



April 2008

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Torrance, in both its values and practices, affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism. This means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

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All LWVT members are encouraged to provide relevant articles and calendar events for publication in the *LWVT Voter*. Articles must be nonpartisan and are subject to editing. Submissions are emailed to wuertzvoter@earthlink.net before the first weekend of each month. The editor is not responsible for verifying the accuracy of the information reported.

Editor: LaVonne Wuertz

President's Message

LWVT members will soon be receiving your Annual Meeting Kits – the invitation, agenda and related materials. Our speaker will be Rob Beste, the Torrance Public Works Director, who will talk about his department's future plans. We hope to see most of our members at the meeting.

Before our annual meeting, the LWV California will be holding its Leadership Council in Sacramento. Although only presidents are voting delegates, Leadership Council is for all League leaders – current and emerging. You are encouraged to attend this conference.

When a member joins LWVT, nearly \$50 of the \$60 in dues goes to the state and national level. LWVUS is intending to advocate another \$1.50 raise in its dues at its Annual Convention in June. Your Board does not want to raise our dues even though we cannot operate on \$10/member per year. We are therefore looking at three ways to increase our income: Ask our members for donations to the League to support our efforts; send letters to local businesses asking for sponsorship; and plan at least one fund-raising event. Please consider making a donation. It can be made to LWVT – Education Fund to be tax deductible or to LWVT to go directly into our general fund.

The MGIK membership committee has begun planning for a special event to be held in conjunction with Constitution Day in September.

We'll need members to join in the fun of planning, advertising, decorating and that old favorite – cleaning up. Be on the lookout for more information.

April brings our Candidate Forum for the City of Torrance Council. Members can be a part of this event by contacting Voter Service Director Pat Kromka to offer assistance.

Barbara Barker

K-12 Budget Cuts

By Mark Steffen

Over the last few months, the topic of the State's budget deficit has been a top news item. One area that has received a lot of attention is how budget cuts will affect K-12 education and community colleges. The budget proposes massive cuts across all areas of the budget including Proposition 98. Proposition 98 had already been reduced as a result of declining revenues.

During the current school year, 2007-2008 the legislature passed legislation to enact reductions to the budget of which \$474.4 million would come from Proposition 98 funding for K-12 schools. For 2008-09, the total proposed reduction of \$4.4 billion would largely be as a result of not funding the statutory cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for revenue limits and categorical programs, but the proposed cuts go very deep and wide:

(Continued on page 3)

League of Women Voters of Torrance News

LWVT Supports Measure T on the Torrance Ballot

Measure T will be on the June Ballot in Torrance. It updates the existing UUT ordinance language with no tax or rate increase. Following is the information provided on the City Clerk's website.

Since 1972, the City of Torrance has used its utility users' tax (UUT) on telephone communications to fund essential City services such as police, fire, street repair, parks, libraries, recreation programs and other services that are vital to our quality of life.

Due to changing technology, recent court rulings and new Federal regulations, the City has placed **Measure T** on the June 2008 ballot to update its existing UUT ordinance language. This revised language will ensure that all residents are treated equally regardless of what types of telecommunications services they use. This is **not** a new tax or a rate increase. This simply replaces outdated language in order to protect the revenue generated by the UUT from changes in future rulings or regulations. A significant percentage of taxes paid by Torrance's residents end up going to the State government; however, by law, all revenues collected from the UUT stay in Torrance for the benefit of our local residents.

Measure T will protect \$6-\$8 million in general fund revenues that fund essential public safety and other City services.

Without the renewal of the existing UUT, the City may be forced to make reductions in community programs, or enact increased fees for services to the public.

This measure includes fiscal accountability provisions including:

- Annual independent financial audits the public can review.
- Local control and use of funds.
- Low income seniors and the disabled are exempt from having to pay the utility users' tax.

Remember to vote on June 3, 2008!

