



One Country, Indivisible: How the Income Gap is Dividing America

“Income inequality,” defined as the uneven distribution of income among a population, is increasing in the United States. But many Americans are not certain what this growing income gap means for our personal and family lives, and for the life and health of the city we call home.

The League of Women Voters will host a luncheon January 28, 2016 at 11:30 am - 1:30 pm at Tom Ham’s Lighthouse Restaurant, 2150 Harbor Island Drive to help explain how the income gap has affected the security and economic stability of all our lives, and how it has contributed to a growing population of low-income and



homeless families.

Speakers who will bring this topic to life include: Bill Oswald, Ph.D., a community development consultant and executive director of Global Action Research Center; Jeeni Criscenzo, founder of Amikas, a non-profit addressing root causes of homelessness among

families, and Joni Halpern, attorney and founder of the Supportive Parents Information Network (SPIN), a former nonprofit organization composed of low-income families working together

to reach self-sufficiency.

Joni Halpern, Program Committee

Ideas for “Fixing” the Money in Politics Problem

Many people believe that there is too much money in politics and political campaigns and that special interests have far too much influence. At both the national level and local level, the League has been studying this issue with respect to both the problem and possible solutions. Following is a restatement of the problem and possible solutions from documents prepared by the national League office.

The Problem

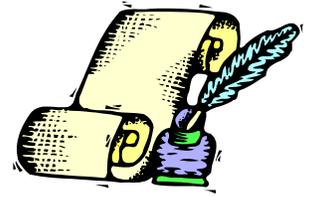
1. The huge amount of money being spent on political campaigns is distorting our democracy.
2. Disclosure requirements are inadequate to identify who is really funding political campaigns.
3. The huge amount being spent on campaigns creates the potential for corruption or at the very least the perception of corruption.
4. Large contributions from donors give these donors special access to elected officials.
5. The Citizens United decision has had the effect of giving corporations and Super PACs (Political Action Committees) much greater influence in the political process.

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**Money in Politics
National Study
Consensus
Meeting
Saturday
January 9
1-3 pm**

**Mission Valley Library
2123 Fenton Pkwy
San Diego CA 92108**

President's Message: Happy New Year 2016!



I am very excited about this month. If you check the calendar in this Voter, you will see that we have two events on January 9, one on January 20, and a luncheon on the 28th.

As with most years, we can expect this upcoming year to be full of wonderful events along with some disasters. Whether man-made or natural, the world is an evolving place and we need to be prepared for, at least, the predicted changes. El Niño should be evident soon and hopefully our City has planned well enough. The League has supported and testified in support of the City's Climate Action Plan at the November 30 City Council Environmental Committee and then again at the December 15 City Council meeting. As I'm sure you know, it passed both of them. We should be proud of the leadership our city and state are taking on this important issue.

Radical groups may grab the headlines, but you can count on the League not to make any "knee-jerk" reactions to their exploits. Relying on our well-researched positions is how we stay one of the most admired organizations in the country. But those positions are the results of our studies, culminating in our local consensus meetings. At the Constitutional Amendment Consensus meeting, we had fewer than 20 members attend. This is grassroots at its best, but if you don't participate, your voice is not heard! Let's change this by having a big crowd at the January 9 "Money in Politics Study" Consensus Meeting. See details about this meeting elsewhere in this Voter. This is a subject too important to leave for a small minority to determine the results. The LWVUS President will use this updated position to testify in Congress about how campaign finance should or can be regulated in relation to First Amendment rights. Make your voice heard and learn more about a very complicated issue. Hope to see you on January 9.

On the morning of January 9, the League will be leading the Kick-off Rally to get Clean Elections for San Diego on the November 2016 ballot. We've been talking about it for years and it is finally happening! See information elsewhere in this Voter for the time and place. After the rally, join me as I go to the MIP Consensus Meeting.

