



Bakersfield Voter

A PUBLICATION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KERN COUNTY

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2008

President's message

R*eaching New Heights Together* was the theme of the 48th biennial convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States. Almost one thousand League voices, including 144 delegates from California, met in beautiful downtown Portland, Oregon.

It was as though the clock stopped for four days. From early morning till midnight enthusiastic League members buzzed around the Hilton Hotel, networking, learning about new issues, discussing important topics, making decisions shaping the direction of the national League program, and just having a good time. The schedule was filled with workshops, caucus meetings, forums, and networking sessions.

The Honorable Barbara Roberts, Oregon's first woman governor, spoke at the opening plenary session. Her topic was *Women as Political Leaders- Our History and Experience*. She shared her experiences as the first women governor of Portland. LWVUS President Mary Wilson delivered a *State of the League* message which reflected on the League's strengths and challenges. She introduced a program that will focus on educating members and communities to be better prepared as advocates on important issues.

Former two term governor of Oregon John Kitzhaber, who is also a physician, presented a speech on *The Unfinished Business of the Baby Boom Generation: Health Care for the 21st Century*. His address demonstrated the fact that the

public and private health care system must be revamped so that 45 million older citizens can be provided with quality health care. Kitzhaber reminded us of all the important systems the baby boomers put in place such as preventative measures and health education.

We also heard a report of the *State of Climate Change – What We know and What We Don't* regarding the impact of climate change throughout the world.

Delegates adopted a proposal to retain all current LWVUS positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, and Social Policy National Program for 2008–2010. Also adopted were positions on health care to educate members and communities to advocate in support of health care as needed; a multi-level education and advocacy campaign to promote solutions to global climate change; and a study on the advisability of using the National Popular Vote compact among the states as a method for electing the President. Visit the www.lwv.org to stay current on these issues.

The Voter Outreach Public Service Announcement video is complete! You can visit our website to see a clip of the video or watch it on local and cable television stations throughout Kern County. The video includes archival footage of historical milestones and a message to get out and vote. It will be aired each election period to remind our community of the importance of our right to vote.

The League is reaching out to local Girl Scouts to join us on August 23 from 11:45 am to 1:30 pm at the Petroleum Club as we commemorate the 87th Women's Equality Day celebration of the U.S. Constitution amendment granting women the right to vote. Read more inside.—Diane Williams

Democracy is not a spectator sport! Join us.

Join the League of Women Voters of Kern County. Any citizen 18 years of age or older may join the League by paying dues. Individual annual dues are \$55; household dues (2 people at the same address) are \$75; student dues are \$35.

Mail to LWVKC, PO Box 132, Bakersfield, CA 93302. For information, call the League Line (661) 634-3773 or e-mail diane.williams.cht5@statefarm.com.

August/September 2008 Calendar

August 12—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVB Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Room UC-3

August 23—Saturday, 11:45 am. **Women's Equality Day Luncheon** and Celebration at the

Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue, 12th floor. Bakersfield Girl Scouts will join us to learn about the history surrounding the passage of the 19th Constitutional Amendment. Kathleen Kress portrays Susan B. Anthony. Cost is \$20. Reservations required by noon, August 21; call the League Line.*

September 9—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVB Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Room UC-3.

September 17—Wednesday, 5:45 pm. General meeting at the Petroleum Club, 5060 California

Avenue. Senator Roy Ashburn or his representative will discuss *Redistricting Reform—Undoing the Jigsaw Puzzle*. The differences between his proposed bill, SCA3, and the League-supported California First proposal, will be highlighted. Dinner reservations required by noon, September 15; call the League Line.*

October 14—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVB Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Room UC-3.

October 15—Wednesday, 5:45 pm. General meeting at the Petroleum Club, 5060 California

Avenue. Pro and Con presentation on November ballot propositions presented by LWVKC speakers bureau. Cost \$22. Dinner reservations required by noon, October 13; call the League Line.*

October date TBA—Focus Group meeting on health care at the Guild House.

**Reservations are required for dinner and luncheon meetings and special events. Please call the League Line, 634-3773, by Monday noon prior to the Wednesday event. No charge for attendance at program only. Thank you.*

League teams with Girl Scouts and AAUW for Women's Equality Day

Our Women's Equality Day commemoration this month will have a brand new addition—Girl Scouts! For the past several months our local League has collaborated with the Joshua Tree Council of Girl Scouts, Bakersfield Region, and the American Association of University Women to plan a program that demonstrates to young women the hard-won importance of voting and the history behind the passage of the 19th Amendment. Partnering with these organizations gives the League an opportunity to perform valuable community outreach. Working with the Girl Scouts, in particular, provides a chance to teach about democracy and the Constitution.

The LWV of Kern County will share this special day with area the Girls Scouts and their mothers at a luncheon at the Petroleum Club on Saturday, August 23 from 11:45 to 1:30. Together we will celebrate the 87th birthday of the passage of the Constitutional amendment that allowed women to vote. The program entitled *Women Through Time* will feature keynote speaker Kathleen Kress who will assume the role of Susan B. Anthony complete with costume. A short film about the suffrage movement and an original quiz show about the background leading up to the passage of the 19th Amendment will generate participation from the girls.

