



The League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark, Union City

# VOTER

Voting

Democracy

Civic Engagement



## SPEAK UP CALIFORNIA

Monday, April 18

7 pm

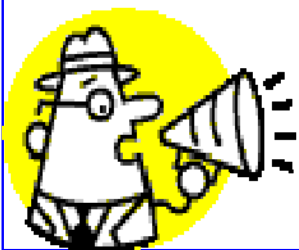
Fukaya Room

Fremont Main Library

American Leadership Forum, California Forward and the League of Women Voters invite you to a dialog about our State, its future and how restructuring the relationship between state government and city and county governments might help us revitalize and re-energize government as a public partner for progress

California Forward is a non-partisan, non-profit working group with the goal of fixing state government and restoring the California Dream.

Please come and let your voice be heard.





### President' s Message

Many thanks to the full board and to Sets and Miriam for stepping in and making things work in my absence. You will be delighted to know how well your League leaders work together to make things happen. I only wish our elected officials could do the same.

The rest of this League year will feature some very interesting meetings. Please take a look at the calendar and plan to attend at least one of them – Stimulus Money, Bullying and our Annual Meeting.

Plans for the LWV Convention continue. Please consider volunteering to attend. It really is FUN!!! as well as educational.

Finally, if you get a call from Sam Neeman about serving on the board, please consider it. There is a wealth of experience that current and former board members are eager to share with you. Think of it as a new adventure in your life!

Alex

### Voting Matters Program

Our Voting Matters Program Committee decided that they do want to continue the program but only on our web site. The committee will begin by producing a short conceptual video (no longer than 15 minutes) to be shown on our web site. If you are interested in joining the committee, call or email Kay Emanuele.

### Board Briefs

- Andrea Schacter to head committee celebrating 100 years of voting for California women
- Guide to Government will have updated, easy-to-print version on our web site
- We will print 500 Facts for Voters to distribute to members and to libraries.
- Future meetings include: March 28 Stimulus Money; April 18 Speak Up California, May Bullying
- Annual Meeting Speaker – Assembly member Bob Wieckowski
- Voting Matter committee decided to try making short video for our web site.

### Smart Voter

The SmartVoter.org team thanks the board of the LWVFNUC for its generous donation to [www.SmartVoter.org](http://www.SmartVoter.org) - the signature program of the LWVC Education Fund. This unique public service provides free Web space to all California candidates, which helps candidates inform voters about their qualifications and positions - and it provides a free Web site for voters, with well organized information on candidates and ballot measures.

SmartVoter.org relies on financial support from county registrars and city clerks as well as donations from local Leagues and individuals. Funding for SmartVoter.org does not come from your member dues to LWVC (PMP paid to the LWVC).

Can you help continue Smart Voter's important service with a personal donation? You may make a tax deductible contribution online at <http://www.cavotes.org/about/donate> (under special instructions, please write SmartVoter) or send a check (with a note designating the contribution for SmartVoter) to the LWVC Education Fund, 1107 9th Street, Suite 300, Sacramento CA 95814.

## Legislative Interview with Assemblyman Robert Wieckowski

March 11, 2011 in Fremont, CA

Participants: John Smith and Marilyn Singer

**Question #1 : Budget Dilemma:** The governor has proposed a package of budget cuts, increased revenue, realignment of services and funding between state and local government and some one-time taxes. What is your evaluation of this proposal?

The Governor has done a positive and realistic evaluation of the budget situation that California finds itself in. He has taken a balanced approach to solving a very complex problem.

The 12.5 Billion of cuts that include Adult Day Care, elimination of Cal Works for 11/12 year olds and other social programs may never come back.

**12.5 Billion in Tax Revenue Extensions:** While some of these taxes (2009) are regressive, the Assemblymember supports extending them as this is the most "politically" possible solution available, given the current political climate.

The Assemblymember thinks the votes are there to pass the budget and get the Tax Extensions on the June ballot.

A downside to **realigning services** and having counties provide them instead of the State, is that some counties are small and do not have the capacity to deliver services, for example, Modoc County.

**Question #2: Budget Process: What proposals do you support to fix the budget process?**

Ideas to "fix" the Budget process:  
Revise super majority requirement to pass funding of budget to a 55% majority.

AB 218 is his legislation to reinstate the Estate Tax to bring in approximately \$1 Billion annually. This would be coupled with an elimination of the manufacturing sales tax requirement to encourage more manufacturing in the State which would increase the number of jobs and the number of workers paying state income taxes.

