



League of Women Voters
North Orange
County

VOTER

January 2005

714-254-7440
P.O. Box 3073
Fullerton, CA 92834

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership is open to men and women of voting age.

Funding Schools Adequately: Is it Possible?

California is facing a dilemma. We have very high expectations for our students, yet very modest means. In fact, California's standards-based curricula and current testing through the Academic Performance Index (API) rank as one of the strictest accountability programs of any state across the country. A score of 800 on a school's API means that 70 percent of its students would exceed the national average, and a score of 800 for every school is the goal for the California state standards. Yet the amount of money California is expending to meet these high standards is modest by any measure. According to figures from

2000 cited by Jon Sonstelie of the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), California's state and local government per capita spending is 9 percent higher than the average of all other states. However, the K-12 share of spending is 11 percent lower. Teacher salaries in California are higher than in most other states. This may be related to the fact that the salaries of college graduates in California are about 14 percent higher on average than in other states; it would seem logical that college-educated teachers would also be paid more in order to be somewhat competitive. The high personnel costs have a

(Continued on page 2)

The League of Women Voters of California has initiated an electronic California VOTER in order to keep as many members as possible (and the public) updated between distribution of paper VOTERs. For the latest issue we have created an electronic mailing list that includes every member for whom we have an email address. If you haven't received your electronic notice, go to lwvc.org to subscribe.

Lunch With League: January 27 Preservation or Obliteration

Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor

As a resident of North Orange County, you may be aware of the open space known as the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor that forms the backdrop to our communities. Claire Schlotterbeck currently serves as Executive Director of Hills For Everyone, the non-profit citizen's group that worked to create Chino Hills State Park, a park that lies at the juncture of four of California's most rapidly growing and urbanized counties. Now the group has joined forces

with other conservation and governmental organizations in the Puente Hills on the west of Chino Hills in an effort to link the remaining open space lands together. Claire Schlotterbeck is leading this cooperative effort to create a backbone and backdrop of open space known as the Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor.

Learn more about the efforts to preserve the Puente-Chino Hills at Lunch with League on January 27th. See reservation details on page 7.

Williams v. California Settlement

An important decision regarding funding for K—12 schools was the settlement in August of the *Williams v. California* lawsuit. First filed in 2000, the suit called on the state to assure that basic services are provided at every school. The plaintiffs focused on adequate instructional materials, certificated teachers, and decent facilities. An out-of-court settlement specified that the state would provide

additional funding for low-performing schools, plus set up a new system for oversight of school districts' resource allocations.

After the settlement was announced, the Legislature rapidly passed four bills that detailed how the funds were to be spent and the oversight responsibilities assigned. County offices of education were charged with making sure that

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Public Education in
California

Consensus
Meeting Three

School Finance
9:00AM
Saturday
January 8, 2005

FJUHS
District Offices
1051 W Bastanchury
at Euclid, Fullerton

Optional Pot Luck

Luncheon
11:30AM

Bring a Dish
Or \$5 Donation

More Information:
714-921-1308
kay-bruce@sbcglobal.net

Funding Schools Adequately,

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direct correlation to a much higher ratio of children per staff member in our state. Even given these caveats, however, it is interesting to note where California spends its resources compared to other states. Research by Sonstelie and others at PPIC shows that in all of the United States except for California, less money is spent per capita on such things as government administration, public safety, social services and higher education. In other states, more is spent on K-12 education, transportation and interest on the general debt than is spent in California. Their report, *High Expectations, Modest Means: The Challenge Facing California's Public Schools*, is the first of a project examining links among school resources, costs, and student outcomes in California. Those relationships are being scrutinized on a number of fronts. A lawsuit filed in 2000, *Williams v. State of California*, asserts that thousands of California students are "deprived of essential educational opportunities to learn" because their schools lack qualified teachers, instructional materials, and clean, safe facilities, and asks the courts to decide what kind of responsibility the state has to provide an adequate level of educational services. Similar questions are

being asked in a number of states, either in their legislatures or through the courts. In California, a new Quality Education Commission is charged with determining the actual cost "to provide each student with an opportunity to meet the achievement levels specified by the legislature." How should California address that cost? Even as state budget makers try to address the structural gap between revenues and expenditures, a solution for California's school financing needs to be found that will provide equity, adequacy and stability. This is a huge challenge. School districts do not have the local revenue authority or local property tax options available in other states. Should California's school financing structure be revamped to ensure that all students are provided with an equitable and adequate learning experience?

