



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

VOTER



FREMONT, NEWARK & UNION CITY

FEBRUARY 2016



Monday, March 7, 2016
League Office
3375 Country Drive
6:00 PM

Special Member Meeting And Light Dinner

Come and join us for a light dinner while we vote on an amendment to our Articles of Incorporation. Please see page 4 for a full explanation of need for the changes in order to continue renting office space from Fremont Community Arts Council. The Special Member Meeting should take approximately 15 minutes. We will need a quorum for the vote!!!



Higher Education Consensus Meeting

Those of you who attend the Special Member Meeting are invited to stay for the Consensus Meeting which will start after the dinner and adjournment of the Special Meeting.

Members who attend the Special Member Meeting do not have to attend the Consensus Meeting.

February 22, 2016
Fremont Main Library
6:30 Meet & Greet
7:00 Program

Higher Education In Crisis

What Underlying Assumptions Have Caused It?



Dr. Noam Cook
Professor Emeritus
Department of Philosophy
San Jose State University

Dr. Cook will examine the nature, purpose and funding of higher education. Signs of change include mounting student debt, inability of the university to meet enrollment demands with limited space, and industry's need for more university-trained applicants.

Dr. Cook will discuss the underlying assumptions of why we are approaching a crisis in Higher Education.

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE



The holiday season may be over but the campaign season is revving into full swing. The caucuses and the primaries are just around the corner. While we in California are thrilled it has been raining, the amount of money raining on various campaigns, especially the Presidential race, is disconcerting and concerning.

Campaign finance watchdogs such as such as The Center for Responsive Politics (Opensecrets.org) and Followthemoney.org, show just how much money it takes to run elections as well as sources of funding. In 2012, over \$6 billion dollars was spent on federal elections alone, with over \$2.6 billion just for the Presidential race.

Arguably, nothing imperils the sovereignty of “we the people” more than labyrinth of money in politics and its influence. The controls in place and the Federal Election Commission, charged with oversight over campaign finances, often seem powerless and ineffective in regulating the flood of campaign funds. A May 2, 2015 New York Times article quotes the FEC’s chair Ann Ravel as saying that “The likelihood of the laws being enforced is slim.” The situation seems to have worsened with the loosening up of corporate spending since the Supreme Court’s 2010 Citizens United case. Clearly it was high time that we updated the League’s campaign finance position so that we could continue to be a measured voice towards protecting the democratic process in our nation.

Perhaps, even more detrimental to our democratic process than the vast amounts of money influencing politics, is lack of participation and apathy about voting. FairVote, a nonpartisan organization which tracks voter turnout, notes that the US voting rates of around 60% of eligible voters during Presidential elections and around a dismal 40% in other years, is much lower than other “established democracies” which tend to have voter rates of 70% or higher.

The League, FairVote and others have pointed out that a robust engagement by voters is critical to a healthy democracy. One reason given for low participation seems to be a general belief that one person’s vote won’t matter. However, the fact is that those who seek to win an election or keep an elected seat will pay more attention and be more responsive to those who vote than to those who don’t. Our vote, individually and collectively, does make a difference and it is the “firewall” against the unprecedented tsunami of money in campaigns. We have a choice, we either participate and vote, or we abdicate our responsibility to those who will buy the election. The choice is clear... register to vote and remember to vote.

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Editor Alex Starr

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA EDUCATION FUND

Study of Public Higher Education in California

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This is a pivotal moment in California public higher education. We are in a unique position to fundamentally change higher education in a way that builds on the values of access, affordability and quality that were embedded in the Master Plan for Higher Education.

Almost daily, there are media reports about the need for reform in California public higher education in terms of access, adequate funding, and affordability. Although the League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) has positions on education covering issues in preK-12 education and the California Community Colleges (CCC), it does not have a position on public higher education in California inclusive of the CCC, the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC) systems. This lack of an inclusive position prevents the LWVC from commenting on or advocating for or against proposed policies and legislation affecting higher education. This study was proposed and approved to remedy this situation and to provide the LWVC with a comprehensive and inclusive position on public higher education in California.

According to the 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education, open access to higher education is provided to all who can benefit from instruction. In defining the scope and purpose of this study, emphasis is given to the concept of access from the perspective of students and families—can students and families afford to pay for the increasing costs given reductions in state funding? The concept of access also includes preparedness for college work and other barriers and opportunities affecting students' successful enrollment and completion.

While the relationship of funding and affordability as key components of access is obvious, the inclusion of student preparedness and other issues arising from barriers and opportunities speaks to

more fundamental questions of equity: Access for whom? Access to what?

The scope of the study, therefore, has been refined to *examining access to quality public higher education in California including funding, affordability, preparedness, equity, and opportunities and barriers to student success.* Understanding these issues and their importance for ensuring access to public higher education is essential for both the membership of the LWVC and all residents of California.

