



# San Diego VOTER

Vol. 72 No. 8

October 2008

## **The Politics of Redistricting: What's at Stake?**

**"Lunch with League": Tuesday, October 28, 2008**

As you are probably aware, Proposition 11, revamping the way the State draws legislative districts, is on the November ballot. It is a confusing measure and one that calls for background and explanation. Dr. Gary Jacobson, Professor of Political Science at UCSD, will provide more information on this proposition and how it will affect the functioning of state government. Because the proposition is strongly supported by LWV (remember we gathered signatures for it last spring?), each of us should be able to talk about it to our friends and neighbors. It will take a lot of explanation before everyone understands it and the issues involved.

As always, the luncheon will start at 11:30 a.m. at Tom Ham's Lighthouse Restaurant on Shelter Island. See the flyer in this *Voter*.

### **Let's Win Redistricting Reform with Proposition 11!**

On November 4, California voters can seize the opportunity to finally ensure their voices are heard and their elected officials more accountable by voting Yes on Proposition 11.

Why it needed? Increasingly, partisan gridlock prevents our state lawmakers from effectively addressing the issues Californians care about most, including the state budget, healthcare reform, education funding, water and the environment, to name a few. Contributing to this ongoing problem is the fact that legislators are allowed to draw their own district lines to guarantee their reelection. As a result, our lawmakers are not accountable to voters. In fact, **even as legislative approval ratings continue to plummet, nearly 99 percent of incumbent legislators are reelected every year.**

Several years ago, the LWV of California drew up criteria for redistricting and until now, they have rejected bills that did not come up to these standards. They include:

- \* Redistricting by a bipartisan commission rather than the legislature
- \* Districts which are substantially equal in population
- \* Districts which are geographically contiguous
- \* Districts that protect the voting strength of a racial or linguistic minority from dilution
- \* Respect for legal boundaries of cities and counties as well as "communities of interest"
- \* Redistricting which is done under specific time lines and with public hearings.

Proposition 11 will end the conflict of interest in our current redistricting system, help put voters back in control and finally make lawmakers accountable to their constituents. The initiative will change the way legislative districts are drawn by creating a 14-member independent redistricting commission that includes five Republicans, five Democrats and four members not affiliated with either major party. The commission will have to draw fair districts that protect minority communities and keep cities and counties intact and will ensure that the redistricting process is transparent and open to public review.

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**Letter from Co-President Norma Damashek**

Election day is breathing down our necks. Only a few more weeks to go before we mail in our ballots or line up at our neighborhood polling place. This year there's a lot at stake and the weight of making the right choices seems heavier than usual.

Most of the time, our personal choice for which candidate we want to put in office is the easy part. League members tend to have strong personal views on political candidates and many of us work hard at influencing political outcomes. We show up at campaign headquarters, paste bumper stickers on our cars, write letters, talk to friends, and make phone calls to get out the vote. And as the finish line approaches we're not too different from the patrons at the Del Mar racetrack, hoping and praying, praying and hoping that our candidate comes in first. League members never give up their personal right to take action or make themselves heard as individuals who care about politics.

The League of Women Voters officially kicks in at another level of politics. We hold fair and open candidates forums. We register voters. We lighten the burden of voters faced with the overabundance of state and local issues on our ballots who have to figure out what the dense pages attached to each ballot proposal actually mean and what we'll end up with if we vote Yes. Or No. On this November's ballot San Diego voters will be faced with 12 state propositions and 5 local propositions. (Perhaps the time has come for the LWV to take a close, critical look at the evolution, value, and shortcomings of the initiative process. Something has gone awry.)

Each political season, League members and innumerable voters reflexively await the League's PROS/CONS analysis of state ballot measures and our Election Extra analysis of local ballot measures for an impartial understanding of complex issues. What makes any analysis of ballot issues so problematic is that politics always involves the process of change and not an absolute/transformational/permanent solution to the human dilemma of how best to define and achieve the collective good. Despite the odds, we're committed to doing what we can in our small corner of the universe to make a responsible contribution.