Board of Directors 2007-08

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Committees

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Fundraising: Janice Steffen

Tri-League Liaison: Linda Brown

LWVT thanks

Barbara Barker

for her generous donation

and

welcomes new members

Dorothy Stewart

and

Rick Wagner

League of Women Voters of Torrance News (cont'd)



Would you be willing to help the League in its efforts to inform the citizens of voters' rights? We are beginning a fundraising campaign and we could use your help. If you have a business, you can advertise in the *Voter*:

- \$100 contribution, with a mention of your company in the *Voter*
- \$200 contribution, with a mention of your company in all 10 issues
- \$500 contribution, with a business card ad in the *Voter* (please include a business card with your check). All checks should be made out to the League of Women Voters.

Or, if you would like a tax-deductible contribution, you can make your check Payable to the LWV Education Fund.

Please send your contributions to the League of Women Voters at P.O. Box 964, Torrance, CA 90508.

Thank you, in advance for your support of the League and its activities.



K-12 Budget Cuts

(Continued from page 1)

- ✓ \$2.6 billion to revenue limit apportionments
- ✓ \$1.1 billion to categorical programs including Class-Size Reduction, Charter School Block Grant, Instructional Materials, Supplemental Instruction, Transportation, Supplemental School Counselors, and various Career-Technical Education Programs
- ✓ \$630.6 million in state funding for special education, child development programs and child care, Before- and After-School Programs and Child Nutrition programs.
Numbers provided by School Services of America.

These proposed cuts have a direct affect on local schools. In the Torrance Unified School District, budget cuts of \$9.4 million dollars have been made and more are expected when the Governor delivers his May Revise of the budget. These cuts will raise class size, reduce or eliminate many programs, reduce administrative and custodial services, reduce security, and many other programs (www.tusd.org). Other local districts as well as districts across the state are experiencing the same reductions. ##

Health Care Update

By *Barbara Barker*

Congressman John Conyers sent this message to the California Health Care Strategy Summit just before it convened in February:

As California goes, so goes the nation – how often we hear that in Washington. You have led in CAFÉ standards, election protection, environmental protection, and so many other issues. I wanted to thank you and urge you on in your efforts to make sure Senator Sheila Kuehl's SB 840 brings single payer health care to California. It is especially important this year, when the national effort is to make sure HR 676 brings single payer health care to the nation by becoming part of the Democratic party platform. Thank you for never giving up on California, and we stand ready to do what we can to help.

The summit workshops worked out details of the new year's campaign for SB 840. In short, these include building coalitions with additional groups, gaining support of counties, cities and school districts through the adoption of resolutions, working with legislators to insure a 2/3 majority for an override vote if the Governor again vetoes the bill, and increasing media attention to the issue.

We are currently trying to get the word out so that our friends and neighbors watch Frontline on Tuesday, April 15.



League of Women Voters of Torrance News (cont'd)

Immigration Study

LWVUS has undertaken a study of immigration in order to establish a position from which to advocate. Torrance and Beach Cities leagues participated in the study by forming a joint committee to study the issues related to a set of discussion questions formulated by LWVUS. Study materials were provided on the LWVUS website. The questions were published in the October and November *LWVT Voters*. Following their study of the issues, the joint committee then held two open meetings where the questions were discussed and consensus sought. The results for question 1 through 3 were published in the February and March *LWVT Voters*. Following are the results reached [in brackets] at the local meetings for questions 4 through 6.

Question 4a. In order to deal more effectively with unauthorized immigrants, Federal immigration law should include a social security card or other national identification card with secure identifiers for All persons residing in the U.S. [Lower priority]

Even though given high priority below, concerns were expressed about implementation and costs. However, members felt that our borders should be strengthened and quotas revised so that they are flexible enough to meet our needs and priorities—labor, education, family reunification. Adequate staffing is needed to accomplish these goals

Question 4b. Federal immigration law dealing with unauthorized immigrants should be enforced by including:

