

FREMONT, NEWARK & UNION CITY

JANUARY 2012

What is Affordable Housing?

In anticipation of the League of Women Voters Bay Area League Day on February 5, 2012, LWVFNUC is offering a tour and Q & A session of Abode's newest affordable housing project, Main Street Village. This special opportunity will give our members an up close and personal view of the best of affordable housing.

Come and learn how affordable housing is defined, and who defines it. Does that definition hold true no matter the location? What services are offered? Are there always services at these locations? How is funding secured? What makes a good affordable housing project? How long does it take from conception to completion? How many partners are part of Main Street Village's success? What role does local, regional, state, federal, government play?

Abode Services

Abode Services, formerly Tri-City Homeless Coalition, has a goal of finding permanent and transitional housing for the homeless and supporting the residents, shelter and other critical services in an emergency and support services that help people to stay in their homes.

One of Abode's special programs is Project Independence, designed for youth aging out of foster care. In collaboration with other social service groups, supportive services offered include case management, education and vocational training, life skills, healthcare.

Abode recently received for a 7th year a four star rating from Charity Navigator for Financial integrity and Accountability and Transparency.

Mayor Bob Wasserman
Our city and League lost a beloved public servant on Dec. 29th. Bob was a standard bearer for civility, open government and public service. Our condolences to his family and colleagues.

**ABODE TOUR
OF MAIN STREET VILLAGE
FOR LEAGUE MEMBERS**



Join us for a special tour of Abode Services newest addition to affordable housing in Fremont. A LEED certified project, it provides permanent housing for low and very low income residents. Over 2,000 applicants vied for the 63 units.

The two 3-story buildings include a community room, meeting rooms, computer room and resident services offices. The large outdoor area between buildings has a community garden and an innovative playground. A small health clinic and more supportive services are located in the main building.

A question and answer session with an Abode representative will follow the tour.

WHAT: Abode's Main Street Village Tour

WHEN: Monday, January 23, 12:00-1:30 P.M.

WHERE: 3615 Main Street, Fremont

For more information contact John Smith.

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President's Message



Happy New Year! As we get out a new calendar we want to take the time to wish you a very healthy, profitable and successful new year.

We hope we have a great year for you in our League programming. There is a delightful tour of Abode's Main Street Village this month. Come see what our redevelopment affordable housing money made possible. Some other ideas are "What does Redistricting look like in the Tri-Cities?", The LWVUS study of privatization, "How the State is going to handle the new federal health care law," and "what the new system of prison to jail transfers will be like".

We have one major problem staring at us. Publicity. How are we going to get the word out about our great programs, explanations of the initiatives on the June ballot, what redistricting and top two candidates in a primary will mean to the voters. The Argus has discontinued the Community Calendar. What can we do to replace it? If you have ideas, contact someone on the League Board.

In 2012 we look forward to the next LWVUS study on Privatization. The next 3 VOTERS will contain background material on this topic. We will also be gearing up for the June Primary election and the November General election.

Miriam Keller
President

Published 10 times a year by the League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark, and Union City (LWVFNUC)
PO Box 3218 Fremont, CA 94539
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From LWVC

Initiative and Referendum Reform: Some Preliminary Ideas

The Initiative and Referendum Study Committee is sifting through dozens of ideas to reform California's initiative and referendum process, seeking deeper policy-based issues and resolutions. The reform ideas cover a wide range of possibilities, from throwing out the whole process as suggested by Peter Schrag in *Paradise Lost* to a wholesale embrace of the growing trend of direct democracy as represented by the initiative and referendum. In evaluating these ideas, the Study Committee is examining initiative and referendum history, process, and key concerns to uncover policy matters and solutions that will stand the test of time in shaping the League's positions in the future.

While the breadth of the reform areas is extensive, it helps to categorize them. Although this is not an exhaustive list of the ideas being studied by the Committee, below are some of the more popular themes:

1. Level the Imbalance of Money Interests –

Money spent by proponents before an initiative qualifies for the ballot can determine which measures even get qualified. To level the playing field, adjust qualification requirements to allow fewer signatures or allow more time to qualify an initiative. Some say the State could benefit by just charging proponents \$2 million to put an item on the ballot, rather than gathering signatures!

