contested general election.

How are Fair Elections working out in states that already implemented them?

Arizona and Maine implemented Fair Elections in 2000, where Fair Elections funding is used by the majority of candidates from both major parties. In states that use Fair Elections, voter turnout has improved because voters know they really matter.

—With thanks to LWV Oakland for this article.





ACTION ALERT

Time to Move Single Payer Health Care in California

The renewed push to pass Senator Mark Leno's SB 810, the California Universal Health Care Act, begins with deadlines that must be met this month. SB 810 must be voted on by the Senate Appropriations Committee by January 22 and by the full senate by the end of January.

SB 810 is nearly identical to former Senator Sheila Kuehl's landmark bill (SB 840) to establish a single payer health insurance system for California. It would provide fiscally sound, affordable health care to all Californians, provide every Californian the right to choose his or her own physician, and control health care cost inflation.

SB 810 was passed by the Senate Health Committee last April but was held in the Senate Appropriations

Committee's "suspense file" last May, along with a majority of other Senate bills that had a fiscal impact. Further action was postponed to this month. And now it's time to act! Tell your state senator to vote YES on SB 810 when it comes up for a vote. Please communicate as a concerned individual, not as a representative of the League.

SB 810 will not only provide high quality, affordable, guaranteed health care to all Californians, it will save the state billions of dollars in health care costs. At a time when the state budget deficit threatens to exceed \$20 billion, and millions of Californians are without jobs and health-care, the need to pass real health care reform in our state is greater than ever.

TAKE ACTION

Assuming that SB 810 will be taken from the suspense file and passed out of the Appropriations Committee, we need to lobby all remaining senators to pass this crucial bill.

Contact **Loni Hancock**, State Senator for our district, 1515 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94612
510-286-1333



UPDATE

On January 28, 2010, Senator Leno's bill, SB 810, reached the Senate floor for the third reading and passed by a vote of 22 AYES and 14 NOES!

JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The League is open to all men and women age 18 or older. Annual dues are \$60., \$55. for seniors, or \$90. for two members at the same address. Membership includes participation in Piedmont, Bay Area, California, and National leagues.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone (H) _____ Phone (W) _____

Email _____

New member Renewal Transfer

Please mail your check payable to
League of Women Voters of Piedmont to
LWV Piedmont, 155 Woodland Way, Piedmont, CA 94611

For further information or dues assistance, please call
Marella Guigou, 835-4241

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters of Piedmont, in both its values and practices, affirms its recognition of diversity and pluralism as realities which need to be embraced. There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWVP on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, creed, sexual orientation or disability.