Consensus questions start out with some suggested questions that each local League just discuss without asking for consensus until the group has completed the rest of the consensus questions and then return to the first set of questions at the end. They read as follows:

Discussion Questions:

What is the purpose of California's system of public higher education? Is it to supply an educated, competitive workforce for the state? Is it to offer the benefits of postsecondary school education to everyone capable of learning? Is it to ensure that the state will have a sufficiently large segment of well-educated citizens? Is it to develop future leaders? Is the purpose to increase opportunities for economic mobility otherwise lacking for first-generation and/or minority youngsters? Is it to continue emphasis on access and excellence as core values?

Are you now enticed by the discussion questions? Good! The consensus questions that follow focusing on Equitable Access, Funding & Affordability, Preparedness, and Opportunities/barriers to Success are equally interesting.

Now mark your calendar for our February 22nd meeting with our guest speaker and our consensus meeting on March 14th. See you there

LWVFNUC Articles of Incorporation Amendment Background Information

The purpose for amending our Articles of Incorporation is to obtain the Welfare Exemption from property tax assessment for our League Office located at 3375 Country Drive. The building is currently owned by the City of Fremont who leases it to the Fremont Community Arts Council (FCAC). FCAC sublets office space to various local non-profits which include us. All tenants must individually obtain this exemption in order for the City of Fremont to be exempted as well.

We are the only organization in the building that has not obtained the Welfare Exemption. The California Board of Equalization (BOE) is the agency that issues the Welfare Exemption. After we received our 501(C)3 determination letter from the IRS, we attempted to obtain the exemption last year. BOE denied our claim due to the wording in our Articles. Tom Carson, who helped us become a 501(C)3 corporation, has reworded Articles IV and V to be acceptable to BOE (we hope).

Proposed Article of Incorporation Amendment

(a) Article IV of the articles of incorporation of this corporation is amended to read as follows:

Article IV. This Corporation is organized and operated exclusively for, and its property is irrevocably dedicated to, charitable purposes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, the Corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under such provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.

(b) Article V of the articles of incorporation of this corporation is amended to read as follows:

Article V. No part of the net income or assets of this organization shall ever inure to the benefit of any director, officer, or member thereof, or to the benefit of any private person.

In the event of the merger or dissolution of the Corporation for any reason, all money and securities or other property of whatsoever nature which at the time be owned or under the absolute control of the Corporation shall be distributed at the discretion of the board, or such other persons as shall be charged by law with the liquidation or winding up of the Corporation and its affairs, to any member organization of the League of Women Voters national organization which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes and which has established its tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code; or if none of these organizations are then in existence or exempt under those tax provisions, then, at the discretion of the board, to another organization which is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes and which has established its tax-exempt status under such designated tax provisions.

Alameda County Water District

There will be a ACWD workshop coming up on Wednesday, Feb. 17th at 4 PM. at the ACWD office at 43885 Grimmer Blvd.

They will be discussing the budget, including a \$12,000,000 budget shortfall. The board has decided that there will be no rate increase this year so the shortfall will probably be growing larger. There is a lack of public attendance at the workshops, and they are very informative. At the last one, there were 2 chairs placed out for the "public". It would be interesting if about 25 League members would show up.

Mr. Weed continues to make the case for no more recycling of water although the ACWD and USD are having a joint exploration of doing that at the sewage treatment plant and using the water to recharge the aquifer. I would like to see a pro and con on the Board's thinking.

Water is an interesting topic and an important one. Please consider joining your League observer on February 17th at the ACWD workshop.

Marilyn Singer

FROM LWVC

Make It Fair Campaign

The [Make It Fair Coalition](#) was formed to work for reform of Proposition 13 by changing the unfair way in which commercial property is taxed in California. The League of Women Voters of California joined the [Make It Fair](#) campaign because school districts and local governments in California desperately need more revenue to rebuild services and restore educational opportunities for the state's children.

Together, over the past several months, the [Make it Fair Coalition](#) has made huge progress in bringing real reform to Prop 13 to the forefront of public debate. A few major accomplishments include:

- Securing nearly 300 [organizational endorsements](#), speaking directly with over 100,000 voters, generating significant press coverage, and training activists across California.
- Working with a cutting-edge team of experts to develop a policy package and securing the introduction of a proposed constitutional amendment in the state Senate

- Changing public attitudes: a [September 2015 survey](#) by the [Public Policy Institute of California](#) shows that 55 percent of likely voters support commercial property tax reform, an increase of five percentage points from the previous survey in May.

Even with this significant and encouraging progress, the Make It Fair coalition has decided not to pursue an initiative for the November 2016 ballot. Instead, Make It Fair will work to build an even more powerful coalition, expand public education, make the electorate reflective of California's diverse population, and raise funds to ensure the success of any future initiative.