(We should be receiving position papers on AB 218 and AB 14 from his office.)

**Question #3. Redevelopment Agency Elimination Impact**

**Irvington BART :** Fremont should "lead" the process to procure the funding for this station from ACTA and the MTC. One possible remedy would be AB 14 (proposed by Assemblymember Wieckowski) to fund the completion of the Regional BART Irvington Station. He will be putting AB14 before the Legislature, based on current outcomes. It hinges on the passage of AB 218.

**Affordable Housing:** It is possible that the "Affordable Housing" element of Redevelopment Agency will be left intact in the current budget compromise proposal. If that does not come to pass, the Legislature will address the need for Affordable Housing in future legislation.

**Question #4. Other Major Issues the Legislature needs to address in 2011?**

**Jobs, Jobs, Jobs-**The state must create a climate for private industry to create more jobs- preferably Green jobs and Green manufacturing jobs ( Solar/Bio Tech etc.)

**Environment:** We need to work more with the business community so they take over more recycling for a profit like the model in Vancouver, Canada.

Question #5: Which advocacy groups are effective in California and why? Which groups do you particularly listen to?

League of Women Voters, University of California, Foundations that provide statistical data and public policy information, Lobbying Groups across the political spectrum-with an eye to their particular bias.



**LWVC State Convention**

One reason for attending the State Convention is the amount of information and best practices that you can bring back to our League. Check out the following workshops and caucuses.

**Thurs., 3/12**

Smart Voter 1-5 pm

**Friday 3/13 Workshops 3-5 pm,**

Candidate Forums in the You tube Era

Leaders! Leaders! We Need Leaders!

Federal Role in Public Education: Making it Local

After Citizens United, is Local Campaign Finance Reform Possible?

Demographics & Audience: Who Are You Trying to Reach?

**8:30 - 10:00 pm**

A Strategic Conversation about League Voter Service

**Sat., 3/14 Workshops 3:30 - 5:00**

Legislative Reform: Has the Time Finally Come?

Sustainable Communities Strategy. SB 375

Watching My City: Exposing the Secrets of Local Government.

Innovative Voter Service Partnerships

Yes You Can Grow Your League's Membership: Tips from Leagues that have done so

**Friday 3/13 8:30 - 10:00 pm**

Smart Voter Demonstration on Learning How to Harness Smart Voter

Best Practices for Nominating Committees

Caucus: Election Systems Concurrence & More

**Sat., 3/14 Caususes: 7:15 - 8:45 am**

Redistricting. Let's Finish What We Started

Water: Myths & Misperceptions

Health Care

**Sat. 3/14 9:30 - 11:00 pm**

Caucus: California Criminal Justice Position by Concurrence

100 year anniversary Celebration

**LWVFNUC gets 3 delegates plus the president.**

Registration \$300 including some meals.

Hotel (Crown Plaza Ventura Beach \$109 per night)

Amtrak 2 blocks from Hotel

Santa Barbara or Oxnard airports plus shuttle

Driving. Right off 101 Freeway

**WE PAY YOUR ROOM,  
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The LWVC is discussing

### Government Reform

Reforms to California government are being proposed by legislators, citizens and a number of political groups. Changes to the budgeting process, term limits, the initiative process and revenue policies are among the ideas being considered. Most reforms would require an amendment to the Constitution. A number of groups are proposing constitutional reform through a constitutional convention or packages of reform measures through the initiative process.

#### *Constitutional Reform*

A number of groups are seeking change in California's constitution.

- Repair California is a coalition advocating a constitutional convention
- California Forward <http://www.caforward.org> has proposals for reforming the state's budget and fiscal systems and the relationship between state and local government.
- Cities, Counties and Schools Partnership [www.ccspartnership.org/default.cfm](http://www.ccspartnership.org/default.cfm) held a summit on Rebuilding California: From the Ground Up.
- The state legislature has announced select committees to look for ways to make state government more effective.

### California Forward

Our early steps toward reform include:

1. Stabilizing the fiscal mess through budget reform.
2. Changing political incentives with redistricting and the top two primary.
3. Restructuring state and local government to drive innovation and results.

### A disciplined and focused fiscal system

One of *California Forward*'s top priorities since 2008 has been reforming the state's budget-making process—currently a dysfunctional system that allows lawmakers to spend more money than we have and does not ensure that money is well spent.