We also know that building communications with other organizations along with maintaining our positions will keep us on a firm footing. One of those organizations is the Women's Museum and the new "Anne Hoi-berg Center for Women." I have always been very impressed with the work that our own Anne has done in International Relations and Women's Studies. That was all highlighted at a wonderful award ceremony I attended in November to open the new center. The women speaking were inspirational and their work was literally awesome. San Diego is becoming a leader in Women's Studies, and the Women's Museum is spotlighting that with each of their wonderful shows. We hope to have a number of our upcoming events at this center and to cosponsor with the Women's Museum on a number of issues.

Join us at these and many other events in 2016!

In League, *Jeanne*

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2016**No Unit Meetings in January****LWVSD Board/Committee Meetings ~ January**

Mon	Jan 4	10 am	Membership Committee, League Office, Ste. 224A, 7710 Balboa Ave, SD 92111
Tues	Jan 5	5:30 pm	LWVSD Board, Board Room, League Office, Ste. 224A, 7710 Balboa Ave, SD 92111
Fri	Jan 8	9:30 am	Public Policy Committee, League Office, Ste. 224A, 7710 Balboa Ave, SD 92111
Sun	Jan 10	1 pm	Voter Service Committee, League Office, Ste. 224A, 7710 Balboa Ave, SD 92111
Mon	Jan 11	1 pm	Charter Review Committee, League Office, Ste. 224A, 7710 Balboa Ave, SD 92111
Fri	Jan 15	10 am	Program Committee, League Office, Ste. 224A, 7710 Balboa Ave, SD 92111
Sat	Jan 16	2 pm	Campus Justice & Sexual Assault Committee, League Office, Ste. 224A
Wed	Jan 20	9:30 am	Education Committee, SD County Office of Ed., 6401 Linda Vista Rd, SD 92111, 307

LWVSD Activities ~ January

Sat	Jan 9	10-11 am	Clean Elections Kick-Off Rally, Mission Bay Visitors Center, p 6 and below
Sat	Jan 9	1-3 pm	National Money In Politics Study Consensus Meeting: Mission Valley Library, 2123 Fenton Pkwy, SD 92108, p 1
Mon	Jan 18	10-11:30	The 2016 All Peoples Celebration on MLK Day, Balboa Activity Center, p 6
Wed	Jan 20	6-8 pm	Sips & Civility Event, Central Library, Shiley Events Suite, 9th floor, flyer p 7
Thurs	Jan 28	11:30 am	Luncheon: The Income Gap in America, Tom Ham's, Harbor Drive, flyer p 9
Fri	Jan 29	9 am-2 pm	Voter Service and Strategy Workshop, County Operations Center, p 8

HAPPY NEW YEAR!**Mark Your Calendars**

	Feb 6	10 am-1 pm	LWVSD Annual Program Planning Meeting, Mission Valley Library, 2123 Fenton Pkwy
	Mar 12		State Higher Education Study Consensus: location, time TBD
	May		Local Campus Justice Study Consensus: date, location, time TBD
	May 21		ILO County Convention

Also see <http://lwvsandiego.org/calendar.html> for updates**Clean Elections Kick-Off Rally****Saturday, January 9, 2016****10 - 11 am****Mission Bay Visitors Center****Mission Bay Drive & Clairemont Drive****(off Interstate 5)****sdcleanelections.org****1st day to sign petitions!**

(continued from page 1)

6. The rules regulating coordination between candidates and Super PAC's are weak and easy to skirt.

Possible Solutions

Legislative Approaches

1. Disclose sources of contributions and expenditures (action by Congress and states). The Supreme Court has upheld disclosure as a means of providing information to the electorate and avoiding corruption or the appearance of corruption. Legislation has been introduced in Congress to expand disclosure. States are introducing and in some instances, passing stronger disclosure laws for political spending.

2. Tighten rules governing coordination in order to limit "independent" spending such as SuperPACs (action by Congress and states). Supreme Court decisions allowing unlimited spending by outside groups are premised on the notion that such spending is truly independent and not coordinated with a candidate in any way. But, in fact, the current rules are quite weak and allow coordination in a number of ways. Through legislation, Congress and the states can tighten these rules. The Federal Election Commission (FEC) could also take action (see Regulatory approaches).