Help us develop an updated League position on school finance by attending the study/consensus meeting on Saturday, January 8, 2005. Ellen Ballard, Marilyn Buchi, Mary Fuhrman, and Barbara Michel, our panel of local experts will present the facts and lead the consensus discussion. It's sure to be a lively and informative meeting and a good example of the League consensus process. Don't miss it!

Presidents Column

As the New Year begins, it's appropriate to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year and to look ahead with renewed resolve for our work in 2005. The League as an organization is often successful because it provides opportunity for individuals to use their unique skills in accomplishing the work of the League. Deane Cassidy is a great example of such an individual. Deane is an initiator who has great skill at engaging others to be involved in League program. The current success of our Education Study Consensus meetings is directly related to Deane's ability to engage our education experts in the programs. Lois Smith is another example. Lois serves on the program committee as the member who contacts speakers for our various events. It doesn't take long after a planning session before Lois has the speakers lined up and confirmed well into the future.

No wonder we're called the League of Women **Voters!** In a survey distributed at the last Lunch with League, an impressive 100% of those who responded had voted in the November 2 election. The 22 survey responses revealed other impressive numbers. For example, 91% had contributed money to a candidate or proposition and 91% had watched all three presidential debates. (Those who hadn't were apologetic and gave good reasons for not watching.)

Of those surveyed, 50% had actively promoted a candidate or proposition by such efforts as walking precincts or telephoning voters; 55% had displayed a bumper sticker or a house sign; and 23% had attended a rally in support of a candidate or proposition.

Prior to the election, 86% of the responders reported they had attended a

Use your unique skills to contribute something to *LWVNOC* this coming year. If you are discouraged by the state of our current gridlocked governmental bodies and polarized electorate you can chose to be active. Whatever small action you can do will give you hope that with others in the League, we will further our mission of informing the electorate and fighting for "good" government. We encourage you to make a New Year's resolution to do so and give a small amount of your time to becoming an activist on one of the many issues we tackle such as education reform, governance, redistricting, campaign finance reform, civil liberties, energy resources or in helping make "Smart Voter" everyone's source for unbiased information.

Here's to a happy and activist New Year.

Eileen Olmsted, Eleanor Fumanti

League Members VOTE

BY ARLINE BURGMEIER, MEMBERSHIP CO-DIRECTOR

meet-the-candidates forum and 50% reported having attended a ballot measure pro/con presentation. (I think some forgot that they had heard Shirley Bloom's pro/con presentation at the October Lunch.) Seven of the 22 responders said they had assisted at a candidate or pro/con forum and 5 had conducted one or both types of public meetings.

Other ways that responders were involved in the election included five people who had demonstrated E-Slate machines for the Registrar of Voters and five who had served as poll workers. One person had organized mock elections at two local high schools and another person was actually a candidate for public office on November 2.

In addition to participating in organized election activities, one responder noted that she had also "shared (her) opinion with anyone who'd listen."

LWV Capistrano Bay Natural Resources Report

DOWN ON THE RANCH / RANCH PLAN

On November 8th, the Orange County Board of Supervisors voted to approve what is known as the Ranch Plan after a long public hearing. This vote will allow zone changes and amendments to the Orange County General Plan allowing a conceptual framework for the building of 14,000 homes and five commercial centers. Approvals are still needed from the county on specific projects and habitat preservation permits from state and federal agencies. The fact that this Plan has been entitled automatically doubles the value of the land from one million dollars per acre to whatever it can bring as the development unfolds. I will list some points of information regarding the Ranch Plan.

