



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

January 2011

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 59 NO. 21

FEDERAL HEALTH CARE REFORM: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Everyone is unhappy about health care, particularly health care costs, but not everyone realizes that a national health care reform bill is law, or what is in it. Research shows that many Americans don't even know that a reform bill has passed. Start by informing yourself about what is—and is not—in the bill, and then make it a point to talk to your friends and neighbors.

Some of what is included in the landmark Affordable Care Act:

- a guarantee that insurance companies can no longer discriminate based on pre-existing conditions
- an end to lifetime caps
- a requirement that insurance companies can no longer drop people when they get sick.

In addition, the bill:

- gives tax credits to small businesses for providing coverage for employees
- requires insurers to cover preventive care at no cost.

There is misinformation being circulated about the bill's effects on Medicare. Don't let the naysayers scare seniors!

- Medicare is actually being improved and strengthened.
- The Affordable Care Act attacks waste and fraud.
- The bill **adds** benefits for those on Medicare:
 - helps seniors stay in their homes
 - bans discrimination based on pre-existing conditions
 - provides preventive care with no co-pays.

Yes, there are taxes—but **only** for those with incomes over \$200,000-\$250,000. These taxes will provide for the largest investment in the health care workforce ever made. There is a huge need for primary health care providers, and the Affordable Care Act will help fill the gap by investing in education and training, and providing incentives for these desperately needed caregivers.

Finally, for those who advocate repealing the act: this is an even more costly choice than enacting it! Repealing the act would cost an estimated \$455 billion.

What about California?

California is on the forefront of federal health care reform. This fall, the governor signed two bills creating the California Health Benefit Exchange. There are a number of challenges on the road to an operational exchange by 2014; the League will be active both in advocacy and community education. If you are interested in working on this issue, contact Helen Hutchison, hhutchison@lwvc.org.

Sign up for action alerts at <http://ca.lwv.org>, the LWVC Web site, and click on "Sign up for E-News" at the upper left. On the sign-up page, choose "Action Alerts." For a complete timeline for implementation of the Affordable Care act, go to <http://docs.house.gov/energycommerce/TIMELINE.pdf>

Do you want to know more? Here are sites where you can find good information:

- <http://www.healthcare.gov/law/introduction/index.html>
- <http://www.whitehouse.gov/healthreform/healthcare-overview>
- <http://www.chcf.org/health-policy-office>

From the LWVC Leaders Update
Ann Krabach, State and National Director

LWV of STANISLAUS COUNTY
OFFICERS

President

Susan Novak

president@lwvstanislaus.org

Vice President

Stella Beratlis

vp2@lwvstanislaus.org

Secretary

Laurie Carley

secretary@lwvstanislaus.org

Treasurer

Seena Rhine

treasurer@lwvstanislaus.org

DIRECTORS

Finance Drive

Mary Giventer

Voter Service

Ellen Dunbar

voterservice@lwvstanislaus.org

Membership

Hanna Renning

State and National Action

Anne Krabach

Local Action

Marie Bairey

Voter Editor

Jean Tenney

newsletter@lwvstanislaus.org

Lunch and Learn

Mildred Kinser

Board Administrator

Lynn Kelso

OFF-BOARD

Voter Service

Marsha Waggoner

Membership

Colleen Norby

Public Relations

Linda Walden

Lunch and Learn

Margie Lipsky

Nominating

Ellen Meyer

Web Master

Diane Bartlett

League Office

720 13th Street, Modesto

209-524-1698

www.lwvstanislaus.org

President's Message

Dear League members:

"You're from the League of Women Voters? Can I have one of those buttons? What a great organization!" How can you not love being part of an organization that gets compliments like that at a local candidates' forum? I just wish we had enough money to give away the buttons! Special thanks to Ellen Dunbar and Marsha Waggoner who organized eight well attended forums ; to Mary Giventer and Ellen Dunbar for presenting the pros and cons of the ballot propositions before a large crowd at MJC; and to every single one of the volunteers listed on page 5. Thanks, also, to our faithful members and donors who through your dues, renewals and contributions help us educate and inform the voters.

Once again League members and donors enjoyed good company, good conversation, and good food at our Annual Holiday Fling. Special thanks to Lynn Fenderson for graciously opening her home, to Hanna Renning for overall coordination, to Margie Lipsky and Lynn Kelso for organizing the food, and to all the wonderful League cooks who provided the goodies. We were fortunate to hear from Lynn Dickerson, CEO of the Gallo Center for the Performing Arts, who touched all of us with her personal story and gave us an insider's look at the Center.

