



League of Women Voters Benicia

VOTER

April 2017

<http://www.lwvbenicia.org>

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization which neither supports nor opposes candidates or political parties. We encourage informed and active participation in government, work to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and action.

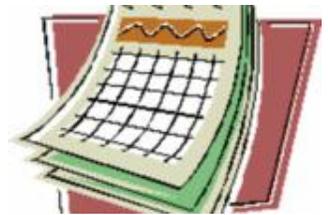
Upcoming Events

April 4: LWV Benicia Board Meeting, 7pm

April 19: Voter Registration at Town Hall, 6-8:30 pm.
Benicia High School Gym

April 26: Educational Forum: California Health Care Reform, 6:30-8:30,
Southampton Swim Club

May 24: SAVE THE DATE! Annual Membership Meeting 7-9pm, Camellia Tea
Room, Benicia



May 24, Wednesday
7-9 PM

May 24, 2017 is one of the most important dates for our League.

It is on that evening that the membership will meet to decide the future of our group. Who will be President? Voter Services Chair? Board Member at Large? Will we vote to allow 16 year olds and noncitizens to be members as recommended by the National League?

There are several other important votes to be made to make our League run more smoothly. This is the meeting where the real business of the League is determined. It's also where you pay your dues. So save the date, find your checkbook, and get ready to make sure the League continues to function.

International Women's Day

March 8 was International Women's Day. While some Bay Area Leagues were holding luncheons and fundraisers, others were supporting "A Day Without a Woman." While our own League had no formal event, several members wearing red League t-shirts represented the LWV Benicia at the International Women's Day March at the Ferry Terminal in Vallejo. From 7:30-11am, about 40 people from various groups rotated through the event holding signs supporting women's rights and waving at friendly, honking drivers.



Voter Registration

Throughout the month of April and May, members of the LWV Benicia will be making presentations at local high schools on voter's rights and registering students to vote

In addition, we will be hosting a table for voter registration and League info at a Town Hall, sponsored by another group on April 19. Congressman Thompson is scheduled to speak about immigration, education, and the environment. If you would like to help with registration please contact Gayle at vonwindgayle@gmail.com

Educational Forum: California Health Care Reform

On April 26, the LWV Benicia will be hosting an educational forum to learn about California's Senate Bill 562, which concerns reforms to California's health care system by enacting a universal single payer program. Pat Snyder, from the LWV-Diablo Valley, will explain the program and describe how the LWV CA may work to promote the bill. State Senator Bill Dodd has been invited to speak as well. He or his staff is expected to discuss the details of the bill. Representatives from Covered California, our current state health care program, were invited but could not attend. Read more about the bill in the following article. The agenda allows for a question and answer period.



New California Single Payer Bill Introduced

By Pat Snyder, LWV Diablo Valley

The campaign to achieve a single payer health care system returned to the California legislature on February 17 when Senators Ricardo Lara and Toni Atkins introduced SB 562, titled “Californians for a Healthy California.” Currently, it is a spot bill stating “the intent of the Legislature to enact a comprehensive universal single payer health care coverage program and a health care cost control system for the benefit of all residents of the state.” (from the text of the bill). It is expected that the full text will be released in about a month. The goal is to move the bill through the state Senate during this first year of the legislative session. It will be heard in the Senate Health and Appropriations Committees before going to the Senate floor.

The bill text further states that all residents of the state have a right to health care, and notes that under current law many Californians (almost 3 million) are left without coverage or with inadequate coverage.

The bill is modeled on one recently passed by the New York State Assembly. It is based on the same principles which underpinned the other earlier single payer bills in California. SB 562 will establish a comprehensive public insurance plan that covers everyone and guarantees quality basic care – sometimes called a Medicare for All plan. The plan will ensure that no one lacks access to care because of an inability to pay for it.

A fiscal study will be conducted to determine the impact of the bill. However, numerous studies in many parts of the country, including the 2006 Lewin Report in California, have shown that such a single payer plan will save money over the status quo system based on private insurance. Thus, such a system is critically needed now as costs of care and coverage are rising and benefits are being reduced.

Advocates view this moment as presenting an excellent opportunity to achieve their goal, as our current system is under attack and a new way of ensuring access to care is needed.

Advocacy for the bill is led by the “Healthy California Campaign”. The AllCare Alliance and the Campaign for a Health California (CHC) are collaborating in mounting an energetic effort to educate the public and move the bill in the Legislature. The League of Women Voters of California is a member of the AllCare Alliance and has consistently supported earlier single payer legislation. When the full text of the bill is available an analysis will be submitted for possible endorsement by LWVC.

BAY AREA MONITOR



League of Women Voters
of the Bay Area Education Fund

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area Education Fund publishes the *Bay Area Monitor* six times a year.

The publication covers policies, plans, programs, and legislation that affect quality of life in the Bay Area and beyond.

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Representative Thompson's Town Hall on the ACA

As part of the LWV US action plan to increase local League involvement at the national level, the LWV Benicia had an observer at the Town Hall in Vallejo last month, sponsored by Mike Thompson from the U.S. House of Representatives. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possible repeal of the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare). Over 250 people turned out to listen.



Thompson, who is on the House Ways and Means Committee, emphatically stated that the discussion of the repeal of ACA for the last 7 years should not be viewed as “political, but about the lives of 7 million people” who will be effected by the change. He went on to explain that the ACA originally started because of the health care crisis. “In District 1 alone out of pocket costs for patients were about \$50 million per year. If ACA is repealed millions will lose their insurance and lose jobs.” Thompson felt that the two most important aspects of the ACA are the elimination of the pre-existing conditions clause and allowing kids to stay on their parents’ insurance policies until they are 26. He stressed that it was “not appropriate to do away with it.”