Make It Fair is serious about reform and will continue to be in touch as plans for the coming months take shape.

League members embraced the Make It Fair campaign strongly; we anticipate that that support will continue and grow, as the whole coalition works to keep this issue vibrant and expand public support.

The New Motor Voter Law

1. I heard that California passed a New Motor Voter law. What does it do?

The goal of the New Motor Voter law is to create an easy, automated way to register to vote when you get a driver's license or state ID card at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). If you have already given your name, address, birthdate, and other relevant information to the DMV, the hope is that you will be able to register to vote by simply confirming you are eligible and being given the opportunity to provide additional voter registration information such as your party preference, a preference to receive election materials in another language, or whether you want to get your ballot in the mail.

In addition, the New Motor Voter law requires the Secretary of State (SoS) and the DMV to develop technology to transmit data on unregistered voters from the DMV to the SoS that can be used for outreach and education purposes only.

2. Is California's New Motor Voter law the same as Oregon's Automatic Registration law?

No. California's law is distinct from Oregon's in four important ways:

- CA requires a person to attest that they are eligible to vote at the DMV before they can be registered.
- CA will offer the attestation and any other voter registration questions in 10 languages.
- CA will give a person the chance to decline voter registration at the DMV.
- CA's law offers some protection against any state law penalties should someone inadvertently register to vote or mistakenly vote as a result of their DMV transaction. (Note: These state law protections may mitigate the potential federal immigration consequences for persons who inadvertently register to vote, but may not offer full protection.)

3. Does the New Motor Voter law change who is eligible to vote?

No. The New Motor Voter law does not change who can register to vote, only how you register to

vote at the DMV. To register to vote you must be a U.S. citizen, a California resident, 18 years of age or older by the next election, and not currently imprisoned or on parole for the conviction of a felony.

4. When will we see these New Motor Voter changes?

The Governor's Office, the SoS, and the DMV hope to have a fully automated voter registration system in place at the DMV before the 2016 elections. In fact, \$2.35 million in the state budget was allocated exclusively for improvements to voter registration at DMV. This system was already under discussion due to a notice of voter registration violations provided to the SoS and the DMV by a group of civic organizations and individuals deprived of voter registration by DMV, and negotiations led by ACLU, Demos, Project Vote, and Morrison Foerster (on behalf of Common Cause, the League of Women Voters of California, ACCE Institute, National Council of La Raza, and three individuals).

The transfer of data for those who decline voter registration at the DMV is subject to additional funding, completion of California's statewide voter registration database, and details to be worked out between the DMV and the SoS. Thus, implementation of this part of the law is not anticipated until sometime prior to the 2018 elections.

5. What is next for implementation of the New Motor Voter law?

The details of how an automated voter registration system will look at the DMV are still being negotiated. However, the hope is that a variety of stakeholders will be invited into the process as it moves forward to ensure that best practices are put into place to ensure a modernized, accessible, and seamless voter registration system that will increase the number of registered voters in California.

For information on recommended best practices for automated voter registration please see "Electronic Voter Registration: Modernizing our Democratic Process," released by the NALEO Educational Fund.

Sat, Feb 6	Bay Area League Day	9:30 AM-2:30 PM, Maple Hall 13837 San Pablo Ave, San Pablo
Thur, Feb 11	Action Group	11:00 AM – 1:00 PM League Office 3375 Country Drive, Fremont
Mon, Feb 22	General Meeting Dr. Noam Cook–Guest Speaker	6:30 PM Meet and Greet, 7:00 PM Program Fremont Main Library, 2400 Stevenson Blvd.
Tues, Mar 1	Board Meeting	6:45 PM Dining Room at League Office 3375 Country Drive, Fremont
Mon, Mar 7	Special Member Meeting and Higher Ed Consensus Meeting	6:00 PM Soup and Special Member Meeting 6:30 PM Consensus Meeting 3375 Country Drive, Fremont
Thur, Mar 10	Action Group	11:00 AM – 1:00 PM 3375 Country Drive, Fremont
Mon, Mar 21	Board Meeting	6:45 PM League Office 3375 Country Drive, Fremont

ALL MEETINGS ARE FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND WHEEL CHAIR ACCESSIBLE

Mission

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.

Join the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TODAY!

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. Members under 18, or non-citizens, are welcome as non-voting Associate Members. Dues include membership in LWVFNUC, Bay Area League, and the California and National Leagues. Financial support for dues is available through our scholarship program. Contact Evelyn La Torre, Membership Chair, for information.

Name (s) _____

New Member Renewal

Transfer from _____

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OR GO ONLINE AT LWVFNUC.ORG!

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