



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF VENTURA COUNTY

VOTER

October, 2015 Volume 58 No.3

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Members and Friends of LWVVC:

It was a pleasure seeing so many of you at our September Membership Meeting in Ojai. Listening to each of you share about yourselves, what you have been up to and about your past experiences was so enlightening. Each time we have an opportunity to learn more about each other and our diverse strengths and personal histories we strengthen our bonds and

commitment to the League and each other. Thanks to all of you who attended as well as the potential new members who came to learn about what we are all about.



In this off-election year we have no candidate forums to run and no Pro and Con meetings to organize so we polled those present at the membership meeting about what they were interested in pursuing during the 2015-16 League year. Though the possibilities are endless and we are few, we narrowed our choices down to studies that are already in the works either at the national or state level, as well as some ongoing interests we have locally including local Housing Authority elections, high school voter registration efforts, a possible fieldtrip for members around the port at Port Hueneme, and a public forum on transportation infrastructure. I am pleased to announce that we had members volunteer and give us input on each of these topics and projects.

The deadlines for the studies will drive our planning for much of the year. In October, I would like to see us meet and answer some consensus questions regarding the Constitutional Amendments Study. We have included the consensus questions in this month's VOTER- a link to the National Study site can be found at the bottom of this issue. We will notify you of the date and time of the Constitutional Amendment meeting as soon as possible. Chris Carson, our State Representative on the National League Board, assures us that the consensus questions are very straight forward and will not require a great deal of study. She strongly encourages us to participate. So keep your eyes open for the notice of time and place, and plan on joining us.

And last, but not least, Board Member Pat Butler has volunteered to take on the job of Membership. Be sure to let her know if you know of anyone who might like to join us. Thank you , Pat!

Yours in League,
Pat Essick - President

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LWVVC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Rather than try to describe what went on at our Annual Membership Meeting in September, we thought we'd let a few photographs tell the story for us. And for those of you who were unable to make it what we will say is you missed an interesting and constructive meeting and an especially good luncheon (it should have been as member's provided some favorite dishes).



HIGHER EDUCATION STUDY

• committee reviewing materials now •

Higher Education Committee Members Takes on Huge Topic

The LWVVC Higher Education Committee is meeting to plan for a February 2016 public forum on Higher Education to discuss the many issues affecting Higher Education in California. Among other things the goal of the Committee is to assist members of the LWVVC to reach consensus on the following issues and present our results to LWVC's Education Committee so that they can establish a position on this important issue.

Some of the topics that we will be discussing include:

- Affordability of Higher Education
- The Need to Update the California Master Plan on Higher Education
- How to make Higher Education More Accessible to all demographic groups

LWVVC's Committee is busy reading materials and discussing how best to present this information to the membership. If you are interested in reading any of the study materials, see the link at the end of the VOTER, there you can have a look at all the material we are reviewing. We look forward to your input. If you have any questions regarding the Higher Ed Committee, please contact Pat Essick or Higher Ed Committee Chair, Beth Cohen at bethlouisecohen@att.net.

Submitted by Beth Cohen, Chair, Higher Education Committee

LWVVC TO RUN ELECTION

• local housing authority requests help •

City of Ventura Housing Authority

In September, LWVVC President Pat Essick was contacted by the staff of this agency about the elections they were preparing for in order to elect four Resident Council Boards. These Boards represent the residents who live in the various public housing residential areas under the agency. Their initial concept was to hold in-person elections at each of their four locations over a two day period. We were daunted by the person power required and began talking to them about doing a mail-in ballot, much like the elections we have done for the Cabrillo Housing Coop.

They realized that a mail-in process would allow more to vote and be a lot cheaper. So at this point, we have agreed to help them. Four of us attended the "Interest Meetings" they are required to hold under HUD regulations. It was a great opportunity for the staff to explain the process and timing of nominations and for us to describe the mail ballot procedures and how the election will be conducted on November 10th. Fortunately, they've decided to have one election site where we will count the ballots for the four separate elections.

Volunteers are needed to help open the ballots and each of the four elections will need two members to tally the votes. We think at this point that 12 volunteers will be needed to help the process move along expeditiously.

Working this sort of election is a benefit for us as we charge \$25 per person per hour, including travel and preparatory time. Please consider volunteering a few hours of your time on November 10th. We will set up between 9:30-10:00 AM and the election meeting will start at 10:00 AM. The location is Westview Community Center at 234 W. Vince St off Ventura Avenue. Contact Pat Essick or Pam Pecarich to volunteer or email us at info@lwvventuracounty.org.