*California Forward* has developed a comprehensive package of fiscal reforms that would require lawmakers to save money and pay down debt in good years, prevent legislators from making promises they can't keep, require every program to be reviewed, and make sure dollars are spent in ways that improve the performance of critical programs, such as education and public safety.

**Budget reform:** California needs a state budget process that will prevent lawmakers from making promises they can't keep and ensure public resources are well spent. The following elements of comprehensive budget reform are a top priority for CA Fwd in 2011 and 2012:

1. **Performance-based budgeting.** The Governor and legislators should establish clear goals and performance measures for all programs. At least once every 10 years, lawmakers must review programs to determine if they should continue, or how they can be improved.
2. **Multi-year budget planning.** The Governor and Legislature should prepare two-year budgets and three- and five-year fiscal forecasts, and publish updates on the state's forecasted fiscal condition prior to the budget vote and early in the subsequent fiscal year. Quick action should be required when revenues decline and the budget falls out of balance.
3. **Pay-As-You-Go for new programs and tax reductions.** Major new or expanded programs or tax reductions (created through the legislative or initiative process) should identify how they will be financed by additional revenue or compensating spending reductions.

4. **Manage volatile revenue and increase reserves.** Spikes in revenue, after meeting minimum K-14 funding obligations, should be used to fill the rainy day fund and for other one-time uses, starting with paying down debt.

**Revenue Reform:** California needs to evolve the tax structure to reflect the evolving economy, and to support structural changes designed to improve community and regional services. Tax reform is a priority for CA Fwd, provided it is part of comprehensive fiscal management and performance improvements. From that perspective, two principles should guide those reforms:

1. **The tax structure should be aligned to the new economy.** California is transitioning to a knowledge and service-based economy, which has ramifications for how tax structure influences investment decisions, as well as how much revenue is generated by certain taxes.
2. **The allocation of revenue should be aligned to structural changes designed to improve results and accountability.** The level of government responsible for providing services must have adequate fiscal control to set priorities and adjust strategies so they can achieve objectives and be held accountable for results.

One element of this reform package—allowing the state budget to pass with a simple majority vote—was adopted with the passage of Prop. 25 in November 2010.

*California Forward* and the California Forward Action Fund continue to advocate for additional reforms that would give lawmakers the tools they need to balance the budget, create stability, and improve results.

### A vibrant and responsive democracy

California's size and the dynamics of a global economy demand that we rethink the relationship between people and their elected representatives. Our large, growing and diverse population requires new rules to encourage voter participation, and to in-

crease the responsiveness of elected officials. Technology provides new tools and new challenges, and competitive pressures require governments to solve tougher challenges in less time.

The results of our dysfunctional system are dire: While the costs of many programs are increasing, the results are not. Failures in one part of the system – education, youth probation, and foster care – drive costs in others, such as prisons. Failures in the prison system further feed prison budgets. Growing costs and dismal results are signals to a competitive world that we can't manage our affairs.

Since 2008, *California Forward* has supported proposals intended to empower voters and encourage candidates to represent everyone in their districts.

**Redistricting:** Political and legislative boundaries are currently being redrawn in California using information acquired from the 2010 census, an act that occurs every ten years in each state in the country. Recognizing the ill-effects of allowing legislators to draw their own districts as they have been allowed to in the past, *California Forward* advocated for the creation of an independent commission to create these boundaries and aided in the passage of a ballot measure that created the Citizen's Redistricting Commission (CRC). We are closely following the activities of the commission and continues to work to educate voters on the importance of redistricting for a fair and functioning system. The CRC is currently in the process of drawing new districts for California's Senate, Assembly, State Board of Equalization, and Congressional districts.

**Primary process reform:** In 2010, *California Forward* and the California Forward Action Fund endorsed the top-two "open-primary" (Prop. 14) on the June primary ballot and are now working to ensure its successful implementation. Prior to the election, *California Forward* published a nonpartisan analysis of the primary process in California, which informed deliberations on this issue with objective data analysis.

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Starting in 2012, this new law will allow voters to choose among all candidates in primary elections, with the top two vote-getters advancing to the general election.