- i. Physical barriers (such as fences) and surveillance at borders [Lower priority]
- ii. Increased personnel at land, air, sea entry points [Higher priority]
- iii. More effective tracking of persons with non-immigrant visas until they leave the country [High priority]
- iv. Verification documents, such as green cards, work permits with secure identifiers [High Priority]
- v. Improved technology to facilitate employer identification of employee visa status [High priority]
- vi. Improved technology for sharing information among Federal agencies [High priority]
- vii. Program for immigrant workers to go in and out of the U.S. to meet seasonal and sporadic labor needs [High priority]
- viii. Significant fines proportionate to revenue for employers who fail to take adequate steps to verify work authorization of employees [High priority]

Question 5. Federal immigration law should address and balance the long-term Federal financial benefit from immigrants with financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations [Consensus]

Question 6. Federal immigration law should be coordinated with U.S. foreign policy to pro-actively help improve economies, education, and job opportunities and living conditions of nations with large emigrating populations [Consensus]

This concludes the report on the local study results. A press release announcing the LWVUS position appears on page 7.

Mary Lou Busch, Torrance member of the joint committee, reported the results of the meetings.

TORRANCE CANDIDATES FORUM



**Featuring 14 City Council
Candidates -**

4 to be elected in June

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM



**Toyota Meeting Hall
3330 Civic Center Drive
Torrance**

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



Check www.smartvoter.org for
candidate information

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League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County News

Lola Ungar Steps Down As LWV/Los Angeles County President; Nancy Mahr Elected at Convention

The LWV/LAC held its convention on Saturday, March 29, 2008, in Alhambra. It was well attended and well orchestrated. Los Angeles County Chief Executive Officer Bill Fujioka addressed the group with his philosophy of county management. He was the speaker at the LWVT Annual meeting last year.

It was decided that a new study would be done of the Los Angeles County Jail System with a committee to be formed to discuss scope, process and budget. The County League also will be emphasizing education and action on election



procedures, redistricting and single-payer universal health care.

Lola Ungar ended her presidency with well-deserved adulation and Nancy Mahr, from the LWV Palos Verdes

Peninsula League was elected. Kay White will complete her term as LWV/LAC Secretary and Lola Ungar is staying on the Board as a Director.

Storybank—Read All About It

Please go to www.lwv.org, then to the "league stories" on the left hand side. You can read the stories of other League members and there is the option of writing your story on the right hand side of the page. Please enter yours. A copy will be sent back to me and it will be printed in our own *Voter*. By the way, I sent mine in months ago and it does not show, so make yours interesting so it will be chosen and you'll publicize our League.



About the League

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation 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 civic education activities, is a 501(c)(3) corporation, a nonprofit educational organization.

The League of Women Voters of Torrance, 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 on which they have come to consensus. 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.

Barbara Barker

League of Women Voters of California News

Redistricting Reform Needs YOU!

Signatures, signatures, signatures! The effort to gather a million signatures to qualify the California Voters FIRST redistricting reform initiative for the ballot is moving ahead, and paid signature gatherers are “on the street” in full force. But with little more than a month left before petitions will be turned in, every League member’s help is essential. There are two tracks you can follow.

First, watch for your four-signature petition; it’s literally “in the mail” on its way to you. Sign it, ask family members or friends to sign, and return the entire petition to the LWVC office right away. The instructions enclosed with the petition are easy to follow, but important! And be sure to send back the petition, even if only some of the signature spaces are filled.

Then, can you do just a little more? We have standard 10-signature petitions and lots of ideas for easy ways to circulate them in your community. A volunteer coordinator, Nicolas Heidorn, has joined the campaign and will facilitate our work. It’s a great way to meet and work with other people committed to reform. Check with your League president to join in the effort, or contact LWVC Advocacy Assistant [Maggie Young](#) via email or by calling 916-442-7215. You can also volunteer through the campaign Web site, www.CaVotersFIRST.org.