Submitted by Pam Pecarich, Treasurer

AMENDING THE US CONSTITUTION

• us league seeks consensus on constitutional amendment process •

Consensus on Amendment Process Due December 1, 2015

As part of the LWV United States' study on Key Structures of Democracy U.S. Constitutional amendment process, local Leagues are being asked to think about and come to consensus on how and when to amend the U.S. Constitution. Following are the consensus questions including pros and cons provided by LWVUS. To read more about this very important subject, following the links at the end of the VOTER.

Constitutional Amendment Consensus Questions

This study is in three parts. The questions in Part I are to develop guidelines for evaluating constitutional amendment proposals. Part II asks about aspects of an Article V Constitutional Convention that may be important in conducting such a convention. Part III asks two overall balancing questions between process and positions. Consensus is due by December 1, 2015. At our consensus meeting we shall be asked if we "Agree", "Disagree" or have been unable to reach consensus on the following issues.

Part I - Considerations for Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals

1. Which of these should or should not be a consideration in identifying an appropriate and well-crafted amendment?

➔ a) Whether the public policy objective addresses matters of such acute and abiding importance that the fundamental charter of our nation must be changed.

PRO: Amendments are changes to a document that provides stability to our system and should be undertaken to address extreme problems or long-term needs.

CON: When public sentiment is overwhelmingly in favor of change, restraint based on veneration of the document is misplaced.

➔ b) Whether the amendment as written would be effective in achieving its policy objective.

PRO: Amendments that may be unenforceable, miss the objective or have unintended consequences will not work to achieve the policy objective.

CON: It's all right to deliberately put something in the Constitution that will need to be interpreted by courts and legislatures over time.

➔ c) Whether the amendment would either make our political system more democratic or protect individual rights.

PRO: Most amendments have sought to make our system more democratic by extending voting rights, for example, or to protect the rights of minorities from powerful interests.

CON: What has been typical in the past is not a good measure of what's appropriate or necessary today or in the future, especially since there have been relatively few amendments.

➔ d) Whether the policy objective can be achieved by a legislative or political approach that is less difficult than a constitutional amendment.

PRO: Due to the difficulty of amending the Constitution, it is important to consider whether legislation or political action is more likely to succeed than an amendment, in order to achieve the objective and to expend resources wisely.

CON: Important policy objectives should sometimes be pursued through a constitutional amendment even though it may be difficult for it to be enacted and even when other options are available.

➔ e) Whether the public policy objective is more suited to a constitutional and general approach than to a statutory and detailed approach.

PRO: It is important to consider whether the goal can best be achieved by an overall value statement, which will be interpreted by the courts, or with specific statutory detail to resolve important issues and reduce ambiguity.

CON: Getting action on an issue is more important than how a policy objective can best be achieved.

Part II - Aspects of an Article V Constitutional Convention

2. What conditions should or should not be in place for an Article V Constitutional Convention initiated by the states?

➔ a) The Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret.

PRO: The public has a right to know what is being debated and voted on.

CON: The lack of public scrutiny and the ability to negotiate in private may enable delegates to more easily reach agreement.

➔ b) Representation at the Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote.

PRO: The delegates represent citizens and should be distributed by U.S. population.

CON: The U.S. is really a federation of states that must agree by state to any change in the Constitution.

➔ c) State delegates must be elected rather than appointed.

PRO: Delegates represent citizens and therefore need to be elected by them.

CON: Appointment allows for experts who wouldn't run in an election.

➔ d) Voting at the Convention must be by delegate, not by state.

PRO: As at the Articles of Confederation Convention, delegates from one state can have varying views and should be able to express them by individual votes.

CON: Because any amendment proposal will go to the states for ratification, voting by state blocs—however the delegates are originally chosen—reflects the probability of eventual ratification.

➔ e) The Convention must be limited to a specific topic.

PRO: It is important to guard against a “runaway convention”.

CON: The convention alternative was provided for a time when Congress was not listening, so the delegates should not be constrained.

➔ f) Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Convention must be called.

PRO: Counting state requests by topic ensures that there is sufficient interest in a particular subject to call a convention, and enhances citizen interest and participation in the process.

CON: There is no requirement for Congress to count state requests by topic and when enough states are unhappy enough to ask for a convention, it should happen.

➔ g) The validity of state “calls” for an Article V Constitutional Convention must be determined by the most recent action of the state. If a state has enacted a rescission of its call, that rescission should be respected by Congress.

PRO: A state legislature should be free to determine its position in regard to an Article V Constitutional Convention. A rescission should be equally acceptable to Congress as a state’s call for a convention.

CON: A state legislature’s call for a Convention cannot be overturned because the process may never end.

3. Should the League oppose an Article V Constitutional Convention to propose amendments to the U.S. Constitution because of unresolved questions about the powers and processes of such a convention?

PRO: The Constitution is too important to trust an unknown or uncontrollable process. It is unclear whether conditions or safeguards regarding powers and processes for a convention can be successfully put in place.

CON: A convention is intended to be an unrestrained process to propose amendments to the Constitution.

