



VOTER

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November 2005

A final look at League's positions on ballot measures

⊗ NO ON PROPOSITION 73--

Waiting Period and Parental Notification before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy

Parents rightfully want to be involved in their teenagers' lives and all parents want what is best for their children. But good family communication can't be imposed by government. Mandatory notification laws may sound good, but in the real world, vulnerable teenagers who can't talk to their parents may resort to unsafe, illegal abortions.

⊗ NO ON PROPOSITION 74--Public School Teachers. Waiting Period for Permanent Status. Dismissal.

The League supports fair, rigorous, and effective teacher evaluation and tenure procedures. However, this measure raises questions of due process rights and may limit the use of dismissal for cause. It does nothing to encourage teachers to enter and remain in the profession.

⊗ NO ON PROPOSITION 75--Public Employee Union Dues. Restrictions on Political Contributions. Employee Consent Requirement.

The League supports fair, even-handed campaign finance reform, but this measure is bad policy. It restricts public employee unions' use of member dues for political activity but has no similar constraint on corporations.

⊗ NO ON PROPOSITION 76--State Spending and School Funding Limits.

This constitutional amendment changes the state's spending cap, increases the governor's power to make budget cuts, and revises the Proposition 98 minimum guarantees for state support of education. It reduces flexibility to address changing needs and will cause cuts in essential services. School funding will be permanently reduced by \$4 bil-

lion per year. Our system of checks and balances will be undermined by giving this and all future governors the power to make cuts unilaterally. This is not budget

immediate redistricting that would ignore three million new Californians, and it requires a cumbersome, wasteful ratification of every set of plans by the people.

⊗ NO ON PROPOSITION 78--Discounts on Prescription Drugs.

There are two prescription drug initiatives on this ballot. Drug companies have contributed over \$50 million to support Proposition 78, an inferior program that depends on their voluntary participation.

⊗ YES ON PROPOSITION 79--Prescription Drug Discounts. State-Negotiated Rebates.

Proposition 79 offers deeper drug discounts to nearly twice as many Californians as Proposition 78. It has an enforcement mechanism to hold drug companies accountable for providing discounts.

⊗ Because League positions do not cover the issues in **PROP 80**, Electric Service Providers. Regulation, the LWVC is remaining neutral on this initiative.

Take to the polls

League does not support or oppose candidates for public office or political parties. League takes stands on issues. The League recommends the following:

- STATE MEASURES:**
- NO! to Proposition 73** (Parental Notification of Abortion)
- NO! to Proposition 74** (Teacher Tenure)
- NO! to Proposition 75** (Union Dues for Political Purposes)

NO! to Proposition 76 (Spending Limits & School Funding)

NO! to Proposition 77 (Redistricting)

NO! to Proposition 78 (Prescription Drug Discounts)

YES! to Proposition 79 (Prescription Drug Discounts)

For a review of all the ballot measures go to: www.smartvoter.org

For more on League's positions go to www.ca.lwv.org

Pros and Cons on TV

The League's Pros and Cons events were taped by our local cable channels and will be re-broadcast as follows:

Alameda Power and Telecom Channel 31:

- Nov. 5 - 4 p.m.
- Nov. 6 - 4 p.m.
- Nov. 7 - 7 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

Comcast Channel 28:

- Nov. 4: Noon, 1:30 p.m., 3 p.m. and 4:30 p.m.

reform!

⊗ NO ON PROPOSITION 77--Redistricting.

California needs to reform the way legislative and congressional district lines are drawn, but this flawed measure doesn't measure up. The makeup of its redistricting panel and its neglect of communities of interest in drawing plans are bad policy. This proposal calls for an

Don't miss Part 2 of 'Alameda Point: Issues and Challenges' Nov. 16

Part two of the informational meeting on Alameda Point will be held Nov. 16, 7 to 9:30 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church, corner of Santa Clara and Grand streets. The focus of this meeting will be the specifics of development of the Point, such as housing, financial tradeoffs, environmental impact, transportation and transit and historic preservation.

Call 523-1235 with questions.

Board Briefs for October

At its Oct. 20 meeting, the Board:

- reviewed plans for four public meetings presenting pros and cons on ballot measures;

- heard the forums will be taped and the viewing schedules published;

- reviewed plans for the November 16 general meeting;

- began planning for our Holiday Party;

- postponed decision on any action re a change to Measure A; and

- heard that our membership drive has begun and renewals and contributions have started to come in.

