



# VOTER

Fall 2005

Editor: Kate Quick

## California Policy Institute Releases Initiative Analysis

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The California Policy Institute of the University of Southern California (CPI of USC) recently released the results of its study of Propositions 73, 74, and 77 slated for the November ballot. Working through a grant from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, CPI identified the long-term fiscal, economic, and social impacts of these initiatives. A CPI analysis of Proposition 76 is also planned.

Proposition 73, "Waiting Period and Parental Notification before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy," seeks to mandate parental involvement in the pregnancy decisions of minors. The initiative would require that physicians defer abortions on minors

until 48 hours after parental notification, except in a medical emergency or if a court waived notification based on evidence of a minor's maturity or best interests. In addition, a parent could waive the waiting period. CPI found that most minors do involve parents in pregnancy decisions, and those who don't tend to be older and employed. Of the states that have adopted similar laws, CPI found little net change in birth rate among minors. They predict that Proposition 73 would not result in major changes in the number of abortions performed in California.

The cost of implementing Proposition 73 could amount to several million dollars annually for physicians and the state for reporting and tracking data on the numbers of abortions provided to minors. Potential savings resulting from a decrease in abortions could

be offset by increased costs for health and social services to teenage mothers and children.

Proposition 74, "Public School Teachers. Waiting Period for Permanent Status. Dismissal," seeks to improve K-12 education by increasing from two to five years the period before permanent status, or tenure, is granted to new teachers. CPI found that the relationship between highly-qualified teachers and high-achieving students is supported by considerable research, but they found no data indicating the optimal length of length of time to obtain tenure. Nationwide, the probationary period for new teachers ranges from one to five years. The majority of states have adopted a three-year probationary period.

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## LWVC Offers Free Websites to Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi Leagues

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When Ann Lundelius Pettit hit the send button to request that New Orleans' League Easy Web site be made live, she had no idea that Hurricane Katrina would intensify to Category 5 force and make landfall only six days later.

In reaction to this national disaster, individuals, organizations and countries throughout the world have pitched in with innumerable forms of help. The League of Women Voters of California has joined in to respond to this catastrophe

"Our heart goes out to the people of New Orleans and the hard hit states of Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. It will be a long road of recovery to rebuild so many of our national treasures and valued communities. The LWVC wanted to join with so many of our members that have contributed and do what we could to help," said Jacqueline Jacobberger, President.

The LWVC Board voted unanimously at its September 18 meeting to offer free Web sites for a period of two years to any League in these hard-hit states that wants to use League Easy Web.

Jacobberger expressed best wishes to the

League presidents of the three states and relayed an invitation to local Leagues to use League Easy Web at no cost.

For more information, please contact support@lwvnet.org.

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## A Message from the President

In her address at the close of the League's national convention in 1923, President Maud Wood Park challenged the delegates "to set to work to restore democracy and to rouse the public to an understanding of the simple duty of every qualified voter to the community, the state, and the nation." Only 49 percent of the eligible voters had cast their ballots in the 1920 presidential election, and the percentages were even lower in 1922's gubernatorial elections. She noted that participation was often much lower in local elections.

Park termed it a "dangerous condition" and called every member of the League to "a crusade" to "sell" the idea of voting to every possible voter with the "...best information which can be obtained..." In her words, "If we are to be really a democracy, it is high time we were about it!"

Today, members of the League of Women Voters are still trying to meet that challenge. There are eight initiatives on the November ballot which, if passed, will affect the operations of our state government and the lives of Californians. In addition, there are elections for city councils, school boards, and a wide variety of special districts as well as local measures.

League members throughout the state are providing the "best information" to voters through traditional pros and cons presentations, candidate forums, and written materials such as the *Pros & Cons*. However, they know that, in order to increase turnout, it is important to use new ways to communicate, and League information is in sim-

pler language, languages other than English, and uses new technology. I believe that our founding members would be amazed and enthusiastic if they could see the opportunities we have now for engaging potential voters through radio and television, the Internet, Podcasts, and other electronic means.

A League poster in a photograph from the 1920s says, "Vote as you please, but VOTE."