Part III – Balancing Questions

4. Should the League consider supporting a Constitutional amendment that will advance a League position even if:

➔ a) There are significant problems with the actual amendment as proposed?

PRO: Our positions have been studied and agreed to. If other organizations are supporting an amendment in a policy area we also support, we might participate even though it is inconsistent with the evaluation guidelines we support under Part I.

CON: If the League has a consensus on the evaluation guidelines outlined in Part I, then the League should not campaign on an amendment when it is inconsistent with those standards, even though the League supports the policy outcome.

➔ b) It is being put forward by a procedural process the League would otherwise oppose?

PRO: Our positions have been studied and agreed to. If other organizations are supporting an amendment in a policy area we also support, we might participate even though it is inconsistent with the process criteria we support under Part II.

CON: If the League has a consensus on the process criteria outlined in Part II, then the League should not campaign for an amendment when the process being proposed is inconsistent with those standards, even though the League supports the policy outcome.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New Members

Welcome to the following new member of LWVVC!

- Kati Hoffman - Ojai

LWVVC BOARD DOINGS

All members are encouraged to attend monthly LWVVC Board meetings. Come and see what your Board is doing and learn about projects that are in the works.

Notes from September Board Meeting

Topics Covered and “To Do” List:

- Plans were made and logistics clarified for September 26 annual membership meeting in Ojai.
- California State University Channel Islands has requested that we assist again with on-campus voter registration training.
- Housing Authority of City of Ventura Resident Council has requested that LWVVC assist with their elections at the end of October.
- AAUW of Thousand Oaks has requested that we co-sponsor a SOAR panel which would work toward an initiative to reauthorize and extend the various SOAR localities’ sunset dates to a uniform 2050. After some discussion the Board decided to decline unless AAUW provided pros and cons on the subject. The Board was also uncomfortable with a policy that extends for 35 years without a thorough examination.
- Membership - Pat Butler agreed to be our Membership Chair, thank you Pat!
- Voter Registration Efforts - It was reported that nine LWVVC members have signed up to register seniors in various Ventura County high schools. Pat Murray gave an update on LWVVC’s Teen Voter project in Thousand Oaks.
- Suzanne Harvey asked that information including scheduling of all committee meetings be reported to her so she can include ongoing updates in the VOTER, including the calendar. One of the best ways to encourage more members to get actively involved is by informing them about all meetings and projects.
- Board discussed our need for someone to chair the LWVVC Scholarship Fund Committee for the 2016 Oxnard College scholarship process. Oxnard matches whatever scholarship money (up to \$15K) they receive. Carol Lindberg agreed to be the Committee’s liaison to the Board.
- Program – Board discussed potential topics and speakers for future public forums including a public meeting to correspond to LWVVC’s Higher Education study (possibly in February) and a program on transportation infrastructure later this year.

Submitted by Judy Murphy, Secretary

VOLUNTEER A LITTLE TIME

• lwvvc needs you! •

If you have some time and are interested in volunteering a bit of it for the good of the League, following is a list of projects that could use your help. If interested in getting involved, send an email to info@lwvventuracounty.org and let us know, someone will contact you to follow-up.

First and foremost we want to thank those of you who signed up during our September Membership Meeting to work on LWVVC projects - the more the better !!

▶ October 19 - **Port Hueneme High School Senior Voter Registration Helpers Needed.** Location: Port Hueneme High School. Carmen Hurd is organizing a voter registration day at Port Hueneme High School and is looking for quite a few helpers as LWVVC members will be visiting economics and government classes from 7:30 am to 3:00 pm where we will be registering seniors to vote. If you would like to help register new voters please give Carmen a call at 805-889-7282.

▶ November 10th - **Election for the Housing Authority of Ventura.** Four area Resident Council Boards of Directors will be elected that day, starting at 10 am at the Westview Community Center at 234 W. Vince St., Ventura. Volunteers needed to open envelopes, tally votes, etc. Contact Pam at 805-797-4757.

▶ We are searching for a few good people who would be interested in **servicing on a committee that shares the load** of getting the following jobs done:

- Voter Service
- Program
- VOTER Production
- Smart Voter

▶ We would like to hear from League members who would be interested in **working on a committee to plan a public forum** dealing with the topic of infrastructure. If you have not previously worked on a forum, welcome!! Contact us at info@lwvventuracounty.org if you have some time to give.

▶ It is time once again when Leagues around the country are asked to interview local politicians and report back to state League on the results of those interviews. Not to worry, interview questions are provided by LWVC. **We need a chairman ASAP to coordinate our interviews** with Hannah Beth Jackson, Julia Brownley, Jacqui Irwin, and Das Williams (shared with Santa Barbara).