Newly elected State Senator, Bill Dodd also spoke in favor of keeping ACA. The State version, called Covered California, gets federal premium subsidies of around \$1.2 million yearly. However, with loss of insurance and jobs related to insurance California could lose up to \$20 billion, he stated.

Other speakers included Frances Pruitt, a cancer survivor who greatly benefited from the ACA in his care. He was followed by Jane Garcia of La Clinica de La Raza, which served 16,000 patients in Vallejo last year who were enrolled in ACA through Covered California and/or Medicare. A representative from Covered California also spoke, explaining the state rates, and how the system works to offer 5 different insurance company plans in Solano County, with 26,000 or more signing up this year. She was followed by Julie Bates from the AARP which is fighting not only for the ACA, but for continuation of Social Security and Medicare.

After a 40 minute question and answer session with the audience, including several statements from Touro University med students in lab coats, Thompson summed up by stating that the ACA allows affordable health care, reduces drug cost, supports women’s right to choose, and promotes the general public health. Rep. Thompson has a bill in the House to improve ACA by adjusting subsidies according to the cost of living in different areas. He closed the meeting by asking for attendees to take action by calling or sending post cards to Senators Harris and Feinstein. “Write or call members of Congress, use Facebook, write letters to the editor. Let them know how important the ACA is to you.”

The LWV US is actively lobbying to stop the repeal of the ACA until a new, improved plan is created first.

Meet Our State Senator, Bill Dodd



Every year the various Leagues in the state are encouraged to conduct interviews with their legislators and elected officials. The LWV Napa, LWV Sonoma, and LWV Diablo Valley conducted a joint interview this February with our new State Senator, Bill Dodd. LWV Benicia was invited to participate, but was unable to attend. Below is the report that was sent to the LWV California. Questions 1,2, and 3 below are provided by the State League and are the same for all legislators. Questions 4 and 5 reflect more regional and local concerns.

Prior to being elected to the State Senate, Bill Dodd served on the Napa County Board of Supervisors for many years, ran a successful small business, founded a youth drug and alcohol rehabilitation center and was a founding director of the Napa County Children's Health Initiative. He served in the State Assembly for two years and is currently State Senator for District 3.

Senator Dodd Interview, Feb. 10, 2017

Reported by Robyn Orsini, LWV Napa

Question 1. Funding of Elections

What legislative measures would you support to ensure adequate and stable funding of election administration in California?

Create procedural uniformity of election procedures among all California counties. This should be done as the state moves toward using mail-in ballots in all counties.

Recommends keeping vote counting local and decentralized. He prioritizes accurate vote counting over speed of getting election results.

Dodd's bill, SB135, calls for more media literacy in grades 1-12. Technological training in internet skills will help new voters develop appropriate skills to tackle learning about the election process.

Question 2. Public Higher Education

How can California meet the challenge of enrolling more students, including students with greater needs, at the UC and CSU? Is more state funding needed? Where does this issue rank in your legislative priorities?

Senator Dodd is concerned about increased tuition and the lack of student housing, He advocates making community colleges entirely free and believes that community colleges should provide higher education opportunities, such as receiving a teaching credential or BA degree. Funding could come from the General Fund.

The senator believes that state pension reform is long overdue. Good pension and retirement security shows that we value our teachers. He would like the League to advocate for needed reform.

Question 3. Water Resources

What kinds of legislative proposals would you support to ensure that enough water of adequate quality is available for municipal and industrial uses, agriculture, and the environment in the face of over-stretched surface water and groundwater resources and climate conditions different than those California experienced in the last century?

Regarding surface water, as an assemblyman he proposed AB1755, the Open and Transparent Water Data Act, which was passed in September 2016. It tracks where all the surface water goes and makes the data available to the public. Such transparency, he believes, will lead to better water management throughout the state.

Regarding groundwater, he supports the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA, 2014) and does not believe further local groundwater restrictions are necessary, except where there is land subsidence due to a drop in groundwater and except when groundwater levels are critical in the 16 important groundwater basins in California.

Regarding watershed restrictions, the senator believes this should remain a local matter.

Question 4. Local League Question on Affordable Housing

In our area, there is a crisis in the availability of affordable housing. This lack of supply contributes to homelessness and means that workers commute longer and longer distances to their jobs, creating growing environmental concerns, bringing up the need for more public transit and the worry of caring for families at home, often hours away. What legislative actions can you support to meet the housing needs of our growing workforce?

To create more funds for affordable housing, Senator Dodd recommends increasing real estate transfer fees, with the collected money being designated for affordable housing in the same county in which the fees were collected.

He would also like to see less permitting and more streamlining of the building process, including more local control over building projects.

Question 5. Personal Priorities

What other major issues do you think the legislature must deal with in 2017? What are your personal priorities?

Senator Dodd says, "The root of everything should be education focused on kids at all levels." He is looking for more ways to fund education and interested in education reform.

Current Board Members

Executive Committee:

Niles Medders

Judy Potter

Gayle Vaughan

Board Officers:

Niles Medders, Vice President

Secretary: Alice Labay

Judy Potter, Treasurer

Gayle Vaughan, Program/Events

Malin Coleridge, Web master

Sharon Tucker, Membership



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Newsletter submissions:
due by 20th of the month
Susan Street, sustreet@pacbell.net

League business only
What where, when why in first paragraph
200 words or less
Please use WORD; Calibri 12 pt is preferred.
No colored backgrounds or fancy font

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