However, the League, from its beginnings, has informed voters through its advocacy as well as its voters service, and our recommendations on the ballot initiatives are in this issue of the VOTER. The state board studied each measure and reached its decisions based on positions reached through study and consensus by members.

Providing information about the League's stands is central to our mission and the League can provide a reasoned argument against the negative advertising that bombards and turns off so many of our citizens. Many voters seek the League's recommendations on ballot measures before making their choices, even though they may disagree.

There are predictions that the November election will have a low turnout because the issues are confusing or uninteresting to voters. My challenge to League members across the state is to do what you can to take up Maud Wood Park's challenge to convince our citizens that participation by voting is central to a healthy democracy.

*Jackie Jacobberger*

### Continued from page 1

Proposition 74 also would modify state policy to enable school districts to dismiss tenured teachers after two consecutive unsatisfactory evaluations. Although evaluation standards are defined in the state education code, CPI notes that specific teacher evaluation processes are established at the local level. California, like most states, has collected no data on the training of evaluators, the efficacy of the systems used to assess teacher performance, or the number of teachers dismissed or resigning due to unsatisfactory performance evaluations.

CPI predicts a shortfall between teacher supply and demand in the next decade, but given the scarcity of data on length of tenure and dismissal policies, could not comment on the long-term impacts of Proposition 74 on teacher supply or education quality.

Proposition 77, "Redistricting," addresses the process by which state Senate, Assembly, Congressional, and Board of Equalization districts are drawn, to shift redistricting responsibility from the legislature to a new commission of retired judges. CPI's findings underscore the trade-offs implicit in any effort to design an effective and fair redistricting process. CPI examined 20 states where redistricting is undertaken by elected or appointed com-

missions. They found that protection of incumbents and bipartisan gerrymandering occurs even in states where commissions determine redistricting. Nonetheless, commissions are more likely to create competitive districts than legislatures. CPI noted that unlike other states, California, under Proposition 77, would form a commission of retired judges selected randomly by lot, rather than appointment. Voters ultimately would approve or reject proposed redistricting plans.

CPI cautions that under Proposition 77 some districts may become more competitive, but many may not change, owing to geographical boundaries, communities of interest, and the fact that some regions tend to have higher numbers of voters from one party or another. CPI predicts other potential effects if Proposition 77 results in a greater number of competitive districts. For example, candidates may focus on local rather than state issues to appeal to voters, legislators may become more moderate to appeal to a broader constituency, and fewer candidates would reflect very liberal or conservative views.

The cost of the redistricting process under Proposition 77 would be reduced from the cur-

rent \$3 million to \$1.5 million every ten years, assuming voters approve the plan submitted by the commission. If voters reject the plan, costs would be incurred as new commissions would then repeat the redistricting process until a plan is identified that is approved by voters.

The USC California Policy Institute provides policymakers and the public with unbiased, research-based nonpartisan analysis and information. The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund has partnered with CPI to deliver this information to a wide audience. Summaries of CPI's analysis of the propositions reported here as well as the full analyses, will be available at

[www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org) and [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org).

CPI researchers will discuss the results of their work in a free interactive Web-based presentation in early October. Robbie Davis, LWVCEF Chair, will moderate the event. Copies of the research are available to League members at no charge. To request a copy, or for more information, contact Jill Kaiser Newcom, LWVC Executive Director, at 916-442-7215.

## How the LWVC Makes Decisions on Initiatives

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### 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 posi-

tions and 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.

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## Redistricting—How the LWVC Decided to Oppose Proposition 77

**Chris Carson**

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Since early this year, the LWVC, in partnership with other nonpartisan citizens groups, lobbied the legislature and governor in an attempt to achieve substantive redistricting reform. Citizens in our state were disturbed by the redistricting plan drawn up by the legislature in 2001, viewing it as a bipartisan gerrymander designed to protect incumbents of both parties. The League and its partners spent countless hours trying to educate the legislature and governor as well as the public about the components of a good redistricting process and worked with legislators in both parties to create and advance a good redistricting bill. Although there were many good faith efforts on all sides and intense last-minute attempts to achieve a bill, we were unable to achieve our goal.

The LWVC board, after thoughtful discussion, decided to oppose Proposition 77, an initiative to amend the state constitution. Reluctantly, we concluded that the measure's provisions did not meet the League's criteria for substantive, effective redistricting reform.

