

The ILO represents the Leagues of the San Diego City, East San Diego County, North Coast, and Escondido

Winter 2012

PROGRAM PLANNING

A principle of the League of Women Voters is that members, after discussion and consensus, inform LWVUS what they want to study, act upon, and emphasize.

In May, the League of Women Voters of San Diego County will hold its biennial convention at which officers will be elected, the budget approved, and new program adopted. In League parlance, program means the selected governmental issues chosen by the membership at local, state, and national levels for study and action.

Program planning includes a review of current positions and member recommendations to retain, delete, or update these positions. Members will also have the opportunity to recommend a new study or issue for emphasis. Your League's recommendations will be forwarded to the County League Board of Directors. The recommendations will be considered at County Convention 2012.

Currently LWV of San Diego County has positions on eleven issues. You can find the full position statements on our website: <http://sdcilo.ca.lwvnet.org/> Please go to the County League website and review the current positions before your program planning meeting.

- Citizen Participation in County Govern-



ment and San Diego Regional Agencies (1978)

- Structure of Government in San Diego County and Region (1986, 2001, 2002)
- Financing County Government (1992)
- Transportation (1990)
- Regional Planning (1970)
- Parks (1973)
- Land Use (1975)
- Child Advocacy (1980)
- Public Libraries (1984)
- The Role of San Diego County Government in Responding to the Impact of the Seriously Mentally Ill (1997)
- Fire Protection (2008-10)

The County League Board of Directors is suggesting the retention of its current positions.

The County League Board of Directors is not recommending a new study at this time.

The County League Board of Directors proposes an emphasis on observation of the Board of Supervisors and all regional governments during the coming biennium.

— Roni Seay, President, LWVSDC

Which BOS District Are You In?

Copy the following address, paste it in your browser, then type in your address as directed.

<http://www.countynewscenter.com/news/which-district-it>



**League of Women Voters
San Diego County ILO
Board of Directors 7/11 - 6/12**

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Sylvia Hampton
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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



To both new and not-so-new League members, I write to emphasize that you constitute the membership of the LWV of San Diego County (or Inter-League Organization) by virtue of your membership in one of our three local Leagues. I am inviting you now to participate actively in any way you can. County League relies on dedicated volunteers who wish to do their part to promote good government throughout the county. We need more observers of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and other regional governmental bodies. If you have a special interest in social services, public safety, budget issues, or land use planning, to name a few, please let me know. If you have an interest in an area of county government but don't have a schedule which allows attendance at daytime meetings, you can still help by volunteering to monitor and research county issues on the Internet. I'm sure that you, like me, are reminded every day of the crucial importance of the League's capacity to monitor, advocate, and act in county and regional venues, as well as local ones.

A Personal Note: How did I become ILO president? I volunteered and was appointed by the Board of Directors because I believe in the potential of the ILO to promote good government countywide. Our county and regional governmental bodies can be virtually invisible to those who live in cities, but they exert an enormous influence on our quality of life as well as our pocketbooks. Please consider becoming an observer or volunteering in some other way, and I hope you will feel free to contact me at 858-926-8800 or RoSeay@aol.com with your ideas, suggestions, and, best of all, your willingness to volunteer in some capacity.

— Roni Seay, President

To contact ILO call Roni Seay
at 858-926-8800 or RoSeay@aol.com
website address <http://sdcilo.ca.lwvnet.org/>

JUNE PRIMARY: "TOP TWO"

Coverage of the June 5 statewide primary often mentions the new "top two" or "open primary" system that will affect some contests on our ballots. Undoubtedly, this new way of choosing candidates in primary elections will confuse many voters. League members, using voter outreach tools like Smart Voter, candidate forums, ballot measure presentations, and general community outreach, will be counted on to help voters understand the implications of this new law. Be ready!



not the top vote-getter from each political party, will then move on to the general election. Candidates for president and party central committees are not included in the "top two" system.

Formerly, virtually all candidates listed their party affiliations on primary and general election ballots. Now, candidates can choose whether or not to do so. Political parties can no longer formally nominate candidates for offices, so a candidate who finishes in the top two and advances to the general election is not the "official nominee" of any party for the office. And yes, it is possible that the top two finishers in a contest could be from the same political party.

