

VOTER

League of Women Voters of the Bay Area

October 2009

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Barbara Murray

I hope to see you at our first **meeting of the year on Saturday, October 10th** – the always popular and lively discussion of the proposed Constitutional Amendments. League members, with our inquisitive minds and varied life experiences, always manage to have a good time as we talk about the pros and cons of the amendments. For those of you who like to plan ahead, **our next discussion meeting will be held on November 14**. It will be a concurrence meeting on the state study – *Voting Procedures to Increase Voter Participation in Texas*. Our own Diane Sheridan played a key role in editing the Facts and Issues and producing one-page summaries of each of the study areas. Needless to say, we will have an inside track in understanding the background and issues surrounding this very interesting topic.

Thank you to all of you who have renewed your membership in the League. A double thank you goes to those of you who have made a monetary donation to the League in addition to your membership dues. **Your support of the League in these tough economic times is greatly appreciated!**

Our **Annual Finance** drive has kicked off. Letters to area businesses were mailed in September seeking financial support for the Bay Area League. We have already received a \$500 donation from Houston Products Processing! They are a sustainable, recycling company and a true friend of the League. You can check out their website at <http://www.hpprecycles.com> .

The following article appeared in the LWV-Texas VOTER. I thought it was worth repeating in our VOTER because it covers such an important issue – **League Under Attack!**

League Under Attack

Linda Wassenich,
Public Relations VP, LWV-Texas

Many League members recently received an email from LWVUS President Mary Wilson that the League is under attack.

A new group, called the League of American Voters (LAV), has formed to oppose Health Care Reform. It shares office space with Americans for Tax Reform in Washington, D.C. The group's advisors are Dick Morris, Grover Norquist, and Ed Rollins. The group developed print and video ads to promote their point of view; but at least two networks, ABC and NBC, refused to run them because they were too partisan and made unsubstantiated claims.

LWV is actively supporting health care reform, including the public option that is part of the Obama plan. LWVUS called the video ads misleading and said that the name, League of American Voters, was deceptively similar to the League of Women Voters, noting that it had even caused confusion among LWV members.

Because LAV does not list its address, a letter had to be hand-delivered to LAV. (One has to wonder about LAV's relationship with Americans for Tax Reform.) Bob Adams, head of LAV, responded by sending a lengthy email to LAV donors, blasting LWV and calling for action.

Consequently, LWVUS has been receiving emails and phone calls that are uncivil, even harassing and threatening in nature. In response, LWVUS has increased security in its office and chosen to screen phone calls. There are concerns that local and state Leagues may also be targeted by this group.

The debate over health care reform has generated intense emotional responses from all sides. The issues are complex, and many are having difficulty understanding them. People often fear change; so attempts to scare people with deceptive or misleading ads are particularly reprehensible.

The public trusts LWV for its unbiased, nonpartisan approach to issues. Therefore, when another organization is formed just to attack health care reform and selects a name so similar to the League's name, it would appear to be an attempt to heighten the public's confusion, just when the League is carrying out one of its core functions to educate the public about policy issues.

LAV has forced LWVUS to spend resources to protect its name and to provide security to the office, not to mention taking time away from the League's mission. Just as we wrote to Texas LWV members last month about how much more can be accomplished when all three levels of the League work together, we need to recognize that the attack on LWVUS hurts the League at all levels.

Your state board encourages all local Leagues to continue in nonpartisan voters service and advocacy based on our positions and also to support LWVUS at this time when the League is under attack.

(Read the LWV-Texas VOTER at: www.lwvtx.org)

CALENDAR

October 2009

- 5 Last day to register to vote for November election
- 10 Discussion meeting on Texas constitutional amendments
home of Diane Sheridan, 9:30-11:30 a.m.**
- 19 First day of early voting for November election
- 27 Last day to apply for ballot by mail for November election
- 30 Last day of early voting for November election
- 31 LWV-BA Board meeting, home of Melba Heselmeyer, 9:00 a.m.**
- 31 LWV-BA VOTER deadline**

November 2009

- 3 Uniform Election Day

Proposed Constitutional Amendments

Saturday, October 10

9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

at the home of Diane Sheridan

Saturday morning issue discussions resume **October 10** with our biennial discussion of *proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution*. Members recently received a *Voters Guide* for the amendment election in the mail.

Among the 11 propositions on the November 3 ballot is one transferring the balance of the higher education fund to a new national research university fund. Another refers to protecting the right of the public to access and use of the public beaches bordering the seaward shore of the Gulf of Mexico. A third deals with eminent domain. *Where else but the League will you find lively discussion about the pros and cons of these and 8 other proposed amendments to the oft-revised Texas Constitution?*

If you plan to attend and are willing to read up on one of the amendments and share what you learn, let Diane know.

We gather at 9:30 to welcome new members and chat with old friends. Discussion begins at 10:00 and ends by 11:30 a.m. at the home of LWV-BA Program Chair Diane Sheridan in Taylor Lake Village. Contact Diane for details at 281-326-5253 or DBSheridan@aol.com. *RSVPs are helpful.*

Directions: KirbyWoods is off Kirby Road between NASA Road One and Red Bluff. From NASA One, turn onto Kirby at the Jack in the Box. Pass TLV City Hall and the water tower. Turn right at the KirbyWoods subdivision sign. From Red Bluff, turn south onto Kirby. Turn left at the KirbyWoods subdivision sign. When the short street ends, turn left onto Live Oak; 1107 will be on your left about three-fourths of the way down the block. There is a red fire hydrant and street light by the driveway.

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.