**Term limits:** *California Forward* supports the term limit reform measure expected to be on the next ballot. That measure would reduce the total number of years lawmakers can serve from 14 to 12, but allow lawmakers to serve those dozen years in the Assembly or Senate, or a combination. The reform is expected to reduce the disruption caused by lawmakers jockeying for their next seat, while allowing leaders and committee chairs to stay in positions long enough to have a sustained impact. This is a priority for CA Fwd in 2011 and 2012.

**Campaign finance.** *California Forward* believes that full and immediate disclosure is the best near-term opportunity to minimize the negative impact of campaign financing on election results and policy decisions. While not a top priority for CA Fwd in 2011, we will consider supporting proposals by others, including those from the Fair Political Practices Commission task force.

**Initiative process.** Direct democracy is an important tool that needs to be refined so that it can be effectively used by public interest groups, and to minimize the unintended consequences of poorly vetted initiatives. While not a top priority for CA Fwd in 2011, we will partner with other organizations to develop and advance specific proposals.

**Voter involvement.** Representative democracy relies on a high turnout of informed voters. The mechanics of the electoral process need to be strengthened to encourage more Californians to register, get engaged and vote. While not a top priority for CA Fwd in 2011, we will partner with other organizations to develop and advance specific proposals.

**Legislative structure reforms.** Elected representatives need to be able to better represent their communities and regions, and the Legislature needs to

be restructured to be able to better solve significant issues. California, for example, should consider alternatives including a unicameral legislature and regional legislative sessions. While not a top priority for CA Fwd in 2011, we will partner with other organizations to explore and advance specific proposals.

## A STRUCTURE THAT DELIVERS RESULTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

State and local agencies must work together to achieve improved education, increased employment, decreased poverty, decreased crime, and improved health.

To address challenges, local and regional governments must share strategies and resources. Without substantial performance improvements in the public sector, California will not be able to simultaneously grow the economy, create equal opportunity and protect our environment.

To improve our state, California must do the following:

1. **Empower local governments** to better deal with crime, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, public health and poverty by giving greater discretion to local government regarding how to best achieve state-wide outcome goals. The state needs to help communities improve outcomes, by providing stable and dedicated funding streams, while enabling local voters to hold locally elected leaders accountable for results.
2. **Create incentives for local governments to cooperate on regional challenges** – preparing the workforce, developing infrastructure and growing jobs, while finding more efficient ways to protect air and water quality, wildlife habitat and open spaces. These incentives can be financial and regulatory, encouraging governments to coordinate activities, share resources, and find better regional solutions for transportation, housing and environmental protection. Developing solid proposals with broad support

is a high priority for CA Fwd in 2011 and 2012.

**3. Revitalize educational systems** to ensure California is a place where children can get a world-class education that prepares them to excel in a global economy and support families of their own. The method for financing schools is a critical element of the state and local fiscal relationship. A significant body of research shows California should invest more in schools – but more in a system designed to improve results, particularly in low-performing schools. The most promising models strengthen relationships between K-12 and higher education institutions, as well as the role of schools in their communities. CA Fwd will partner with other groups dedicated to educational reforms to advance school finance and governance reforms.

**4. Encourage elected leaders to negotiate pension solutions.** “ Pension reform ” is not a governance issue. But if pension liabilities are not resolved, the positive impact of governance reforms will be muted. CA Fwd will partner with other nonpartisan efforts to develop a factual understanding of the challenges and the options for resolution

The Cities, Counties, Schools (CCS ) Partnership also has a list of reforms they would like to see implemented. See their web site [www.ccspartnership.org/default.cfm](http://www.ccspartnership.org/default.cfm)

Repair California has the following web site [www.repaircalifornia.org/](http://www.repaircalifornia.org/) but it was not available as this publication went to press.

The state legislature announced in September 2009 a Joint Select Committee on Reform to look for ways to make state government more effective. The committee has been tasked with:

- Giving Californians more value for their tax dollars by making government more efficient and accountable.

- Prioritizing key issues, so government makes the tough decisions and only turns to the voters when absolutely necessary.
- Cutting through the gridlock caused by outmoded rules and undue partisanship.
- Making government more transparent and accessible from around the state.
- Diminishing the influence of special interests. Making government more customer-friendly.
- Creating a process that encourages decisions that reflect long-term thinking, not short-term band-aids.

### LWWUS Webinars

**Webinar Library Now Online! (NEW )** New and old webinars are now online. Check out the LWWUS Members Section for guidance and tips from Annual Meetings to Candidate Forums and Voter Guides. Click to go directly to the [Webinar Library](#) or to access our most recent [Annual Meeting Webinar](#).