3. Adopt public funding for all candidates (action by Congress and states). Congress could extend public funding to all candidates for all federal offices and more states could adopt public financing. Currently, only candidates for president can receive public funding at the federal level and in the past two presidential elections, the candidates have opted out of the public funding system. Resources to support public financing would need to be established. Some states offer public financing to candidates for some offices, although in some, perhaps most, of these the funding is insufficient and/or unreliable. In all cases, public financing is a voluntary option. The LWVUS, the California League and the San Diego League all support public funding of elections. (Note: in the author's opinion, it is very unlikely that public financing will be expanded at the federal level in the current political environment.)

4. Prohibit members of Congress from fundraising from the interests they most directly

regulate (action by Congress). For example, Congress could prohibit contributions from PACs and lobbyists associated with federal government contractors. It could also close the "revolving door" by significantly extending the existing time limitations on negotiating or accepting a high paying job with a firm with whom they have been involved as a member of Congress.

5. Use or expand state corporate law (action by states). There are efforts to use or expand state corporate laws to regulate the behavior of corporations. One possibility would be to require directors to obtain shareholder approval before making campaign donations and expenditures as well as public disclosure of such spending. Another possibility is to require noninterference in state and local elections as a condition for obtaining a business license in a given state.

6. Change the composition of the Federal Election Commission (action by Congress). Currently the FEC consists of six members, three each from the two major political parties. Consequently, the FEC routinely deadlocks 3-3 on most major votes and little gets done. A way to get around this could be to make the number of commissioners an uneven number with one member being independent or nonpartisan.

Regulatory Approaches

1. Enforce campaign finance laws (action by the Federal Elections Commission and state regulatory agencies). The FEC, established in 1974, could be much more effective in enforcing remaining federal campaign finance laws such as disclosure requirements and coordination rules. Lawsuits are pending to force FEC action in these areas. As stated above, the FEC is currently ineffective and cannot exercise its enforcement powers. And of course, no law is effective unless it can be enforced.

2. Adopt a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rule governing political expenditures (action by the SEC or possibly Congress). In 2011 a group of ten corporate and securities law professors petitioned the SEC to require public companies to disclose their political activities including campaign donations and lobbying efforts. An SEC rule change would not require Congressional approval.

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3. Strengthen and enforce 501(c)4 political activity rules (action by the Internal Revenue Service). To be tax-exempt as a social welfare organization, according to the Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)4, an organization must not be organized for profit and must be operated exclusively to promote social welfare. It is argued that the promotion of social welfare does not include direct or indirect participation or intervention in political campaigns on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. However, under long-standing IRS regulations, a section 501(c)4 social welfare organization is allowed to engage in some political activities as long as that is not its primary activity. There is no need for strict enforcement of the rules applicable to 501(c)4. The IRS could close loopholes that allow unlimited secret spending in elections by 501(c)4 groups while protecting truly non-partisan voter service activity.

Impediments to the Federal Election Commission Operating Effectively

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) was established in 1974 in response to the Watergate crisis to enforce campaign finance laws and regulations. The legislation creating the FEC required the president, speaker of the House and president pro tempore of the Senate to each appoint two of the six voting commissioners. The secretary of the Senate and the clerk of the House were designated ex-officio nonvoting members.

Consequently, in 1976 the Supreme Court in *Buckley v. Valeo* found that the method of appointing FEC commissioners violated the constitutional principle of separation of powers since Congress and not the president appointed four of the six commissioners. However, the method of appointment was changed and the president now appoints all six commissioners who are subject to confirmation by the Senate. However, although the president now appoints all six, the requirement for Senate confirmation has resulted in three commissioners from each of the two major parties, resulting in the aforementioned stalemate on most major decisions.

In addition to the problem of the stalemate of the commissioners, there are other major impediments pre-

venting the FEC from effectively performing its mission. According to a paper written by the national League office, the agency is operating without permanent leadership in key enforcement, communications and financial reporting positions. Among the vacant positions are general counsel, associate general counsel for litigation and associate general counsel for policy.