- ◆ Supervisor Wilson crafted a late deal to grade 60 acres for non-profit groups to build low-income housing.
- ◆ The cities of Rancho Santa Margarita, Mission Viejo, San Juan Capistrano and San Clemente will be negotiating the impact of traffic on their cities with the Ranch and other government agencies.
- ◆ Biologists with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the California Department of Fish and Game had hoped

that the Ranch's early approval would not come before they could finish the Nature Reserve plan for the property. They estimated needing six more months. Many asked at the hearings what is six more months in comparison to a 20 year development process?

- ◆ There may be a law suit/s from the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club and other groups in the future.
- ◆ All of south county water from Irvine down comes from the Colorado River or Delta sources. The Santa Margarita Water person claimed that there was enough water available for the development. League should look into this.
- ◆ Orange County declined the offer of land from the Ranch for a sports park saying there was no money available to develop or maintain it in these hard fiscal times.
- ◆ The impact on San Juan Creek was not addressed either. Doheny State Beach is already polluted.

LWV Capistrano Bay Area Land Use Committee

BY BARBARA ROSENBAUM, COMMITTEE CHAIR

Williams v. California

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school districts provide their lowest-performing schools with appropriate instructional materials, teachers, and facilities.

The funding, which totaled \$188 million in one-time funds in 2004—05, included \$138 million for instructional materials plus another \$50 million to conduct an assessment of facility conditions, supplement county superintendents' capacity to oversee low-

performing schools, fund emergency repairs, and cover other costs of implementation. The settlement also commits the state to \$800 million for facilities in future years. For the most part, these resources are to be directed to the state's lowest-performing schools based on their status in Deciles 1—3 on California's Academic Performance Index (API).

School Finance Highlights 2004-05

Published by EdSource November 2004

ORANGE COUNTY VOTER

Year's End

When the Orange County Board of Supervisors reconvenes in January '05, the retiring Mr. Smith will not be back; his 1st district seat will be taken by Mr. Lou Correa, currently a state assemblyman who is termed out and ran for a board seat instead. Mr. Campbell, of the 3rd district, who was also once an assemblyman, won a full 4 year term, without opposition; his first term was a short one, as he replaced Mr. Spitzer, who went on to the Assembly in 2002. Is there a pattern here? Mr. Wilson, the current chairman, Mr. Silva and Mr. Norby are set until 2006. Occasional tidbits in the papers suggest they too may want to move on, and Mr. Wilson did take a stab at the Assembly during the 2004 primary but it came to nothing. Supervisors are limited by term limits to two 4-year terms so Mr. Wilson and Mr. Silva have just 2 years to go, Mr. Norby can run again. The incoming Mr. Correa is a Democrat, but that is not supposed to have anything to do with anything, because the Board, like a city council, is "non-partisan". But it should be interesting, and maybe, maybe, give Orange County a much-needed entree to the powers that be in the Legislature where Orange County has little clout.

In the meantime, county business moves on. A new CEO, Thomas Mauk, is in charge, as of mid-October. According to the papers he has experience as a city manager in La Habra, Norco and Whittier and has some business experience. As always, the biggest challenge will be the county's finances and how to manage bankruptcy debt, shrinking reserves and a stingy state government. Only time will tell.

In late September the board had a lengthy discussion about continuing to pay dues, \$160,000, to CSAC, the California State Association of Counties, whose basic mission is to lobby the state on behalf of counties. But Orange County has a problem: it is a "donor county" in terms of taxes to the state but very low if not the lowest county in returned funds from the state for many of the mandated services it has to provide. This is called the "equity issue" and one way to solve it would be to re-slice the money pie to make the shares more even. But that would mean others counties would

get less and no one is going to agree to that! The solution is more money for all counties and fewer mandates, said the representative of SCAC, and, anyway, we can argue more effectively than your single lobbyist can. Mr. Norby asked the county lobbyist, Scott Baugh, for his opinion. Nimbly, Mr. Baugh said that CSAC can cover all the Sacramento bases and that it is helpful to local staffers. And that he would like to see a discussion within CSAC that debated all the various distributions of funds, that there are all kinds of inequities, up and down; he even suggested that the Legislative Analyst, Liz Hill, could moderate such a debate. Mr. Norby still thought it more important to see legislators one on one; Mr. Campbell spoke up for "buying in bulk". And in the end, they agreed to continue with SCAC, 5-0.