A panel of women will discuss their professions and the challenges they face working in male-dominated careers. Panelists include Superior Court Judge Sharon Mettler; Rosemary Wahl, first woman chief deputy in the Kern County Sheriffs Department; and Danielle D. Wade, Vice President of Brighthouse Network. Girl Scouts who attend will earn a badge by completing the *Women Through Time* requirements.

Women's Equality Day commemorates the passage in 1920 of the 19th Amendment which granted women the right to vote. The fight for suffrage was a nearly 100 year battle in our country fought by women whose names still resonate in our history. Women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony,

Alice Paul, Carrie Chapman Catt (who became the first president of the League of Women Voters), Lucy Stone, and Ida B. Wells worked tirelessly over the century, building upon the work of their foremothers and sacrificing their freedoms in order to bring about the vote for women.

Because American women comprise more than half of our nation's voters, it is crucial that middle school and high school girls understand the struggles of those who fought for equality in the voting booth. The right to vote should never be taken for granted.

To make a reservation, please call the League Line, 634-3773. Cost of the luncheon is \$20. The Petroleum Club is located at 5060 California Avenue.—
Diane Williams and Lynne Rosenstein

Voter Services expands its role

An election year like 2008 provides a myriad of opportunities for our local League. Voter Services plans to be very busy this fall. In September, various organizations and residence homes in Kern County will receive a letter offering the League's services in the following areas:

- Voter Registration
- Pro/Con Presentations
- Conducting Forum.

We will register voters in October at several sites. This year we will expand our services to cities outside of Bakersfield. On Saturday, October 18, we will be in Delano, Shafter and Arvin helping people register. On Sunday, October 19, we will be at four locations in Bakersfield. Sites will be announced later.

Additionally, with eleven propositions on the ballot, we anticipate many requests for Pro/Con presentations. We also expect to be called to organize and moderate forums. Therefore, we have a big crew of members who will be available for these activities. If you are interested in helping to register voters, make Pro/Con



presentations, or help conduct a forum, please contact Terri Stanton at 589-7314 or stantont @bak.rr.comm.

Training is available for all of these activities. Your assistance is crucial this year. Please lend a hand.

We need many people to make these activities work. If you don't contact me, I will be getting in touch with you.—Terri Stanton

California Voters First redistricting proposal explained

Background: What is redistricting?

- Every 10 years, after the census, new boundary lines for the Congress and the California Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization districts are drawn. Currently, the CA State Legislature draws those lines. This is a major conflict of interest.

How would the California Voters FIRST Act change redistricting?

- 14-Person Citizens Redistricting Commission. The California FIRST Act would create a politically balanced Commission—5 Democrats, 5 Republican, 4 others. Commissioners would be chosen for their impartiality, skills, and to reflect our State's demographic and geographic diversity.
- Protecting communities, cities, and counties. The California Voters FIRST Act would create a list of prioritized mapping criteria for the Commission to follow. This would ensure that our Constitution, federal and state laws are followed. California's communities, cities, and counties must be respected.
- Open and public process. The Commission would hold hearings to receive public input. The California Voters FIRST Act would end the closed-door political deals by legislators to draw districts that protect themselves.

How would the Commission be formed?

- California registered voters are invited to participate.

- A pool of 60 (20 Ds, 20 Rs, 20 others) is selected based on their skills, ability to be impartial, and diversity by a review panel of state auditors (1 D, 1 R, 1 other).
- The 4 legislative leaders can strike up to 24 people from the pool.
- Out of the remaining pool, 8 Commissioners are randomly picked—3 Ds, 3 Rs, 2 others.
- The final 6 Commissioner (2 Ds, 2 Rs, 2 others) are chosen by the 8 Commissioners from the remaining pool based on the balance of skills and diversity they would bring.

What Mapping Criteria would the Commission follow? Criteria listed in rank order:

- A. Districts shall comply with U.S. Constitution, including equal population requirements
 - B. Districts shall comply with the Voting Rights Act.
 - C. Districts shall be geographically contiguous.
 - D. The geographic integrity of any city, county, or city and county, neighborhoods, or communities of interest shall be respected. Communities of interest shall not be defined as having a relationship with incumbents, candidates or parties.
 - E. To the extent possible, after the above criteria have been satisfied, districts shall be compact.
 - F. To the extent possible, after the above criteria have been satisfied, districts shall be nested.
- * Incumbent residences may not be considered; districts may not be drawn to favor politicians or parties.

What is the scope of the Citizen's Redistricting Commission?

- The Commission will draw California Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization seats in the next redistricting, 2011 and after each decennial census.
- The State Legislature will draw Congressional seats, following the same mapping criteria and hearing requirements as the Commission.

The LWVC supports this plan. Please go to www.commoncause.org/cavotersfirst for more information and to read the full initiative.

League of Women Voters of Kern County

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