

**The League of
Women Voters of
Alameda**

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The VOTER is published 8 times per year. Current and past issues of the VOTER are posted on our website

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The League of Women Voters; a non-partisan political organization – encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influence public policy through education. 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.



Volume 42

Number 2

March 2009 Political Responsibility through Informed and Active Participation

VOTER

SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE MEETING

The Alameda LWV is sponsoring a general public meeting. All League members as well as general public are invited to this meeting. We will have a very knowledgeable speaker, Pat Snyder, explain the plan as well as answer our questions on 'Single Payer Plan'.

Date: March 26, 2009
Time: 7:30 P.M.
Place: Alameda Hospital, Room 'A' (2nd Floor)
Speaker: Patricia Snyder, PhD, RN

Patricia R. Snyder, PhD, RN, has been a key player in the state single payer struggle, representing the LWV. Hope to see you all, and bring your family, friends and neighbors to this meeting. This is one topic which affects all of us. We would like to know your concerns and questions.

What is SINGLE PAYER?

The following information has been provided by OneCareNow, a statewide grass roots campaign devoted to educating Californians and building support for [Senate Bill 840](#), titled "The California Universal Healthcare Act", authored by Senator Sheila Kuehl.

Because 6.5 million people in California have no access to quality, affordable healthcare and millions more have inadequate healthcare coverage through skin and bones insurance plans, our private health insurance system is immoral and failing.

We must care for all the children and sick who do not have access to affordable healthcare. We must protect people from greedy insurance companies who make their profits by denying healthcare. Because we care for Californians, we must create a fair, responsible public health insurance system- a "single payer" system- that protects us from the greedy private insurers and keeps our healthcare private.

SB 840 is the landmark legislation that abides by these principles and provides fiscally sound, affordable and comprehensive coverage via universal health insurance for all Californians.

The bill creates one plan and one public trust fund which pays all health care bills and collects all the monies already being spent on health care and insurance plans, which is called a "single payer" system. When enacted, SB 840 replaces all health premiums, taxes, deductibles and co-payments now paid by employers, employees and individuals with one affordable premium paid to the public trust fund to save \$8 billion dollars in the first year alone and over \$350 billion over a ten year period. (continued on page 3)



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Kate Quick, President, League of Women Voters of Alameda

The other shoe has dropped and we now know that there will be another election for us to educate voters about on May 19th. This is a result of the California budget process, and will involve at least six measures, several of which change prior fiscal decisions made by the voters to accommodate this year's budget agreements. So we are gearing up yet again. If you want to help, please contact Joanne McKray.

We also now know that for certain the LWVC is not going to produce Pros and Cons, and we will be relying on the Secretary of State's information. Since there are no local ballot measures for the special election in May, nor are there candidates, we will not need to do local Pros and Cons. However, we will need to do some synopsis of the ballot measures and guidelines for voting, as well as our "Vote With the League" materials. With the short lead time, the Board has decided to use the Easy Voter Guide (EVG) materials and our guides and post them to as many of the local blogs as we can, as well as pay a professional videographer to film our Pros and Cons for posting on U-Tube. We will be doing only one "live" Pros and Cons forum.

I've been watching the State budget process and suspect that a measure to reduce the required 2/3 majority to pass a budget in the legislature will be on our June, 2010 ballot. It will be contentious, I'm sure, but from what I have read and seen, something has to be done to relieve the dysfunctional process we have now. I think there will also be a constitutional convention before long as our state constitution has become overburdened with so many legislative items it has also become dysfunctional. A lot of work the League will be involved in. Stay tuned for more on these subjects.

At least two from our League will be going to the hearing on February 27th in San Francisco on Proposition 11 implementation. Helen Hutchinson, of the Oakland League will be speaking for the LWVC, and we will be there both to observe and to give her support.

Coming soon will be our Membership Coffee and Orientation on March 28th at Alameda Hospital and the Meet Your Public Officials fundraiser in April. If you wish to help with the former, contact Membership Chair, Shubha Fpanse, or the latter, Liz Rogers, Audrey Lord-Houseman, Dorothy Fullerton, Li Volin or Juelle Ann Boyer.

With all this busy-ness we will need all hands on deck. Please decide what you can do to help and contact the appropriate person to offer your services. Some tasks will take only an hour or two; others a longer commitment. One nice thing about League – there is no time requirement – but we do ask for your good will and support in taking on some task so that the work gets done. The League is well worth it!

Kate

California's Precarious Water Supply

Water: California's New Gold was the subject of this year's Bay Area League Day on January 31. 190 participants heard presentations by an impressive panel of experts. This reports some of their messages.

Though the drought has lately occupied center stage, this discussion was mostly about the Delta, which provides the water supply for two thirds of Californians, irrigation for millions of acres of farmland, and habitat for hundreds of species.