In the run up to the election, the board members received regular reports from the Registrar on the preparations he was making for the balloting. Mr. Norby and Mr. Campbell gave advice and the resident gadfly prophesied disaster. As of this writing, the counting on some local elections isn't quite finished but no egregious errors, conflicts or complaints have appeared and Mr. Rodermund's election report was full of praise for all the precinct workers, particularly the students and county employees, his hardworking staff and, last but not least, the sheriff's department which brought all the voting records, both machine and paper, to the proper place to be counted safely and efficiently. One can only hope all concerned now get to go on vacation!

In the context of commenting on a newspaper article about the public's "right to know", Mr. Norby again spoke unfavorably about getting too much detailed information from staff at closed sessions, especially when it involves employee contracts. He wants it ahead of time so he can absorb it, study it, and then vote. He also complained about inadequate staff reports on agenda items, for the same reasons.

Now, if a supervisor doesn't get the information he wants, can the public? And why not?

BY TRISH HARRIGAN, LWV OBSERVER
ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ENERGY FORUMS KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON

The LWVC Education Fund will host two major all-day forums in January to address our state's energy situation, with particular emphasis on the structure and governance of the electricity system. The California Public Utilities Commission, the California Energy Commission, Town Hall Los Angeles and the Commonwealth Club will be cosponsors.

The first forum will be held in Los Angeles at the Ronald Reagan Building on Friday, January 21, and the second will be in San Francisco at the Public Utilities Commission Headquarters, Friday, January 28. Details are at <http://lwvc.org/lwvc/edfund/citizenend/natres/energy/>. These forums are open to the public as well as to League members, so reservations should be made promptly.

For the past two years, our Energy Committee has been working with other public interest groups, government officials, and industry spokespersons to clarify a variety of viewpoints regarding options for California's electricity future. It was clear two years ago that the industry, torn apart by the deregulation debacle, was still largely dysfunctional. In 2002 SB 1389 (Bowen) called for an ongoing process of integrated energy planning statewide, and the committee has been an active participant in that effort. By now, what caused the electricity crisis is evident; however, it is not yet totally clear how the industry can best be structured to meet the needs of the people of California in the coming years.

The speakers at these forums will be the major energy policy makers in the state from executive agencies, the legislature, the California Public Utilities

Commission, the Energy Commission, and the Independent System Operator. The first panel will address issues of governance: in particular, the changes that should be made in the way that California's energy priorities are developed and the way policy is made and implemented.

With additional input from the environmental community and the independent power producers, a second panel of state policy makers will consider what is needed to ensure timely and also adequate investments in the supply of generation resources and infrastructure.

The third panel will include representatives of the investor-owned utilities, the municipal utilities, the supporters of community choice aggregation, the manufacturing sector, and rate payer advocates and will focus on what a choice between utility and non-utility service would mean for electricity customers--including consideration of the critical core/non-core customer debate. These forums will encompass a great deal of information that will be background for the LWVC Energy Update study in the spring. They will also provide the first general public discussion of the most critical energy policy issues currently being addressed by the policy makers and by the industry. We hope that Leagues from every corner of the state will be able to send at least one representative, and we urge you to invite your local legislators.

For more information, contact Jane Turnbull at 650-559-1766 or jaturnbu@ix.netcom.com.