Now, we have other work ahead of us. What do you want to see on the agenda for our League and for Leagues across California for the next two years? As a member of this grassroots organization, you have the opportunity to influence the selection of issues where LWVC will focus time and resources. What about our local positions? What should be our advocacy priorities? Read more about how you can participate in program planning on pages 3 and 4.

January is also the month when the nominating committee meets to begin choosing a slate of officers and directors and to plan our Annual Meeting. Ellen Meyer, Nominating Committee Chair, welcomes your suggestions for the meeting location and speaker, and for members who may be interested in serving on the Board.

Margie Lipsky and Mildred Kinser have an interesting lineup of Lunch and Learn speakers. (page 3.) Hope you can join us!

Susan Novak President

DIVERSITY POLICY:

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County in both its values and practices affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which 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.

Program Planning Meeting: State Issues

Please save the evening of **Wednesday, January 26, 2011, 6:30 p.m.**, at the League Office, 720 13th Street, for our **annual Program Planning meeting**. It is important that as many members as possible take part in the discussion, so that we can forward meaningful ideas to the state League (LWVC). **If you cannot attend the meeting, please be sure to fill out the enclosed flyer** and return it ASAP.

Every two years, local Leagues participate in the LWVC Program Planning process by making recommendations concerning program issues. This is how we remain a grassroots organization. The Program Planning process is an important League tool for identifying issues for study. It gives members and Leagues the opportunity to balance the pros and cons, assess possible support, and consider the viability of issues.

While it is important for every League to hold a Program Planning meeting to discuss possible issues for study at the state level, it is not essential for every League to select an issue. The response form includes a line to indicate that issues were discussed but no change is recommended.

It will be up to all our participating members to take part in the discussion, in person at the meeting or by submitting the inserted form by February 7. Our board will consider the results of our member discussion and submissions at its February board meeting. The deadline for submitting the resulting response to LWVC is February 11, 2011

Stella Beratlis, Vice President

2010 Finance Drive

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Finance Drive. Your donations are vital to our continued voter service activities. We are still short of our goal. If you have not yet donated, it is not too late to do so. If we all pitch in a little, we will have a successful Finance Drive and be prepared for a busy year of activities in 2011. Best wishes for the New Year!

Mary Giventer, Finance Drive Director

LWV Advocacy Activities

At the Modesto Farmer's Market on October 14 Susan Novak, Jean Tenney and Ann Krabach discussed the League's positions on the state ballot measures and distributed flyers.

Amy Wolfe presented LWVC recommendations to the Democratic Central Committee on October 21.

Ann Krabach, State and National Director

Lunch and Learn

League will be hosting Mayor Virginia Madueno of Riverbank on January 25, 2011 at 12 noon at Appetiz Restaurant. She will speak on the future plan for the property of the old ammunition plant as well as other land use issues facing Riverbank under a new City Council.

The Search is On!

It is that time again when the Nominating Committee will be calling on members to serve on the Board of the League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County in 2011-2012. Serving on the Board is a great way to contribute to our community and learn more about League! The nominating committee will also be securing a speaker and location for our Annual Meeting in the spring. If you are interested in serving as a Board member, please contact Ellen Meyer, Nominating Committee Chair, at 209-579-1603 or email her at ellen-e@sbcglobal.net.

Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools Petition

The Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, www.civicmissionofschools.org, is sponsoring a petition to remind all policymakers of the essential and historic role schools play in providing the knowledge, skills and disposition for informed and engaged citizenship. The Campaign is asking all Americans nationwide to sign [this petition](#) reminding policymakers of the three essential C-s of education, preparation for College, Career and Citizenship. The petition will be presented to local, state and federal education policymakers in 2011. The League is a part of the Campaign and serves on its Steering Committee.

PROGRAM PLANNING PRIORITIES: STATE 2011-2013 & LOCAL

Please attend the Program Planning Meeting on **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26 at 6:30 P.M.**, at the League Office, 720 13th St.

Before participating go to <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/issues/index.html> to read the LWVC positions. For our local positions go to http://lwvstanislaus.org/local_action.html.

If you are unable to attend, please fill out this inserted flyer as described below.

After completing the form, mail it to LVW of Stanislaus County, P.O. Box E, Modesto, CA 95352, by February 7. The form may also be downloaded from <http://www.lwvstanislaus.org>.

Name _____

Part 1: State Positions. Circle the positions you wish to retain; draw a line through those you wish to drop.

IF UPDATING ONE OF THESE IS ONE OF YOUR PRIORITIES, PLEASE REMEMBER TO IDENTIFY IT AS A CHOICE IN PART II, BELOW.