Because much of the land is below sea level and getting lower, an earthquake or high water in the channels could breach the levees around the islands and flood the Delta with water from the Bay. The increased salinity would mean that communities in this area that get their water from the Delta and most of California to the south would be without usable water. The implication is that we need a way to get water from the Sacramento River past the Delta, i.e., a peripheral canal or pipeline.

Since farming on the islands and water diversion have changed the Delta, leaving much of it below sea level, and pollution and invasive species have altered the biota, the Delta cannot be restored to its 19th century condition. However, healthy habitat can be restored with measures appropriate to its several habitats, e.g., mudflat, open water.

Agriculture in the Central Valley can thrive, producing more food with less water, by using efficient irrigation technology and growing crops that use water more efficiently.

To see slides from some of the presenters, go to www.lwvbayarea.org, scroll down to Document Library, then Bay Area League Day Reports.

(Single Payer Health Care – continued from page 1)

A Brief History

On August 28, 2006 SB 840 passed both houses of the California legislature in a historic vote affirming the right of Californians to quality, affordable health insurance. On September 22, 2006 after taking \$4 million from the insurance industry, Governor Schwarzenegger vetoed SB 840 on the grounds that "healthcare is not a right." On January 9, 2007 Governor Schwarzenegger unveiled his own healthcare reform proposal to vastly increase insurance coverage by using an [individual mandate](#) to force uninsured Californians buy private health insurance yet his proposal fails to establish effective quality or [cost controls](#).

On Feb 27, 2007 Senator Kuehl reintroduced SB 840 to great fanfare in Sacramento. On April 20, 2007 the finance portion of SB 840, [SB 1014](#), was introduced. SB 840 passed the CA Senate on 6/6/07 and is now in the Assembly up for a floor vote. In January 2008 Governor Schwarzenegger cobbled together a bad compromise bill [ABX 1-1](#) with the Assembly which failed in the Senate where the wise Senate Health Committee rejected it 10 to 1. [Compare Governor's old plan with SB 840](#)

On September 1st, 2008 SB 840 passed the California Legislature.

Some of SB 840 benefits include:

Security - All California residents are covered for life.

Choice - Everyone has the freedom to choose their doctor or integrated health system such as Kaiser. Delivery of care will continue as now to be private and public.

Comprehensive Benefits - Coverage includes all care prescribed by a patient's health care provider that meets accepted standards of care and practice. Coverage includes hospital, medical, surgical, mental health; dental and vision care; prescription drugs and medical equipments, diagnostic testing, hospice care and more.

High Quality - The bill utilizes proven financial incentives that support the delivery of high quality care, including bonuses for providers working in rural or under-served areas. The plan invests in needed health care infrastructure such as electronic claims and reimbursement systems and statewide medical databases that improve health care quality.

Efficient Administration - Consolidating the hundreds of insurance plans, both private and public, into one comprehensive insurance plan saves the state, patients and providers billions of dollars each year.

Shared Responsibility - Payment of an affordable premium by employers, employees and individuals supports the health care system we all need at some time.

Fair Reimbursement - Providers receive fair and full compensation for all their services.

Cost Controls - Health care costs are controlled by efficient administration, bulk purchase of drugs and durable medical equipment, global health care budgets, coordination of capital expenditures, and linkage to growth of the State Gross Domestic Product.

Once again, California is in the forefront of change. The March 26th General Meeting will be a great opportunity to learn more about what is on the horizon and how we as an active League can influence the shape of our medical care delivery system in the future.

MAY 19th ELECTION

No one's happy with how it was done, but the budget crisis is resolved!

Well, not exactly. The \$42 billion gap will not be closed unless voters agree to amend previously passed measures. Thus we face another special election on May 19, involving at least five propositions.

Creating the most new money for the general fund would be one which alters the State Lottery measure. Authorized in 1984 with the sole purpose of providing extra money for schools, the new proposition would allow the lottery proceeds to be used for other purposes. Also affecting the state's schools would be a proposition revisiting Prop 98's requirements. Two propositions passed to create new programs, in early childhood education through a cigarette tax (Prop 10) and in mental health services through a tax on the wealthy (Prop 63), would be revised so as to use funds collected only for existing programs. Finally a cap would be placed on state spending, involving a limitation on increases from one budget to the next and the establishment of a rainy day fund to which any excess revenues would be contributed.

Obviously many Californians will be as reluctant to vote for these measures as many legislators have been to recommend them. Opposition groups are already organizing. It remains to be seen if voters will agree bite the bullet and vote yes in light of the state's fiscal crisis.

Meantime the League's Voter Education arm has its work cut out for it and a short time to do it. Preliminary ideas include holding one public Pros/Cons Forum and then making use of televised material from that event for an edited YouTube presentation. Other internet use, involving blogs containing links to Secretary of State and Legislative Analyst sites as well as SmartVoter, is anticipated, as well as the usual material distribution. Many hands -and brains- will be needed.