Second, although the FEC is charged with enforcing complex statutory requirements, it is a relatively small federal agency with an FY15 budget of \$67,500,000. And, during the 2013 governmental shutdown, foreign hackers infiltrated computer systems that contained information on how billions of dollars of campaign funds were spent and raised. Consequently, a priority in its FY16 budget is replacing hardware and servers and developing a plan to store FEC data in a cloud environment and enhance its information technology program.

Despite these impediments and barriers to effective functioning, the FEC did have one significant enforcement action earlier this year when former political consultant Tyler Haber pleaded guilty to illegally coordinating campaign spending between a PAC he had helped create and a Virginia congressional campaign he managed in 2012. He also pleaded guilty to lying to FBI agents investigating the case. This was the first criminal prosecution in the United States based on the coordination of campaign contributions between political committees.

Conclusion

In the current highly partisan political environment at the federal level, some of the approaches outlined above have little chance of being approved. Others may be politically feasible. There may be a greater possibility of enacting reform measures at the state and local levels. We will have to see what the future holds for reforming campaign finance laws and regulations. Additionally, future court decisions will undoubtedly influence reform as well. Finally, the impediments to the effectiveness of the FEC need to be resolved.

Myles Pomeroy

Chair, Public Policy Committee

Do You Know About “Clean Elections”?

As we have been studying Money In Politics, two possible solutions keep coming up... Disclosure Rules and Public Financing. What we know of as “Clean Elections” is a type of public financing; one that requires any candidate who chooses to run “clean” to agree to only spend the money provided by the Clean Election Fund. They may not use their own money or anyone else’s on their campaign. That means that they are only beholden to the citizens.

Many League members are familiar with this concept and may have even been active in trying to get this for San Diego. Well, it is finally here. Many feel it is now



or never. Join us in this LWV supported campaign to create a way for well-qualified citizens to become candidates without having to be wealthy or have wealthy connections. When we think of the criteria for the offices of mayor, city attorney or councilmember, should being a good-fundraiser be one of the most

important? Unfortunately, that is the case today.

To find out more information about this initiative, look at the site sdcleanelections.org. And join us at the kick-off rally on January 9. See details on page 3.

Jeanne Brown, President

The 2016 All Peoples Celebration on MLK Day, Monday, January 18 is being held at the Balboa Activity Center from 10:00-11:30 a.m. John Carlos Frey, a multiple Emmy Award-winning investigative journalist, is the keynote speaker. The LWVSD is trying to put together a table of ten for this breakfast. If you would like to attend, mail a check made out to Alliance San Diego for \$50 and mail it to P.O. Box 12266, San Diego, CA 92112. Please let Beryl Flom know so we get you at our table (edflom@sbcglobal.net or 858-459-4406).

Immigration and Deportation Congressional Interviews

Due to the LWVSD's interest and educational tours of the effects of deportation by ICE, the LWVUS has granted our request to meet with local members of Congress regarding our concerns and informing them about what we have learned and make suggestions to improve the situation. If you would like to help design the interview questions and attend the interviews in the next few months, please contact Beryl Flom, edflom@sbcglobal.net or 858-459-4406. You can also sign up online at www.alliancesd.org/apc2016.

ILO Options Study Committee Report

The ILO Options Study Committee wants to keep the entire League membership in San Diego County informed about our progress. Last month we reported our action plan, which was to collect information from other California Leagues about how they handle regional issues in their service areas. We have now narrowed our search down to the 8 large urban areas of California which have high populations. This includes Orange County, Los Angeles County, Sacramento County, and the Bay area. We have developed a script and will be conducting telephone interviews with knowledgeable Leaguers in these areas. All interviews will be done before January. We will be sharing the results with you soon.

And just a reminder – the ILO County Convention, where we will all vote on our chosen path for regional League involvement, will tentatively be held on Saturday, May 21. Please mark your calendars, confirm the date at we get closer to May, and plan to attend.