- Our position calls for an independent panel with membership that reflects the diversity in California. Choosing three retired judges, who will not be representative of the varied population, political thought, and geography of California, and may or may not be independent, does not fit this criterion.
- Our position clearly favors district lines that respect communities that share common cultural, demographic or economic interests.

Proposition 77 does not mention communities of interest. It is too easy to draw lines that respect political boundaries but dilute the voting power of racial, ethnic or linguistic communities that often cross city or county boundaries. Unless this criterion is written into law, there is real potential for problems.

- The measure mandates a mid-decade redistricting. This would unfairly use data that is at least six years old and does not factor in the 3 million more people in the state since the last census.
- The requirement for a vote of the people to approve any redistricting plan at the same election in which it is being used is an invitation to chaos. If a plan fails, another plan must be created and another election held. The cycle could repeat until exhaustion or boredom sets in and a plan is finally approved.

Proposition 77 is bad policy any way you look at it. The League is **the** good government organization in California. This measure is not good government, and cannot be supported by the League. But we have not given hope. In the coming year we, with our partners, will continue the fight for a redistricting plan that will work.

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### ∞ IN MEMORIAM ∞

Mary Lynne Ishikawa, a past State Board Social Policy Director, passed away on September 10. Mary Lynne was a woman of great strength and dignity, and will be greatly missed by the League.

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## Health Care Pilot Program Progressing

**Joan Lancaster**

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The last issue of the LWVC VOTER reported on the Health Care Pilot Program which was in its beginning phase. Local Leagues were encouraged to participate and we congratulate the Claremont, Oakland, San Luis Obispo County, Southwest Santa Clara Valley and Torrance Leagues for making the commitment. Other Leagues are standing by.

The health care committee has prepared Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and other materials for speakers to use in making presentations to the public. The purpose of the project is to educate local League members about issues related to single payer health care so they can become effective advocates, and then to develop a

speaker's bureau and an education outreach program. The project will seek to obtain widespread support for single payer legislation and/or initiatives supported by the League.

During the next phase sample speeches and fact sheets for specific communities will be developed. Excerpts from SB 840, the single payer health care plan by Senator Sheila Kuehl, will be included in these fact sheets. The bill is supported by the LWVC in its present form; it is likely to be amended in the second year of the 2005-2007 legislative session to include a financing system. The LWVC will keep members informed about the bill as it goes through the legislative process.

Other Leagues that have an interest in this pilot program on health care are welcome to contact Barbara Storey, Program Director (bs\_lwv004@cox.net).

## New Developments Add To Traditional Voter Education Tools

**Robbie Davis**

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The LWVC Education Fund is always the center of activity for statewide elections, and November 2005 is no exception. The Ed Fund is involved in all the usual projects—voter registration; *Pros & Cons* and the *In Depth* guide for pro and con speakers; the *Easy Voter Guide*; and Smart Voter. And, we now have a new program.

The Hewlett Foundation is funding in-depth research on Propositions 73, 74, 76, and 77 by USC's California Policy Institute that will result in a 16 to 20 page informational document and a two-page "summary points" sheet for each. Some of the issues to be addressed in this research are the history of the measure, the results of similar legislation in other states, and projections of presumed impact.

When trying to determine how best to disseminate this information, the Foundation turned to the Ed Fund. We have committed to making the public aware of this nonpartisan analysis in a variety of ways: putting links to the two-page summary points document and the longer version on the LWVC Web site, [www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org), and on Smart Voter, [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org); using the in-

formation for training local League speakers; producing a series of brief video clips that can be aired on cable channels or streamed on Smart Voter; and hosting two interactive "Webinars" where any League member can participate to learn more about these four measures. It's an exciting opportunity for us

to partner with Hewlett and with a prestigious "think tank."

As always, it is not the LWVC Ed Fund that ultimately makes our voter education activities successful. It takes the efforts of thousands of League members across the state to distribute the *Pros & Cons* and *Easy Voter Guide*, to preside over pro and con presen-

tations and candidate forums, and to urge candidates to take advantage of Smart Voter. We have all had plenty of practice—this will be our fifth statewide election in three years—and there is no doubt that League members will once again rise to the occasion.