Time to renew your League membership

By Jean Fong
Boardmember

Please take a few minutes to send in your membership renewal for the coming year. **Dues:** \$53 for a single membership; \$20 for an additional member at the same address. Fill out form on page 6.

Due to the number of elections to be held in the next 12 months, the League anticipates more programming and accompanying expenses than usual. Your continuing financial support will therefore be doubly appreciated.

We are also asking your ongoing assistance in recruiting new members. In addition to strengthening our membership base, we would like to incorporate a broader cross-section of the Alameda community.

Students who are 18 years of age and enrolled at an academic institution, either full or part-time, can now join for \$25 – a rate that our Board felt would be attractive and affordable for them.

This welcome change is due to the

State voting at the last annual convention to follow the National League in accepting one-half the per member payment for students. (The PMP is the annual assessment of local leagues paid to the State LWV, LWVUS, and the ILO.) This new category is not on the application forms as yet and will need to be written in until new forms are available.

Lastly, our local League offers a limited number of partial and full scholarships for prospective members. These are based on financial need and are granted on a case-by-case basis. These requests may be submitted with the completed application form.

If you have any questions, please contact Jean Fong at jsfong1@comcast.net.

The Membership Committee, along with our Treasurer, looks forward to receiving your renewals and new membership applications during this month.

Again, thank you for your continuing support!

Handy Web sites

- Oakland League: www.lwvoakland.org
- Bay Area League: www.lwvba-ca.org
- State League: www.ca.lwv.org
- National League: www.lwv.org
- LWV Smart Voter: www.smartvoter.org
- LWVBA Monitor:

www.bayareamonitor.org

- Sen. Barbara Boxer: senator@boxer.senate.gov

- Sen. Diane Feinstein: senator@feinstein.senate.gov

- The White House: www.whitehouse.gov.

Keep in touch with your League

Have you moved? Have you changed your phone number or email address? Does your League have the best ways to get in touch with you? Don't let the League lose contact with you.

Send any new contact information to Jean Fong, membership director. Write her at 734 Palmera Court, Alameda, CA 94501. Call her at (510) 522-7797. Or email her at jsfong1@comcast.net



Everything you need to know about how to register to vote, how to get informed about an election, and how to vote at your polling place or at home. Go to www.easyvoter.org

Easy-to-read, nonpartisan information about statewide candidates and propositions – updated for each statewide election.

Use this information to learn about important issues – then form your own opinions.

How the LWVC makes decisions on initiatives

By John D. Sullivan

Legislation Director
legislation@lwvc.org

By Trudy Schafer

Program Director/Advocate
tschafer@lwvc.org

Nonpartisan, But Political—A foundational principle of the League of Women Voters is that it is a nonpartisan organization that does not support candidates or parties in elections. The League has developed positions on a range of issues in the areas of government function, social policy, and environmental policy, and uses these positions to take stands and to advocate on initiatives and bills in the legislature. The League can also address elected and appointed officials at the national, state and local levels concerning the effective implementation of legislation.

Development of Positions—It is important to understand how the LWVC develops its positions and how those positions are applied to initiatives, such as the eight that are on the Special Election ballot for November 2005.

Positions are developed by means of an extensive study process that can take two to three years to complete.

After delegates to an LWVC

convention adopt a state study, the LWVC board appoints a study team. The study team develops relevant material, interviews many people, attends hearings and presentations and generally attempts to become informed about the issue. The study team then prepares a Study Kit, including a Leader's Guide, that presents the issues and also contains a set of consensus questions.

The Study Kit is distributed to local Leagues for use in unit and other study meetings; the local Leagues complete the consensus questions and return them to the study team. The study team develops the consensus positions for presentation to the LWVC board.

The board then adopts the positions the positions become available for advocacy. The position is affirmed by the delegates to the next state convention.

Taking an LWVC Stand on an Initiative begins with analysis of the initiative by off-board consultants and program directors. The analysis includes a summary of the existing situation, what would be changed by the initiative, relevant League positions, and information about the sponsors of the measure. Then the LWVC Legislation Committee and board Program

Committee discuss each initiative and develop a recommendation for the LWVC board.