### "The Women's, Yes!"

On Saturday, April 16, 11:30-1:30 at the Fremont Adult School Multiuse Room AAUW has a Women's History Tea and Program in which you hear women's voices of protest. The source is Howard Zinn's book, "Voices: The Peoples History of the United States of America." "The Women's, Yes!" features Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, Genora Dollinger, Martza Castillo and others. The audiences from our previous programs have raved about both the program and the food. If you want reservations or more information, please contact Marylouise Bailey ( 510-657-9770 or [m Bailey151@aol.com](mailto:m Bailey151@aol.com)). Cost \$20.



**Join the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

Any person, man or woman, who subscribes to the purpose and policy of the League may join.

To be a voting member, one must be at least 18 years of age and a U.S. citizen.

Annual dues includes membership in Local, Bay Area, California and National Leagues.

Make your check payable to: LWVFNUC and mail it with this form to:

**LWVFNUC-MEMBERSHIP, P. O. Box 3218, Fremont, CA 94539**

Individual Membership—\$60      Household—\$90

Donate to LWVFNUC \$ \_\_\_\_\_      Donate to Ed. Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_      Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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E-mail \_\_\_\_\_      New Member \_\_\_\_\_      Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Transfer From \_\_\_\_\_

Dues and contributions to the League are not tax deductible. Contributions to the LWV Ed Fund are deductible to the extent allowed by law. For more information or for confidential dues assistance, please contact: Andrea Schacter—schacter@pacbell.net.

**Mission Statement**

The League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark, and Union City, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**Diversity Policy**

LWVFNUC affirms its commitment to reflect the diversity of our communities in our membership and actions. We believe diverse views are important for responsible decision making and seek to work with all people and groups who reflect our community diversity.

**LWVFNUC Voter**

Published 10 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark, and Union City.

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**The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education**

We won't be receiving any background papers on this coming LWVUS study until May. In the meantime you might want to check out these books recommended by the national League.

- The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Undermine Education, by Diane Ravitch.
- The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future, by Linda Darling-Hammond.

**LWVUS Legislative Priorities**

The Board adopted the following **LWVUS Legislative Priorities** for 2011.

- Clean Air Defense
- Health Care Defense
- Money in Elections ( campaign finance reform )
- Voter Registration and Election Administration

**The Legislative Watch List** is as follows:

- CEDAW ( C onvention on the E limination of D iscrimination Against Women )
- Climate Change
- Ethics
- Immigration
- Safe Drilling and Mining ( " F racking " )

The Watch List means that if an opportunity arises on these issues and does not interfere with action on an advocacy priority, the LWVUS may take action if it appears we can make an impact.

## RedistrictingCA Conference

March 31, 2011, 12:00—5:00 pm  
 Doubletree San Francisco Airport  
 835 Airport Blvd.  
 Burlingame, CA 94010

In 2011, California will redraw our state and congressional district lines. For the first time, the new voter-approved Citizens Redistricting Commission will be redistricting. How the lines are drawn will determine whether communities have a fair opportunity to elect the candidates of their choice in state legislative, Board of Equalization and congressional elections. Come learn about how to present to the commission.

Register Today!. The conference fee is \$25. Reservations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. To register, please visit [www.commoncause.org/redistrictingCA](http://www.commoncause.org/redistrictingCA).

### Who is the Redistricting California Alliance?

We are non-profit organizations that are committed to ensuring California 's redistricting process is fair and inclusive: African American Redistricting Collaborative, Asian Pacific American Legal Center, California Common Cause, California Forward, California National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Center for Governmental Studies, Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy, League of Women Voters of California, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund. Rose Institute of State and Local Government at Claremont McKenna College, The Advancement Project, The Greenlining Institute, and the Redistricting Group at Berkeley Law.

### CALENDAR

Thurs., April 7	Action Committee	12:00 pm Brown bag lunch	Kay Emanuele 's home
Mon. April 11	LWV Board Meeting	1:00 pm	League Office 3375 Country Dr.
Thurs., April 14	Education Committee	9:30 am	Miriam Keller 's home
Sat., April 16	Voter deadline	Midnight	
Mon., April 18	General Meeting <i>Speak Up California</i>	7:00 pm	Fremont Main Library Fukaya Room