### How Is Homeland Security Working at Home?

**Chris Carson**

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The LWVUS has begun a project relating to disaster response, one that is particularly timely given the recent devastation created by hurricane Katrina and the apparent uncertainty about what we have been able to accomplish in dealing with man-made and natural disasters since 9/11. This project is part of the League's engagement in civil liberty and security issues, and is based on our commitment to the notion that democratic government depends on the informed and active participation of its citizens at all levels of government, and to 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. The responses are then presented to their communities through various means: public forums with security leaders, reports, articles in the VOTER, op-eds, letters to the editor, and/or local talk shows.

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 diverse parts 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 survey questionnaire are now posted on the LWVUS Web site, [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). For further help, contact our Civil Liberties coordinators, Carole Wagner Vallianos and Lois Chaney, or LWVUS board member Xandra Kayden.

## VOTE WITH THE LEAGUE ON NOVEMBER 8TH

### ⚡ **PROP 73 Waiting Period and Parental Notification before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy.** **OPPOSE**

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.

### ⚡ **PROP 74 Public School Teachers. Waiting Period for Permanent Status. Dismissal.** **OPPOSE**

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.

### ⚡ **PROP 75 Public Employee Union Dues. Restrictions on Political Contributions. Employee Consent Requirement.** **OPPOSE**

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.

### ⚡ **PROP 76 State Spending and School Funding Limits.** **OPPOSE**

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 billion 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 reform!

### ⚡ **PROP 77 Redistricting.** **OPPOSE**

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

### ⚡ **PROP 78 Discounts on Prescription Drugs.** **OPPOSE**

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.

### ⬆️ **PROP 79 Prescription Drug Discounts. State-Negotiated Rebates.** **SUPPORT**

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.

### California VOTER

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### About the League:

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

The League has two separate and distinct roles. The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund, which conducts our voters service and citizen education activities, is a 501(c)(3) corporation, a nonprofit educational organization. The League of Women Voters of California, a membership organization, conducts action and advocacy and is a nonprofit 501(c)(4) corporation.

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. The League provides members with opportunities to 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, articles, and book reviews. They may be sent, faxed or e-mailed to the LWVC.

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## Building Your League Membership

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Why do some Leagues grow while others languish or lose members? The LWVUS conducted a survey of Leagues that had a growth in membership in at least five of the last six years, and shared this information with delegates to the June 2005 LWVUS Council. The LWVUS queried 46 Leagues from 22 states with a good mix of sizes; the smallest League surveyed had 29 members while the largest had 688. Most Leagues were in the 50- to 80-member range. The group had a broad representation of states and regions throughout the country. The survey found there were common practices and components among these growing Leagues; these Leagues had activities and attitudes that they felt were important for growth. Here is what the LWVUS found:

- The growing League has interesting program (issues important to the community-local, state, national).
- The growing League understands and builds on the League's trusted reputation
- The growing League has a high degree of visibility and is externally oriented:
  - 85 percent of the Leagues have local press coverage due to relationships with media
  - 80 percent of the Leagues regularly submit letters to the editor
  - they use other visibility opportunities such as cable, public access and radio.
- The growing League sets yearly membership plans with goals that make it stretch; these Leagues had 20 percent to 50 percent growth goals. Some of them run membership campaigns where the organization is committed to bring in new members during a given period of time.
- The whole League is involved in membership recruitment and member retention. They all ASK people to JOIN.
- New member welcome sessions make the new person feel a part of the group. To ensure retention, members are contacted by mail for the annual membership renewal and then contacted again by phone.
- Membership is not just the responsibility of the membership chair, nor is it just the responsibility of the board. Most people join the League because they have been asked by someone they know and respect. That person could be and should be you.

## LWVUS Asks for Accurate E-mail Addresses for League Members

**Kate Quick,**

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The LWVUS Web site has been a work in progress for some time now. A feature of the site is new online security. While most of the information on the newly constructed site will be available to all, there is information that is limited to members. This is particularly true of its member-donor database. To keep that and

other internal League documents secure and accessible only to members, experts in the field were consulted to develop a login procedure for the member's section.