---Norma Damashek, Co-President

*The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization dedicated to informed and active public participation in government policy and decision-making. The League engages in education and advocacy on behalf of the public interest and welcomes full participation in its activities by all members of the public.*

(continued from page 1)

The League of Women Voters of California has been a key proponent of fair redistricting reform for years and supports Prop. 11 because this initiative meets all of our criteria for effective redistricting. Prop. 11 enjoys broad bipartisan support from around the state, including AARP, Common Cause, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, former state Controller Steve Westly, former Governor Gray Davis, the California Police Chiefs Association, the California Chamber of Commerce, ACLU of Southern California, the Sacramento Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce, and the Orange County Professional Firefighters, among many others.

**The status quo is not working for California.** By supporting Proposition 11, voters will help put the state on the right track by ending the redistricting conflict of interest and making lawmakers more accountable to voters. We hope you will join us in supporting this important measure on November 4. You can visit [www.yesprop11.org](http://www.yesprop11.org) for more information. Contact your League president or [redistricting @lwvc.org](mailto:redistricting@lwvc.org) to get involved!

--- Beryl Flom, VP/Program



## “Storybank”

**Another in our series of League reminiscences that might inspire you and your friends to devote more of your life to the League of Women Voters. This month we hear from Mildred Pilot.**

I joined the Hammond, Indiana, LWV in 1950. Having a deep love of country, the League was my kind of organization—informed participation of citizens in government. I met women interested in their community who became steadfast friends. I never imagined at the time what a profound role the League would play in my life.

I served as president of the Hammond League, president of the Indiana State League, and was a member of the state board for 10 years. I authored several publications including a 48-page guidebook for local programs entitled *How to Choose, Research, Present, Publish, Act*. As chair of the state program, “The Study of the Relationship of Taxes and Schools,” I wrote study kits on state taxes and financing, methods of school financing, and school reorganization covering Indiana and other states. I also had the opportunity to interview political candidates airing on drive-time radio.

The League afforded me many opportunities, not only within the League itself, but also in the community and state. Because of my League position and later because of my experience, I was appointed by several governors to serve on various Indiana state committees and commissions on school finance, reorganization. Eventually I became political editor for a local radio station. My daily program covered national, state, and local issues.

None of this would have happened had I not joined the League. It truly changed my life. Nearly every year, I get together with my wonderful Leaguer friends back in Indiana to catch up, talk politics, and share ideas. One of the first things I did when I moved to San Diego in 1987 was to join my local League.

---Millie Pilot

**Did you enjoy reading Millie's reflections of the importance of the League in her life? I certainly did! What part has the League played in yours? Please share your reflections with us by sending your "Storybank" to the Voter editor at [frose@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:frose@mail.sdsu.edu). We'll be looking for it.**

---Jeanne Brown, VP/Administration

## Membership

Currently the LWVSD has 518 members!

Please welcome these new members.

NAME	ZIP
Dorothy Bearman	92037
Marie-Claire Brien	92109
Jean Bruce	55403
Amna Cornett	92103
Beth Crawford	92122
Alison Cummings	92119
Jeanne M. Davies	82109
Shirley Davis	92103
Murray Galinson	92037
Sharon Gordon	92107
Lucretia "Cree" Groen	92037
Richard Jaffe	92037
David Johns	92115
Hazel Marshall King	92102
Gloria Lantzer	92120
Mary Mandelbaum	92118
Mary McKenzie	92101
Janice R. Nordby	92128
Marcia Reed	92109
Kenneth Sulzer	92117
Rava Villon	92115
Gayle Whitebook	92119

### Change in Unit Meetings

Please note that most October Unit Meetings will take place in the third week of the month instead of the usual second, due to the unusual start of the month. Also note that there are several Location changes.

---Jody Tadder, Unit Coordinator

### Got time?

As you know, volunteer work can take a lot of time. Here's the good news. We aren't asking for your time unless you have it to give.

We do, however, appreciate you as a member. When you have time, we'd like to have you come to a committee meeting or attend one of our many events. You may be pleasantly surprised and decide you'd like to take an active part in the organization. Don't forget--for every activity there are large or small jobs waiting.

If **YOU** could lend us a few hours per month, it would be much appreciated. The following projects are coming up:

✳ Legislative Interviews - In February, we are asked by the LWV of California to interview State legislators with questions provided. The person organizing this little project would schedule the appointments and find a couple of volunteers to go to each interview. They also need to be written up and sent to LWVC. Total time is 5 hours/interview.