The law applies to congressional and state elective offices (not county or local offices). Formerly, all congressional and state candidates in a primary election of the same political party appeared on a partisan ballot received by and voted on by voters of the same political party. The top vote-getter from each political party then moved on to the general election, and voters could then vote for any candidate, regardless of party affiliation.

The main argument in support of this change is that it might cause voters to elect more moderate members of the California State Legislature. Opponents claim that minor and independent political parties will lose their influence.

Now, congressional and state candidates running in the June primary, regardless of their party affiliation, will appear on a single primary ballot, and voters can vote for any one candidate. The top two vote-getters in each contest,

— Joyce Joseph, County Coordinator,
Smart Voter Project; jajoseph@san.rr.com
<http://www.SmartVoter.org> www.SmartVoter.org

STATE OF THE COUNTY

Chairman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Ron Roberts (District 4), will deliver the annual State of the County address on Wednesday, February 8, 2012.



The State of the County Address covers accomplishments of county government during the past year. Chairman Roberts also will present his goals for the county government for the year 2012.

The address will be given at a public meeting to be held at the Hall of Champions in Balboa Park (Palisades area), beginning at 6 p.m. Tickets or reservations are not needed.

The address will be televised later that same evening on the Government Access Channel and shown on the county's web site. It also will be broadcast several times during the week following. Information on the broadcast dates and times will be available at the county's communications website, www.CTN.org.

Elections for county supervisor, Districts 1, 2, and 3 will be held this year. District 1 is now served by Supervisor Cox and covers the southern portion of the county. Supervisor Jacob serves District 2, the eastern portion of the county.

Both Supervisors Cox and Jacob are standing for re-election. District 3, which is the north coastal-central portion of the county, is served by Supervisor Slater-Price, who is not standing for re-election. This is the first "wide open" supervisorial election in this district in 20 years. Elections for supervisors in Districts 4 and 5 will be held in 2014.

The county government provides health and justice services to all three million residents of San Diego County and municipal services to the county's unincorporated areas.

— Nan Valerio, Director, Regional Government

HOW THE LEAGUE IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN HEALTH CARE

From the beginning of U.S. health care debates in the 1990's, public interest and public health organizations have been faced with well-funded opposition designed to enhance profits with no regard for the health of the population. California has a chance to lead the discussion and the nation back to where it belongs: the most cost-effective way to manage the health system for the benefit of its citizens.



The League of Women Voters of the U.S. studied health care beginning in 1990. Phase 1 studied the delivery and policy goals of the U.S. health care system, and Phase 2 focused on health care financing and administration. Research committees wrote reports for the members to discuss before reaching a consensus. We consulted with local experts, health care professionals and consumers. Our final position was announced in April of 1993 during the height of the national health care debate. As soon as the study results were announced, the LWVUS president met with White House officials to present the new position. The League has actively participated in the health care debate ever since.

We use LWV's national position to take action at the state and local levels of government. Our national position on Meeting Basic Human Needs, also addresses health care: more equitable distribution of services, increasing the availability of resources in medically underserved areas, training providers in needed fields of care, standardizing the services provided under publicly funded health care programs and insurance reforms. LWV believes cost saving mechanisms should not interfere with the delivery of quality care. In 1993 LWVUS testified before three Congressional Committees calling for comprehensive health care reform. We joined two national coalitions---one comprised of consumer, business, labor, provider and senior groups working for reform, and the other comprised of groups supporting the single-payer approach. League actively lobbied in support of universal coverage, cost containment, single-payer or employer mandate and a strong benefits package. LWV continues to advocate for the inclusion of state single-payer option in any health care package and emphasized our support for the inclusion of comprehensive repro-

ductive health care in any health benefits package. Health care reform advocates, including LWV, pressed for comprehensive reform through September 1994. But congressional sponsors were thwarted and reform was declared dead without Congress ever voting on it---killed by the insurance industry.