Key to this procedure is the use of the member's own e-mail address as a personal identifier. Therefore, all local Leagues have been asked to forward the e-mail addresses of their members to the LWVUS so they will be able to get access.

## Smart Voter on the Airwaves

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The LWV California Education Fund has entered into an exciting new partnership with Infinity/CBS News Stations for the coming election season.

This means that the League's award-winning on-line voter service tool ([www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org)) will receive numerous referrals during prime commute times.

Radio stations in the San Francisco Bay Area, KCBS-AM ALLNEWS 740; Fresno, KMJ-AM 580; and the greater Los Angeles Area, KNX-AM 1070 and KFWB-AM 980 will participate

With over five million weekly listeners tuning in to these stations, a higher level of voters service will become available to drivers trapped in traffic as well as the multitudes who listen in from home, work, or shopping venues.

Smart Voter will be mentioned in all on-air promotional announcements directing listeners to [www.kcbs.com](http://www.kcbs.com) This newly designed Web site will feature an array of multi-media voter information resources including a prominently featured Smart Voter personal ballot look-up. Smart Voter's responsibility is simply to keep providing the detailed Web site content for which it has been recognized since 1997.

Users who enter Smart Voter through the interactive KCBS interface will view Smart Voter pages inside a frame developed by KCBS with approval of the LWVCEF and the statewide Smart Voter team. New elements include a search engine, a polling component, and an audio archive.

Listen in!

### Become a State-of-the-Art Citizen SmartVoter.org

- ✓ Your complete personalized ballot—anytime you want it
- ✓ Your polling place
- ✓ Profiles of candidates in your community
- ✓ Ballot measures
- ✓ Election results

[www.SmartVoter.org](http://www.SmartVoter.org)

file page, as well as set their own password.

Local Leagues are encouraged to gather and submit as many e-mail addresses for their members as possible, so no one will be left out of the member's only Web site.

**Important to this gathering of addresses is the policy of the LWVUS that these addresses will NEVER be sold or traded, so League members can be assured that the information will not be used for other than the purpose of setting up a log-in.**

The first time a member logs into the new Web site, the member will go through an initial log in process to set up their password. If the e-mail address is in the LWVUS database, the process will generate a security key that will be e-mailed back to the member. If the e-mail address is not in the database, there will be a delay in the member's ability to log in. Once the member does receive a security code, they can log in and access their own pro-

## League Utilizes the Easy Voter Guide as an Important Tool for Voter Education

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Another election, another set of often confusing ballot measures to wade through. The issues don't get any easier, but a tool exists that can help individuals stay afloat and lead to making informed decisions.

The *Easy Voter Guide* (EVG) provides simplified, nonpartisan information about statewide candidates and ballot measures and is found in several languages—English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. A large-print version is also available for download at [www.easylvoter.org](http://www.easylvoter.org).

How does the League get the EVG into the hands of a very diverse audience consisting of those with a limited education, low in-

come, young adults, new citizens, and people with disabilities?

Since the EVG is geared to such a diverse audience in California, some local Leagues decide to direct their outreach efforts to a single group, such as new citizens. Using the EVG as the basis for offering service, the local League contacts targeted groups to let them know about the direct presentations given through its Speakers Bureau.

These local Leagues learn as much as they can about the targeted organization, assessing the needs of the group. The Easy Voter Guide Web site tells us that new voters prefer to learn from their peers; so local Leagues offer to conduct 'train the trainers' presentations. They take members from the targeted group through their Speakers Bureau training and those trained are able to inform their

members about why they should learn about the ballot measures and vote. Thus, League members deliver the information, in partnership with those trained.

A common reason for not voting is a lack of understanding of the issues on the ballot, especially if the issues are too many and too complex. Using the EVG, either in direct presentations or in training sessions, encourages voters to learn about the measures that matter in their lives. It is important that new voters understand that voting for every single measure is not required, but the act of voting is critical to their exercise of full citizenship.

The Easy Voter Guide Project's web site contains many ways to engage voters in getting involved in the voting process. Visit <http://www.easylvoter.org/california/resources/index.html> for more information.