▶ **Articles for the VOTER** from other websites: You don't have to write it but if you are willing to check into state and national news, especially the state League's website, for relevant stories to include in the VOTER, please contact us at info@lwvventuracounty.org. Do it each month or just once. We are always interested in articles about doings in Ventura County so feel free to submit articles you think would be of interest to our members...you are almost certainly correct. VOTER deadline is one week prior to ending of every month.

Working on a project for LWVVC and need some help? Email to sharvey@cal.berkeley.edu and tell us what you need- we'll include it in the next VOTER. Please include dates, location, time of day.

THINGS ARE HAPPENING!

- all league meetings are open to the public •

CALENDAR

2015

- ▶ **Tuesday, November 3** - Higher Education Study Committee Meeting - 3:30 pm at Marie Callendar's in Ventura.
- ▶ **Thursday, November 12** - LWVVC Board Meeting – 11:00 am to 1 pm (please be prompt). Location: Ventura College of Law, Classroom #1 located off the Courtyard, 4475 Market Street, Ventura (parking in the rear.). Open to all members.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

- ▶ **Saturday, December 12** - LWVVC Holiday Luncheon – Noon. Location: Pierpont Inn, 550 Sanjon Rd, Ventura 93001. Luncheon will include choice of 5 entrees. Cost is \$20 including beverage and dessert. RSVP with payment to LWVVC by December 7, or pay \$25 at the door. Checks should be payable to LWVVC.
- ▶ **December** - LWVVC Board will not meet.

2016

- ▶ **January**, date and details TBA - LWVVC Meeting on Money in Politics.
- ▶ **Thursday, January 14** - LWVVC Board Meeting – 11:00 am to 1 pm (please be prompt). Location: Ventura College of Law, Classroom #1 located off the Courtyard, 4475 Market Street, Ventura (parking in the rear.). Open to all members.
- ▶ **Thursday, February 11** - LWVVC Board Meeting – 11:00 am to 1 pm (please be prompt). Location: Ventura College of Law, Classroom #1 located off the Courtyard, 4475 Market Street, Ventura (parking in the rear.). Open to all members.
- ▶ **Wednesday, February 24** - Thousand Oaks area LWVVC members will meet to prepare materials for the annual Teen Voter Outreach Program of the Thousand Oaks Conejo Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) - 9:00 am to Noon. Announcements, voter registration cards, and a congratulatory letter from Thousand Oak's mayor will be sent to graduating high school seniors in the area. Participants will meet at the CVUSD office at 1400 Janss Rd., Thousand Oaks.
- ▶ **Saturday, February 27** - Consensus Meeting on LWVC Higher Education Study. Location and time TBA. Study will be presented and consensus conducted. See link at end of VOTER for study materials.
- ▶ **Thursday, March 10** - LWVVC Board Meeting – 11:00 am to 1 pm (please be prompt). Location: Ventura College of Law, Classroom #1 located off the Courtyard, 4475 Market Street, Ventura (parking in the rear.). Open to all members.
- ▶ **April**, date and details TBA. LWVVC Forum on Transportation Infrastructure.
- ▶ **Thursday, April 14** - LWVVC Board Meeting – 11:00 am to 1 pm (please be prompt). Location: Ventura College of Law, Classroom #1 located off the Courtyard, 4475 Market Street, Ventura (parking in the rear.). Open to all members.

▶ **Thursday, May 12 - LWVVC Board Meeting** – 11:00 am to 1 pm (please be prompt). Location: Ventura College of Law, Classroom #1 located off the Courtyard, 4475 Market Street, Ventura (parking in the rear.). Open to all members.

▶ **Thursday, June 9 - LWVVC Board Meeting** – 11:00 am to 1 pm (please be prompt). Location: Ventura College of Law, Classroom #1 located off the Courtyard, 4475 Market Street, Ventura (parking in the rear.). Open to all members.

▶ **June 16 - 19 - LWVUS National Convention**. Location: Washington DC. The 2016 LWVUS Convention will be held June 16-19, 2016 at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, 2660 Woodley Rd NW, Washington, DC , 20008. Additional information can be found by clicking [National Convention](#).

CURRENT LEAGUE STUDIES

- ▶ LWVC study this term is *Public Higher Education: Access and Affordability*- study materials available [here](#). Consensus due April 1, 2016.
- ▶ LWVUS 2014-2016 program on Key Structures of Democracy includes two studies:
1. *U.S. Constitution*: Committee will study process by which the U.S. Constitution can be amended, including the constitutional convention method, and identifying the gaps and challenges in those methods. Consensus due December 1, 2015 - preview questions [here](#).
 2. *Money in Politics*: Committee is updating League's position on campaign finance in order to address the lack of member understanding and agreement as to whether financing a political campaign is protected speech under the First Amendment. Consensus due February 1, 2016.
- Information on LWVUS studies can be found [here](#).