Joanne McKray
Voter Education Chair

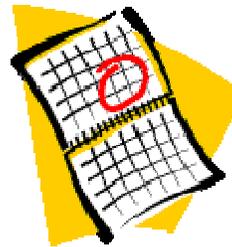
NEW MEMBER COFFEE

Date: March 28
Time: 10 a.m.
Place Alameda hospital, Room "A"

All are invited to an orientation coffee for new and prospective members to meet the Board and learn more about the Alameda League, its mission and activities.

Members are encouraged to bring friends and family to learn more about us. The event is free and open to all.

For more information please contact Shubha Fanse at shubhaf@aol.com.



Mark Your Calendar

**for MEET YOUR PUBLIC
OFFICIALS April 23rd.**



Next Board Meeting is
Thursday, March 19,
7:30pm,
Conference Room C,
Alameda Hospital
2070 Clinton Avenue
Alameda



Celebrating 89 Years

The League of Women Voters just commemorated our 89th birthday – and we've got a lot to be proud of! There is no other national organization in America that inspires such a great degree of commitment from its members. Here's a quick peek at five accomplishments we are celebrating and why the League's trusted legacy and grassroots strength remains as vital to a healthy and transparent government, all these years later.

- We celebrate this year with a strong commitment to build on the civic energy generated during the 2008 election season and continue our legacy of fostering meaningful citizen participation.
- We are so proud that in nearly 850 communities nationwide, the League remains THE trusted place for citizens to discuss the issues, ask the difficult questions, and demand accountability from their government.
- The League is a leader in transparency – from our work in the 1950s to uncover Senator Joseph McCarthy's abuse of congressional investigative powers to our current work urging President Obama to make openness in government a priority, the League is working to make the federal government more accessible to American citizens.
- The League celebrates our work promoting equal voting rights, having been at the forefront of the struggle to pass the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1982, winning passage of the National Voter Registration Act in 1993, and more recently working to enact the Help America Vote Act of 2002, and ensure full voting rights for Americans living in our nation's capital.
- Our connection with communities is helping us expand our work on issues that impact Americans and the world, such as climate change and health care.

The League of Women Voters truly has left its footprint on American history, and our democracy is stronger because of it. We look forward to continuing to strengthen our representative democracy for years to come.

BOARD BRIEFS

At its February 19, 2009 meeting the Board:

- Heard how we were going to proceed with consensus on the National Popular Vote
- Set our final program planning meeting for February 26th
- Heard an announcement that all the Board portfolio information was now posted to the web site.
- Heard an announcement that the MYPO planning committee was meeting on February 25th, and that some preliminary work has already been done.
- Discussed holding joint program meetings with other similar organizations, such as AAUW and BPW.
- Decided to work harder to meet the Chamber of Commerce newsletter deadline in announcing our program meetings.
- Decided to write a letter to the Alameda Transportation Commission regarding current fare hike proposals, and to ask our City Council to object to these fare hikes as well.
- Heard that President Kate Quick and Program VP Anne Spanier will be attending the Proposition 11 hearings on Friday, February 27th
- Heard that a special election will be held on May 19th to deal with State budget issues, and began the planning process for dealing with the new election cycle.
- Heard that the coffee for new and prospective members will be on March 28th at the Hospital.
- Heard that the Budget Committee, consisting of Li Volin, Earleen Hamlin, Dorothy Fullerton and Juelle Ann Boyer will be meeting on February 26th.

Join or Renew your membership in the Alameda League Today!



Name _____
 Other Names _____
 (if a family membership)
 Address _____ City _____ ZIP _____
 Phone _____ e-mail _____

\$65 Single Membership \$85 Family Membership \$25 Student Membership Dues year is Jan 1 – Dec 31.
 Dues assistance is available for those on limited income – Contact us at 869-4969. Make Check payable to LWV Alameda and mail to: League of Women Voters of Alameda, P. O. Box 1645, Alameda, CA 94501

Education Fund donations are Tax Deductible

Donations to the League of Women Voters Educations Fund are tax deductible. Consider sending a check for \$5 or more made out to LWV Ed Fund with your renewal, or at any time to LWV Alameda, P. O. Box 1645. Alameda, CA 94501

Turn your Trash into Cash for the Ed Fund

Lynn and Jim Groh collect aluminum cans, sell them and give the proceeds to the Ed Fund. Drop your aluminum cans on their front porch at 1546 Eastshore Drive, Alameda, and help the League educate voters.

Upcoming Events

March 19 th 7:30 pm	Board Meeting Alameda Hospital
March 26 th 7:30 pm	Single Payer Health Care Alameda Hospital
March 28 th 10:00 am	New Member Coffee Alameda Hospital
April 23 rd	Meet Your Public Officials Harbor Bay Community Center

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