John D. Sullivan, *Natural Resources Director*, natural_resources@lwvc.org

LWVC

Energy Forum

January 21, 2005

Open to the Public

As well as League

Reserve Now

Call E. Fumanti

714-879-1782

Lunch with League

Thursday, January 27 11:30 AM
Preservation or Obliteration
Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor

Sizzler Restaurant
1401 Harbor Blvd. Fullerton
Cost \$12.00
Call 714-254-7440 By January 25th
Steak, Chicken or Salad Bar

Put on Your Thinking Cap It's Almost Time for Program Planning

Each year, members decide what issues the League will emphasize and what new policy areas to study. Every other year we are invited to set the agenda for LWV of California for the upcoming two years, keeping the work of the League a truly grassroots function. In alternate years we review LWVUS positions. What local issues do you think we need to emphasize in our program for 2005-06? What are the state program issues you'd like to see us devote our efforts to in the next two years?

Bring your ideas to our annual League Birthday Celebration on February 12th. We'll be making these decisions as part of the celebration.

GEARING UP TO PASS UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE Solutions That Work

You are invited to a special presentation of the credible Lewin Study research findings on the Health Care for All Californians Act

Wednesday, February 9, 2005

1st Congregational Church of Long Beach,
241 Cedar, Cedar and 3rd
Long Beach 90802

Time: 9:45-12 Noon

Please come and hear about the astounding findings showing how California can provide an affordable, high quality health care plan with permanence and security in coverage to all.

Information: choff74523@aol.com 310 377 7668

Parking at City Lot on Broadway and Cedar

League of Women Voters of Long Beach,

CALENDAR

**Public Education in California
 Study/ Consensus Meeting Three
 Financing Our Schools 9:00AM**

Saturday, January 8, 2005

FJUHS District Offices
 1051 W Bastanchury at Euclid
 Fullerton

Optional Pot Luck

Luncheon 11:30AM

Bring a Dish Or \$5 Donation

More Information:

714-921-1308

kay-bruce@sbcglobal.net

LWVNOOC Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 12

3:30-5:30 PM

FJUHS District Offices
 1051 W Bastanchury at Euclid
 Fullerton

714-879-1782

Keeping the Lights On

LWVC Energy Forum

Friday, January 21

9:00AM-4:00PM

Ronald Reagan State Building
 Los Angeles

Call 714-879-1782

Car Pool from Fullerton

Lunch with League

Thursday, January 27 11:30 AM

Preservation or Obliteration

Puente-Chino Hills Wildlife Corridor

Sizzler Restaurant

1401 North Harbor Blvd.

Fullerton Cost \$12

Reservations: Call 714-254-7440

LWV 85TH Birthday

Saturday, February 12

9:00AM-1:00PM

FJUHS District Board Room
 1051 W Bastanchury at Euclid
 Fullerton

Continental Breakfast

Luncheon Provided by the Board

LWVNOOC Garage Sale

February 26, 8:00AM-1:00PM

Rain or Shine

2241 Victoria Drive, Fullerton

714-879-1782

JOIN THE LEAGUE!!!

We're a not-for profit organization, established in 1920, with the mission of promoting political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. We never support or oppose political candidates. We do advocate on issues that our members have studied and on which we've reached consensus. All citizens — both men and women of voting age— are welcome to join!

____ Yes, I want to join. Enclosed is my check for \$55.00 payable to LWVNOC.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Mail to the League of Women Voters NOC
P.O. Box 3073, Fullerton, CA 92834
714-254-7440

LWVNOC Garage Sale

Rain or Shine

Saturday, February 26, 2005

8:00AM-1:00PM

2241 Victoria Drive

Fullerton

Unclutter Your Life

Put Aside Those Unused Treasures

Drop off Donations February 23-24

Call 714-879-1782



League of Women Voters
North Orange County
P.O. Box 3073
Fullerton CA 92834

Happy New Year
Education Meeting: Jan. 8
Lunch with League: Jan. 27

Voter Editor

Eleanor Fumanti

714-879-1782

mefumanti@adelphia.net