The board considers each Program Committee recommendation with the goal of supporting the initiative, opposing the initiative, or, in some cases, remaining neutral. This process can be spread out over two board meetings and, in rare cases take even longer. In the case of Proposition 77 (redistricting) on the November 2005 ballot, the possibility of alternative measures on redistricting more in line with LWVC positions existed for most of the summer and the board did not make a final decision until the end of August. The board voted to oppose Prop 77 because, in its final form, it contained a number of provisions which were not in keeping with the LWVC positions on redistricting.

As this brief description shows, the League is very careful about how it reaches positions on issues and is equally careful about how it applies those positions to initiatives and legislation. This careful approach does mean that the LWVC cannot always act as rapidly as other advocacy groups but it also means that, when the League acts, it has a solid basis for its action.

LWVUS asks: How is Homeland Security working at home?

By Chris Carson

Government Director,
govt@lwvc.org

The LWVUS has begun a project on disaster response, one that is particularly timely given the chaos surrounding hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the apparent uncertainty about what we have been able to accomplish in dealing with disasters since 9/11.

It is based on our commitment to the notion that democratic government depends on the informed and active par-

ticipation of its citizens at all levels of government, and the citizen's right to know about governmental actions.

Whether man-made or natural, disasters require the same attention: prevention, response, and recovery. The goal of this effort is to help local Leagues engage their communities in a conversation about how homeland security is working at home. It envisions a local League committee undertaking an initial survey of key officials who have responsibility for local security, and presenting

their response to their communities through forums with security leaders that engage community members, and/or reports, articles in the VOTER, op-eds, letters to the editor, local talk shows, etc.

The project should also help local Leagues gain a better understanding of how government works, establish personal relationships with officials charged with security, and engage the diversity of the community in a subject that matters very much to all of us. Ideally, it would highlight areas of need, open

communications between community leaders and residents on what is and can be done, and engage citizens in the planning and execution of security measures against both man-made and natural threats. It may also attract new members.

The project details and the questionnaire are now on the LWVUS Web site. For further help, please contact our Civil Liberties coordinators, Carole Wagner Vallianos and Lois Chaney, or LWVUS board member Xandra Kayden.

Part One: Keeping the lights on in California

First in a series of informative articles for an Update of the LWVC Energy Position. Position tentatively to be discussed at Jan. 19 board meeting.

The LWVC recognizes that a full study of Energy would cover more than electricity. However, due to the timeliness and complexity of questions relating to Electrical Energy, and due to limited resources, the delegates at the 2003 Convention instructed that this Update should be restricted to electricity systems in California and their governance.

For one startling moment at LWVC convention 2003, the lights went out all over the auditorium. And for a long hot summer in 2001, the threat of rolling blackouts was part of the daily life of all Californians. And although the West Coast has not had a major multi-state transmission outage since August 1996, the August 2003 blackout of the eastern U.S. and Canada only serves to point up our vulnerability.

All of these point up the crucial need to find the best way to secure and deliver an adequate and reliable supply of electricity for our state. This needs to be done in a way that respects the social and natural environment. New decisions will be made in Sacramento and in our local communities; new sources of energy and new techniques of delivering it will continue

Energy Study 2003-05

to evolve. The League must be in a position bring its principles to bear on public energy policy.

Unfortunately, our Energy Position was last updated in 1980—a quarter of century ago!

Our 1980 Position permits us to speak only on :

- Conservation
- Public health and safety
- Environmental protection
- Renewable sources
- Siting of facilities
- Tax incentives for conservation and renewables

This leaves a number of areas that we have not studied in sufficient depth to be able to comment.

Before 2001 there was little concern in California about a shortage of generation capacity and of transmission facilities. Then came a “perfect storm” which peaked in 2001—drought in the north-west, extreme heat in the southwest, excessive and unregulated prices of natural gas from out of state, bottlenecks in related markets, unexpectedly high business growth in the technology sector, and a flawed attempt at deregulation.

Through this experience we gained a new perspective on energy questions. We now see many additional areas calling for an updated Energy Position. We need to be able to address:

- Integration of energy policy – from production to transmission to delivery
- Re-regulation or de-regulation - or something else
- State and federal regulatory conflicts
- Differing roles of investor-owned utilities (IOUs) and public utilities
- Issues of social equity
- Role of the public in planning
- Direct access for some users
- Distributed energy resources (DER)*
- Emerging sources of energy--solar, wind, fuel cells and more

During the coming months we will be producing a series of articles expanding on all of these questions. We hope you will read them thoughtfully and bring your light to the League by joining in the Study to Update the LWVC Energy Position.