While you’re at the [Web site](#), check out the list of individuals and organizations that endorse California Voters FIRST. Our campaign is co-chaired by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and former State Controller Steve Westly. And the theme of strong bipartisan support was reinforced last week when California Forward, a new reform group chaired by Democrat Leon Panetta and Republican Thomas McKernan, announced its endorsement during its kickoff event in Sacramento.

2008 Election Calendar

Statewide Direct Primary Election (Non-Presidential)

Mon., May 5	First day to apply for absentee voter ballot by mail
Tue., May 13	Last day for state to mail Voter Pamphlet
Tue., May 13	Last day for counties to mail Sample Ballot
Mon., May 19	Last day to register to vote (for June 3)
Tue., May 20	Last day for candidates to file for write-in
Tue., May 27	Last day to apply for absentee voter ballot by mail
Tue., June 3	Election Day. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.



Go to Smart Voter (www.smartvoter.org) to find your polling places and information about the candidates.



Information on this page is from LWVC sources.

League of Women Voters of the United States News

LEAGUE OPPOSES DEPORTATIONS, SUPPORTS EARNED CITIZENSHIP FOR UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANTS *League of Women Voters Announces Its Position on Immigration*

Washington, DC– The League of Women Voters today announced its official position on immigration reform policy. [Press release dated April 2, 2008]

“After a lengthy and comprehensive study of this complex issue by our grassroots members,” said national League president Mary G. Wilson, “the League’s position calls for a path to citizenship for current unauthorized immigrants.”

“As part of overall immigration reform, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria,” Wilson stated. “We oppose deportations of current unauthorized immigrants who have no history of serious criminal activity,” she said.

The full immigration policy approved by the national League’s Board of Directors in March was studied by the organization’s membership for more than eighteen months. The policy achieved member consensus through a survey of the nearly 850 local Leagues.

Other elements of the League’s position include support for increased enforcement personnel at borders, more effective tracking of individuals who enter the U.S., and significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers. Furthermore, the League will champion due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment. The League position sets criteria for legal admission to the U.S.,

including family reunification of spouses or minor children; economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.; political persecution or humanitarian crises; and studying in the U.S.

The League will use this recently adopted position to guide its advocacy work on federal legislation introduced on this very important public policy issue.

[The official position can be viewed on the LWVUS website at www.lwv.org.]



LWV is the organization where your hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to tangible civic improvement.

JOIN THE LEAGUE Yes! I want to make a difference!

I want to make a difference in the decisions that affect my life. I know every new member makes the League more effective in influencing public policy on issues I care about.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip _____

Telephone: (Day) _____

(Evening) _____

Email: _____

Individual \$60

Household \$90

Student \$30

Please make checks payable to: League of Women Voters of Torrance

Mail to: League of Women Voters of Torrance
Post Office Box 964, Torrance, CA 90508

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Keep up to date with important League of Women Voters communications. Check out national, state and county issues on-line at:

National: www.lwv.org

State: ca.lwv.org

County: www.lacilo.ca.lwvnet.org

Torrance: <http://torrance.ca.lwvnet.org>

For protection of privacy, when sending emails that include anyone outside this membership, please address the names on the Blind CC (BCC) line so that the addresses do not show.

Board Meetings are open to all members and held on the first Thursday of each Month except May.

2008 Calendar

Apr. 16, 7-9 pm	Candidates Forum, Torrance City Council. Toyota Meeting Hall, Torrance Civic Center
Apr. 26, 9:30-2:30	County Ballot Briefing for June Primary, East Los Angeles Library
May 1, 7 pm	Board Meeting (Call for location)
May 17-18	LWVC Council, Sacramento
May 31, 8:30-11:30 am	LWVT Annual Meeting, Marie Callender's Restaurant, 21211 Hawthorne Blvd (Torrance Restaurant Row)
June 3	Primary Election for Congressional, State, County Offices, Torrance City Council, Propositions
June 13-17	LWVUS Convention, Portland
June 21, 11-3 pm	Old/New Board Meeting



League of Women Voters of Torrance

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