The focus then shifted to the states and LWV Education Fund initiated community education efforts on health care issues with the "Understanding Health Care Policy Project." The project trained Leagues to conduct broad-based outreach and education on health policy issues to expand community participation in the debate. LWV Education Fund and the Kaiser Family Foundation undertook a major citizen education effort, "Citizen's Voice for Citizen's Choice: A Campaign for a Public Voice on Health Care Reform." Leagues sponsored more than 60 town meetings in major media markets nationwide, involving members of Congress and other leading policy makers and analysts in health care discussions with citizens. In September 1994, the LWVEF and the Kaiser Family Foundation held a National Satellite Town Meeting on Health Care Reform, with more than 200 down-link sites across the country, including San Diego. They also undertook a major television advertising effort to promote public participation in the debate. In 1997, the LWVUS joined 100 organizations in successfully urging Congress to pass strong bipartisan child health care legislation. LWVUS worked for passage of the Patients' Bill of Rights, aimed at giving Americans participating in managed care health plans greater access to specialists without going through a gatekeeper, the right to emergency room care using the "reasonably prudent person" standard, a speedy appeals process when there is a dispute with insurers and other rights. But the House passed a weaker version of the legislation, which focused on the rights of insurers rather than on patients' rights.

Also in 1998, the LWVEF once again partnered with the Kaiser Family Foundation on a citizen education project focused on Medicare reform, patients' bill of rights and other health care issues. We gathered information through citizen forums to prepare a Public Voice Report

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HOW THE LEAGUE IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN HEALTH CARE

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to present to the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare. The commission presented its report to Congress. It emphasized that people value Medicare but recognize its flaws. Fairness, responsibility, efficiency, and access were identified as important values for any reforms of the Medicare system.

In 2000 the LWVEF and KRF developed and distributed two guides, *Join the Debate: Your Guide to Health Issues in the 2000 Election* and *A Leader's Handbook for Holding Community Dialogues*. The project focused on five issues under debate in the election: the uninsured, managed care and patients' rights, Medicare reform, prescription drug coverage and long-term care. The San Diego County LWV (ILO) held a public forum with all Congressional candidates using these materials. Over 300 people attended.

ILO has been active in health care issues since October

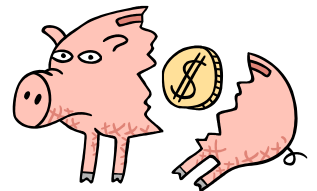
1996 as a leader of the Coalition for Quality Health Care, a community organization that was formed to preserve Sharp HealthCare as not-for-profit and oppose their take-over by Columbia HCA. ILO was instrumental in forming the Regional Healthcare Advisory Council and served on the Project Management Committee for the Improving Access to Healthcare project, which led to the establishment of the Consumer Center for Health Education and Advocacy and San Diegans for Healthcare Coverage, a local coalition for health.

League does not believe so-called "Consumer Directed Health Plans" or "Health Savings Accounts" achieve the goals our members found to be fundamental to the health care problem's solution. We are working to pass CA Senate Bill 810, the landmark Single Payer legislation that establishes a modern universal state system to cover every California resident with comprehensive benefits efficiently and cost-effectively.

— Sylvia Hampton, ILO Health Director

THE COUNTY LEAGUE'S BEQUEST FUND

The San Diego County LWV has a bequest fund whose purpose is to fund projects which benefit all Leagues and also develop public awareness of the LWV throughout San Diego County. Jeanne Brown, Mary Crowley, Nancy Hand, Sylvia Hampton, Marjorie Larson, and Roni Seay (County League president) volunteered to be on the committee. Several suggestions were given at the January County League Board meeting including publicizing our League positions, purchasing up-to-date audio-visual equipment, paying for a well-known speaker, and hiring a public relations specialist to help us communicate with the public more effectively. The County League is asking the local leagues to apply for a grant which would help achieve our fund's purpose.



— Nancy Hand, Vice President, Financial Planning

The Registrar's Directory of Public Officials is a useful reference, especially during election season, containing a wealth of information about election details and dates.

<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/voters/Eng/reports/pubofficials.pdf>

The Voter is published quarterly: Fall/October, Winter/February, Spring/April, and Midsummer

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