*Distributed energy resources are small-scale power generation facilities (typically in the range of 3 to 10,000kW) located close to where electricity is used (e.g., a home or business) to provide an alternative to or an enhancement of the traditional electric power system.

Part Two: Flipping the switch: The League and energy

Second in a series of informative articles for an Update of the LWVC Energy Position

When we flip the light switch, we expect the lights to go on. We expect reliability. The three key elements are generation, transmission and distribution. Generation is the creation of electricity. Transmission is the movement of the electricity from generation to a delivery system.

The distribution system delivers the electricity to your home. Prior to 1996, all these elements were owned and operated by a utility – a vertically integrated monopoly. When you flipped the switch, you sent a signal to the utility to provide you with electrici-

ty. The utility had planned ahead for that demand for electricity based on historical trends, and economic and sociological forecasts. It built generating plants, transmission lines, and distribution lines, and operated the whole system. The utility had an obligation to serve you, the consumer, with reliable, reasonably priced electricity.

As a major element of its planning the utility had to learn about the usage patterns of all its customers – when households are likely to turn on their air-conditioners, when merchants will switch on their outdoor lights, when industries will power up their major equipment.

From this understanding, the utility developed a 20-

year Load Forecast (how much electricity will be used on an hourly basis every day for the next 20 years!) Using this forecast, the utility judged what resources it would need to supply the demands of all its customers, including the resources needed to meet the peak demands.

These peak demands are met by peaking plants, or “peakers.” They run only at peak demand times because they are usually less efficient, thus more expensive to operate. Average demand is provided by what is called base-load generation – big, generally more efficient generators that hum along most of the time.

Californians are served by three investor-owned utilities

(IOUs), 21 municipal Utilities (muni’s), three rural electric cooperatives (RECs), two federal agencies and 13 irrigation districts in California, all in the electric utility business and all engaged in one, two or all three aspects of the industry.

The format of our state’s electric industry changed radically in 1996. Seeking to foster competition, the state legislature passed AB 1890, which proved to be a deeply flawed attempt at “deregulation” by separating the pricing of wholesale and retail generation.

Through this bill the Legislature “unbundled” the vertical utility, separating generation from transmission
Please see Energy on Page 5

News from the State Board: Getting so much done with so little

By Kate Quick

Communications Director,
LWVC Board

As you read this, our Special Election will be over, the votes counted and the results known. The Special Election has been a lot of work for the local Leagues, and for the State League Board and Office.

Running up to the election, our state office staff, particularly Trudy Schafer, who does our legislative work, and our President, Jackie Jacobberger, was working for months with the legislature and our "good guy lobby" partners to attempt to find legislative solutions for some of the items that wound up on the ballot. Proposition 77 was a particularly hard case, as we were trying right up to the ballot deadline to get the Governor and Legislature to agree to a good legislative solution or a better ballot measure, more in keeping with the redistricting guidelines League had fought for for so long.

Office staff worked long hours to pull together all the orders for Pros and Cons, as well as get the

written materials into final form for the publication and posting on the Web site. Typing, layout, negotiations with the printer and the shipper are all part of that effort. There was also work in producing, processing orders and delivery of the Easy Voter Guides, the In Depth, and the Action Guide going on at the same time.

Before I was elected to the State Board, I often wondered exactly what our Per Member Payment (PMP) was used for. It isn't a mystery to me anymore – except the realization that how they get done all that they do with so little staff is not only a mystery it's miraculous.

Our new Executive Director, Jill Kaiser Newcom is working hard on a very ambitious fund raising plan. The ads for donating our used cars are just the beginning of that program. From my participation on the State Board Audit and Budget Committees, I can tell you honestly that the state League has been operating on a seriously under funded basis for many years. I discovered that my bud-

get to produce the state VOTER four times a year was under the true cost by about \$25,000 per year. And there is more: the cost of the Web site, the SmartVoter Web site, the production of workshops, councils, conventions and meetings, as well as the bill tracking, lobbying and practical matters such as insurance, book-keeping and paying the auditors – all funded on a shoestring. So we need all that Jill and the Board can come up with, in addition to the PMP's to make it possible for the state League to be of assistance to the program and to the local Leagues.