✳ Silent Auction (at Holiday Party) - For a couple of months from October to early December, the Auction Committee will be sending out letters to a list of past donors. They will also contact League members to make donations through the Unit Coordinator and the Voter. The Holiday Party is set for December 11th. Items will need to be displayed for the event and a program listing them prepared. Total time about 20 hours, mostly in early December.

✳ Holiday Party Chair - This person and her committee would arrange for the place, the caterer, entertainment, and invitations for the Holiday Party, December 11th. Time involved is about 10 hours.

To get involved, please contact Anne Hoiberg, 619-223-8074, Norma Damashek 858-459-8751, or the League office 858-483-8696.

---Beryl Flom, VP/Program

## October Unit Meetings: PROS and CONS of Local Propositions

Thursday, Oct. 9 9:30 – 11:30 AM	East San Diego <b>(Note Location change.)</b>	College Rolando Library 6600 Montezuma Road San Diego, CA 92115-2828	Dorothy Joy (619) 660- 9265
Friday, Oct. 10 10:30 - 12:00 PM	La Jolla <b>(Note Location change.)</b>	Riford Senior Center 6811 La Jolla Blvd. La Jolla, CA 92037	Sherry Bloom 858-459-7598 619-200-0300 (cell)
Saturday, Oct. 11 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Southeast Unit	Malcolm X Library 5138 Market Street San Diego, CA 92105	Vergie Wright (619) 264-6735
Monday, Oct. 13 9:30 -11:30 AM	Rancho Bernardo and Scripps Ranch	San Diego National Bank Community Rm. 2nd Fl. 16789 Bernardo Ctr. Drive San Diego, CA 92128	Bev Wilson (858) 592-9664 Irene Dunny (858) 204-6766
Monday, Oct. 13 5:30 – 7:30 PM	Mission Valley <b>(Note Location change.)</b>	First United Methodist Church 2111 Camino del Rio South Linder Hall, Room 2 San Diego, CA 92108 (White church on Hw'y 8 across from Mission Valley Center)	Debra Blum (619) 225-0353 Karen Beeson (619) 475-8236
Tuesday, Oct. 14 1:00 – 3:00 PM	University City	North University City Community Library 8820 Judicial Drive San Diego, CA 92122	Joyce Janette (858) 278-7855 Mary McDonald (619) 542-1438
Wednesday, Oct. 15 9:30 – 11:30 AM	North Shores/ Point Loma	LWVSD Office 4901 Morena Blvd. Bldg., 100, Ste. 104 San Diego, CA 92117	Nancy Witt (619) 222-7230 Gloria Christman (858) 273-0590
Wednesday, Oct. 15 1:00 – 3:00 PM	Tierrasanta	Villa Monterey Club House 5275 Rimpark/Apple Tree Dr. San Diego, CA 92124	Carole Porter (858) 279-5474

## LWVSD Calendar — October

October			
10/3	Fri.	10:30 am	County League Board Meeting, LWVSD Office
10/6	Mon.	9:30 am	Program Committee, LWVSD Office
10/7	Tues.	6:00 pm	Board Meeting, LWVSD Office
10/8	Wed.		<i>Yom Kippur begins at sundown</i>
10/10	Thurs.	9:30 am	Unit Council, LWVSD Office
Oct. 13-18			<b>UNITS - PROS and CONS of Local Propositions</b>
10/13	Mon.		<i>Columbus Day</i>
10/15	Wed.	9:30 am	Education Committee Meeting, LWVSD Office
10/20	Mon.	10.00 am	Membership Committee Meeting, LWVSD Office
10/24	Fri.	9:30 am	Public Policy Meeting, LWVSD Office
10/24	Mon.	noon	Program Committee, LWVSD Office
10/28	Tues.	11:30am	<b>Lunch with League: Gary Jacobson, - The Politics of Redistricting - What's at Stake?, Tom Ham's Restaurant, Harbor Island</b>



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### LWVSD Diversity Policy

The LWVSD, in both its values and practices, affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there should be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League of Women Voters on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability. LWVSD recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. LWVSD subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs. LWVSD affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its Board, staff and programs.

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### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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