Anne Omsted

SIPS AND CIVILITY

“HOW TO BE A SMART VOTER”

WEDNESDAY
JANUARY 20
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

SAN DIEGO CENTRAL LIBRARY
330 PARK BLVD
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

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SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER:
CHRISTINE KEHOE, FORMER CA
STATE SENATOR



PRESENTED BY:

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS SAN DIEGO
INDEPENDENT VOTER PROJECT
SAN DIEGO PUBLIC LIBRARY



Membership

The official membership count is due at the LWVUS office by February 1, so the Membership Committee is making sure the list is accurate and complete. Two people just rejoined, so please be sure any past members you know are on our list and supporting League. The Per Member Payment is figured from this count - the amount the local League sends into state and national Leagues to support them.



We were saddened to hear that an old time Leaguer, **Linn Hairston**, passed away in October after breaking her hip. She was a faithful member of the Tierrasanta Unit and pitched in to help often, particularly in counting ballots for homeowner groups and assembling the Voter. Linn had a heart of gold and will be sorely missed, particularly at her Unit meetings.

New members over the last couple of months are a joy to the League! Please welcome:

Brenda Goldbaum, 92037

Rita Hartman, 92119

Mary Jefferson, 92128

Mattie Lucas, 92107

Phillip Manson, 92106

Suzanne Todd, 91977

Beryl Flom, Membership Chair, edflom@sbcglobal.net, 858-459-4406



To all members of the San Diego and North County San Diego Leagues

You are invited to attend an informational 2016 Voter Service and Strategy presentation with the San Diego County Registrar of Voters Michael Vu, LWVCEF Senior Director of Civic Engagement Dora Rose and LWVC Membership and Technology Manager Sharon Stone. The upcoming 2016 Presidential election promises to be a very busy time for Leagues across the state, so whether you're "getting it in gear" or still trying to figure out "how the pieces align," you don't want to miss this opportunity to hear what's in store for 2016 and how you can be a part of it.

When: Friday, January 29, 2016

9:00 a.m. Coffee and rolls

9:30 – 11:30 a.m. 2016 Plans for Voter Service

Where:

San Diego County Operations Center, Rm. 172,
5560 Overland Avenue, San Diego CA 92123

Schedule of meetings/workshops:

9:30 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. 2016 Voter Service & Strategy Presentation

10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Registrar of Voters Michael Vu

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. Discussion and Questions

11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Lunch Break and Registrar of Voters Tour

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Voter's Edge California Training

Stay and learn how to work on the next generation of Smart Voter. VEC, a joint project with MapLight, is our new one-stop online source for a personalized ballot or information about candidates, ballot measures, and elections.

If you have questions, please contact Martha Cox at mcox@lwvc.org. A registration flyer will be available soon.



Lunch with League

“One Country, Indivisible:

How the Income Gap is Dividing America”

Thursday, January 28

11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Tom Ham’s Lighthouse Restaurant

Cost \$30 by deadline Monday January 25;
\$35 after or at the door



Speakers

Joni Halpern - former lawyer for ACLU and founder of the Supportive Parents Information Network (SPIN), member of LWVSD

Jeeni Criscenzo - founder of Amikas in 2009, which addresses homelessness with affordable, innovative housing solutions for the San Diego Region’s most vulnerable population – women and children

William T Oswald, Ph.D. - independent community development consultant and executive director of Global ARC (Global Action Research Center)



Lunch with League: Homelessness, January 28, 2016

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ E-Mail _____

Guest(s) _____

Amount enclosed (\$30 per person) _____ by Jan. 25. Make checks payable to LWVSD and mail to 7710 Balboa Ave. 224A, San Diego CA 92117, 858-483-8696, or register on our website with Paypal www.lwvsandiego.org Click on ‘donate’ button, ‘amount’ \$30, ‘purpose’ January Luncheon



League of Women Voters of San Diego

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San Diego CA 92111
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 Inside

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- ◆ Membership
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- ◆ ILO Options Committee Report

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.

Join the League

__ Individual Membership \$65 __ Additional Household Memberships \$35 __ Student Membership \$25

Those on limited incomes can pay any amount. Please contact Beryl Flom for more information.

Name(s) _____ Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone(s) _____ Email _____

How did you hear about LWV? _____

Please make your check payable to: League of Women Voters of San Diego

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