The state League is pursuing grants and underwriting for a lot of its activities, and has had good success with some, such as Hewlett Packard. Many of the Board members donate their expenses, to keep down the administrative costs. The office has sufficient space, but could not be called luxurious. I think the combination of aggressive fund raising and utilization of the money we get from that will see an extension of more services to local Leagues in the near future.

Continued from Page 4

and from the delivery of power. The hope was to make room for more players in the generation field. Each vertically integrated utility was knocked on its side, and was required to sell off its generation facilities (except for hydro and nuclear facilities).

Generation could now be provided by merchant generators, independent power producers, out-of-state utilities or aggregators (brokers of wholesale generation). Generation greater than 50 MW of capacity is still licensed by the California Energy Commission, but pricing of wholesale power is now monitored by the Federation Energy Regulatory Commission.

Reliability is no longer the major criterion for the state's

electric system, and even the jurisdiction of the CPUC with regard to pricing is limited. Transmission became the responsibility of a new not-for-profit, quasi-governmental organization known as the California Independent System Operator (CAISO). CAISO has the competency and responsibility to measure congestion along the transmission lines, but there is some contention among the Energy Commission, CAISO and the Public Utilities Commission over the definition of need for new transmission lines, and whose responsibility it is to finance and build them.

The distribution system has remained the responsibility of the utility, and regulatory oversight has stayed with the

California Public Utilities Commission. Part of the work of the distribution system is to reduce high-voltage electricity to a voltage-safe for use in your home. This is usually done first at a distribution substation in your general area, then at a pole-mounted or perhaps underground transformer very near your home.

Today, generation is owned by a variety of providers but not typically by the distribution utility. Power flows over the transmission grid operated by CAISO. It is delivered to the distribution system operated by your local utility, which delivers it to your home.

With the passage of the deregulation legislation, reliability and the utility's obliga-

tion to serve gave way to power shortages and spiking prices.

As the policy makers and regulators struggle to find a new model which will provide competition and choice and thus lower prices without sacrificing reliability, the League must understand these key elements, their interrelationships, and the policies and their impacts on the electric system.

Resources for your use in learning more

www.ferc.gov – The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

www.cpuc.ca.gov – The Calif. Public Utilities Commission

www.energy.ca.gov – The Calif. Energy Commission

Calendar of events

All members and the public invited

- **Tuesday, Nov. 8** - ELECTION DAY! VOTE!
- **Wednesday, Nov. 16, 7 - 9:30 p.m.** - Part Two of "Issues and Challenges at Alameda Point" hosted by LWVA and the Alameda Ministerial Association, Christ Episcopal Church, Santa Clara and Grand. (See page 2 story)
- **Thursday, Nov 17, 7 - 9 p.m.** - Board Meeting. Alameda Hospital, conference room C, 2070 Clinton Ave., Alameda
- **First or second week of December** - Annual Holiday Party. Details to come via email, and on our website www.alameda.ca.lwvnet.org

Please consider making a donation of \$5 or more to our Education Fund, the lifeblood of our public outreach activities. No amount is too small. Last year we had no donations, so we are trying to increase awareness this year. Your donations are tax deductible.

Mail your check to:
League of Women Voters of Alameda,
P.O. Box 1645, Alameda, CA 94501.

Include your name, address, phone, and email and the amount you've enclosed.

Thank you!

The League of Women Voters – a non-partisan political organization – encourages informed and active participation of citizens 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.

With membership comes the opportunity to work with well-informed, grassroots activists on a broad range of public policy concerns. Learn valuable, transferable skills, including how to organize and run productive meetings, write more effectively, speak in public, organize and run effective campaigns, conduct research studies, and coordinate general civic leadership training. The League invites your comments, letters and articles. They may be sent, faxed or e-mailed to the LWVA.

Join or Renew

Cut out, fill in and mail this coupon with your check to: League of Women Voters of Alameda, P.O. Box 1645, Alameda, CA 94501.

Dues: \$53 for a single membership; \$20 for an additional membership at the same address. Students pay \$25, and full and partial scholarships are available. Questions? Contact Jean Fong at jsfong1@comcast.net.

Make checks payable to League of Women Voters of Alameda.

Joining at the local level makes you a member at all levels: Local, county, Bay Area, state and national.

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