LWVC Program Positions

Government

Campaign Financing

Constitution

Election Systems

Initiative and Referendum Process

Intergovernmental Relationships

Public Libraries

Redistricting

State & Local Finances

Voting Rights

Natural Resources

Agriculture

Air Quality

Energy

Hazardous Materials

Land Use

Solid Waste

Transportation

Water

Social Policy

Child Care

Community College System

Education: Pre-K-12

Housing

Juvenile Justice/Dependency

Legal Aid

Mental Health Care

Part II: State Study. I recommend:

_____ No state study

_____ New study on: _____
Topic(s). If more than one topic, rank as 1, 2, and 3

_____ Update position on:

_____ Adopt by concurrence position on:

Please comment on need for a state study. (Use back if necessary.)

Part III: Local Program Positions. Circle the positions you wish to retain; draw a line through those you wish to drop. Note any that you would want to update.

Land Use

Housing

Adult Criminal Justice

Municipal Government

Child Abuse and Neglect

Local Library Finance

Gang Violence

LWVCS Bylaws Revision

The Bylaws Revision Committee, comprised of Marie Bairey, Lynn Kelso, Carole Davis, Julie Saugstad, Marsha Waggoner, Virginia Lish and Susan Novak, was given the charge of reviewing the LWVSC bylaws. Rather than tweaking specific sections of the bylaws, the Committee has done a complete review and revision. Thinking this project would take many months, but also knowing that revisions had to be approved by our Board and LWVC before being presented to the members for approval, the Committee buckled down to the task. In two very productive meetings, the revised bylaws were in draft form.

Using models and wording provided by LWVC, the Committee examined each section of our current bylaws to make them compliant with California law for non-profits and consistent with our League's past practice. The result is a simpler, clearer and shorter document. The committee will present its recommendations to the LWVSC Board at its January meeting. If all goes well, the revised bylaws will be on the agenda for approval at our Annual Meeting in the spring.

If you have questions, contact Marie Bairey.

Marie Bairey, Chair, Bylaws Revision Committee

Voter Service

Seven forums were conducted by League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County for the fall elections. These were: Oakdale Mayor and City Council, Riverbank City Council, Turlock City Council, Superior Court Judge run-off, Yosemite Community College Trustees and two with candidates for appointment to the Modesto City Council.

Many of our members worked as moderators, question sorters, greeters, and timers to make the forums effective. Some helped with several forums. We want to thank all of the following people who participated to help bring information to the voters: Amy Wolfe, Marsha Waggoner, Mary Giventer, Diane Bartlett, Marjorie Brooks, Carmen Morad, Marge Lipsky, Julie Saugstad, Hannah Parris, Michele McNeil, Allan McKessick, Kate Weiner, Marjorie Brooks, Jean Tenney, Joan Patterson, Sara Jamison, Susan Novak, Marie Bairey, Sally Amaral, and Stella Beratlis.

We also thank AAUW members from Riverbank and Oakdale who helped with the forums in those cities. They were: Judy Kropp, Barbara Marquis, Marsha Love, Julie Reuben and Mary Wolgamot.

A presentation of the Pros and Cons of Ballot Propositions was co-sponsored with the MJC Civic Engagement Project. Members who volunteered for this event were; Allan McKessick, Mary Giventer, Ellen Dunbar, Hanna Renning, Ann Krabach, and Patty Beyer. We were assisted by MJC students from the Civic Engagement Project. Thanks to everyone for making this event a success.

Ellen Dunbar, Voter Service Director

**I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO
YOURS BY JOINING
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF STANISLAUS COUNTY!**

Student Membership \$15 _____
Individual Membership \$60 _____
Household Membership \$90 _____

Please contact me with more information:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone (for directory): _____

Email: _____

Please deliver my Voter by: E-mail US mail

MAIL TO
LWVSC
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352.

Board Highlights

November 10, 2010

- Ellen Dunbar and Marsha Waggoner were recognized for an outstanding job on Voter Service in preparation for the November election.
- Nominating Committee will begin meeting in January with Ellen Meyer as Chair.
- Discussed Pay-Pal as another means of fund development. It is used by other Leagues around the Nation. Diane Bartlett is pursuing this option and will report back to the Board.

Laurie Carley, Secretary

Welcome Our Newest Member

Vito Chiesa

We look forward to seeing you at our events

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352**

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS
(Check Website for Updates.)**

Wednesday, January 12

**6:00 p.m. Board Meeting, LWV Office
720 13th Street, Modesto**

Wednesday, January 26

6:30 p.m. Program Planning Meeting, LWV Office

Tuesday, January 25

**12:00 Noon, Lunch and Learn
Appetiz Restaurant, Roseburg Square, Modesto
Speaker: Virginia Madueno, Mayor of Riverbank,
on plan for the property of the old ammunition plant and other
land use issues
\$11. Call one day ahead for special dietary needs**