## The Environment: Friend or Foe?

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Meteorological warning systems and advances in structural engineering cannot eliminate the danger to people and property when natural and man-made disasters occur. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Americans in every state are asking hard questions about the ability to respond to and to recover from catastrophic events. Louisiana's gulf lands radically changed after the first explorers and seafarers paddled small boats ashore to establish trading posts. A marshland plagued with mosquitoes was eventually drained and altered to make way for greater commerce. Yet, in less than three hours, widespread destruction laid waste to more than 300 years of modern historical, environmental, economic and human resources for an important U.S. community.

We in California see striking similarities between the Louisiana delta region and our own, and we ask what we can do to prevent or lessen the outcome should the unthinkable happen here. In terms of water safety and supply, we must immediately attend to our dam and levee infrastructure. We

must immediately revisit the zoning and statewide building practices that allow construction in low-lying or flood-prone zones. Ultimately we need to heed the possible consequences of monstrous grading or mining practices or other land changes that affect groundwater basins\*, drought and

flood cycles, and potable water storage and delivery systems.

Safeguarding energy production and delivery systems is another concern. Members will find the recently released **Energy Update Study Kit** a valuable source of information. The time to understand state policy, agencies, technologies, the costs of energy and the nexus between energy and

water in California is now. If your League has not yet developed a local study committee, please contact your League president and volunteer to help.

\* While grading for a residential development, a builder in northern San Diego County pierced the cap of a groundwater table. Thus exposed, the water now forms a small lake with no outlet.

## USC Researchers Present Free, Web-based Conference



Public policy researchers from the USC California Policy Institute (CPI) will present "Statewide Special Election: What We Know" during a free, Web-based conference on Wednesday, October 19, at 7:00 p.m.

Members of the League are invited to participate in this live interactive session from the comfort of their own homes or offices.

"Statewide Special Election: What We Know" will feature CPI research on Propositions 73, 74, 76 and 77. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions of the researchers, and LWVC Education Fund Chair Robbie Davis will moderate the discussion.

Registration for this free session is limited to fifty League members. To register, send an e-mail to Jill Kaiser Newcom, LWVC Executive Director, at [jnewcom@lwvc.org](mailto:jnewcom@lwvc.org). She will reply with a confirmation and step-by-step instructions for logging into the Web-based conference.

All registrants will receive a complimentary copy of the CPI research after the presentation. "Statewide Special Election: What We Know" is made possible through a grant from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

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League of Women Voters of California Education Fund

[www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org)



Encouraging the informed participation of citizens in government and influencing public policy since 1920.

## Not a Member of the League of Women Voters? **Please Join!**

The League of Women Voters of California is strictly nonpartisan; we never support or oppose any political party or candidate. At the same time, we are wholeheartedly political, working to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to citizens of voting age. Others are invited to join as associate members.

- Yes, I want to join. Enclosed is my check for \$50.00 payable to the League of Women Voters of California.
- Please send me more information about the League and its publications.
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### Mail to: LWVC

801 12th St., Suite 220, Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 442-7215; (916) 442-7362, Fax  
(888) 870-VOTE, Toll free  
**www.lwvc.org**; lwvc@lwvc.org

Dues and gifts to the League of Women Voters of California are not tax deductible. Gifts to the LWVC Education Fund are tax deductible.

**Election Day is Tuesday, November 8, 2005.**

**Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.**

**October 24 is the last day to register to vote for the  
November 8 election.**

### Absentee Ballot

The last day that your county elections official can accept an application by mail for an absentee ballot is November 1. You may apply in person for an absentee ballot at the office of your county elections official through Election Day. Your completed absentee ballot must be in the hands of your county elections official by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, November 8, 2005.

### New Citizen?

If you became a citizen in California after the close of registration on October 24, 2005, you may still register to vote by visiting your county elections office on or between the dates of October 25 and November 1. Bring proof of citizenship with you, and be prepared to declare to the county elections official that you have established residency in California.

### Election Information

If you are a registered voter, you will receive a notice of the election that includes the location of your polling place. The notice will also include a sample ballot, an application for an absentee ballot and information about the ballot measures.



**The League of Women Voters  
of California**

**801 12th Street, Suite 220  
Sacramento, CA 95814**  
(916) 442-7215  
(916) 442-7362, Fax  
(888) 870-VOTE, Toll free  
lwvc@lwvc.org

### Change of Address?

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