Increase Transparency – The shocking sums of money spent to influence voters after a measure has qualified for the ballot, while unlimited according to the Courts, can at least become more easily viewable. Improve accountability, disclosure and easy public access to information about the money that flows into and through the initiative process.

2. Engage Citizens – Use deliberative polling or a citizens' initiative review panel to engage and educate the voting public about ballot measures. In Oregon panels of 24 voters, randomly-selected and demographically-balanced, come together from across the state to evaluate a ballot measure. The panels hear directly from campaigns for and against each measure and call upon policy experts during the multi-day public review. At the conclusion, each panel then drafts a Citizens' Statement highlighting the most important findings about the measure. Separate panels are used for each ballot measure.

3. Think Slowly; Work Together – Restructure the people's initiative process to include steps which are normally part of the legislative process—adding analysis, deliberation, debate, negotiation and the ability to amend the measure before balloting. Revisit the indirect initiative process by providing incentives of a lower signature threshold or longer circulation time to initiative proponents for indirect initiatives submitted to the Legislature.

4. Use Technology – Allow e-gathering of signatures on the Internet, or other utilization of technology to streamline or enhance the qualification process such as allowing a "no" to indicate an item should not appear on the ballot (balanced with concerns of disenfranchisement of non computer literate or citizens without access to computers.) If you'd like more information, the Initiative and Referendum study Web page has a list of preliminary resources. For a lively discussion on the topic, join the I&R study listserv, and/or the Facebook group. Study material for local Leagues will be available in the summer of 2012. Consensus reports will be due in March 2013, allowing local Leagues time after the November 2012 election to hold consensus meetings.

A Regional Meeting Coming to Your Area...Mark your Calendar!

What is going on with the California state budget? Are you ready for 2012 federal election? Why is the League studying the initiative and referendum process? What issues are impacting your area?

Join us on **February 25, 2012** at the Martin Luther King Library in San Jose to learn more from expert speakers about these important issues. Watch for more information on the regional meetings on the LWVC members Web site.

From LWVUS

Privatization Study Background Paper

Subcontracting Public Education

By Ted Volskay

BACKGROUND

An education management organization (EMO) is a private entity that is subcontracted to manage one or more traditional public schools charter schools, or an entire school district. The EMO objective is to achieve efficiencies that translate into improvements in academic performance, cost savings for the school districts or profits in the case of for-profit EMOs. As a result, EMOs operate schools with the same or fewer financial resources than had been provided to the schools by the public sector. In 2007, it was estimated that for-profit EMOs operated approximately 20 percent of all charter schools.¹

Education Alternatives, Inc., (EAI) was a publicly traded, for-profit EMO that was headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Established in 1986, EAI stock was traded in the over-the-counter market and quoted on the NASDAQ Exchange.² An EAI's ability to make a profit for stockholders is directly tied to EAI's success in cutting the operating costs of the schools that it is managing.³

In 1992, the Baltimore City Public Schools entered into a \$133 million, five-year contract with EAI to oversee the management and instruction at nine of the 182 schools within the district. The schools to be managed by EAI included eight elementary schools and one middle school. The contract was later modified to include three additional schools. The contract called for yearly reviews and a provision for the Baltimore City Public Schools to terminate the contract at any time following a 90-day notice.⁴

Under terms of the contract, EAI responsibilities included facilities management, financial management and some staff development. Under the contract, EAI had the autonomy to determine which services it would provide directly and which services it would subcontract with the school system to deliver where it did not wish to provide such services directly. EAI also had partial discretion to select staff, curriculum delivery, instructional methodology, training and other areas supporting instruction. The contract provided for a periodic transfer of funds based upon a negotiated per-pupil allocation for educational and most non-instructional services.⁵

EAI management expected a 25 percent reduction in operating and administration expenses. Of these savings, 20 percent would be reinvested back into the classroom and the remaining 5 percent of savings would be profit for EAI stockholders. In turn, the Baltimore City Public Schools would not incur any additional cost beyond what already was allocated for public education or approximately \$5,500 in average annual per-pupil cost.⁶

EAI and school system staff agreed to appoint a school district employee to serve as a liaison to represent the superintendent. The liaison was responsible for staffing decisions and disciplinary measures, and for adhering to the policies and procedures of the Baltimore City Public Schools.⁷

In November 1995, the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners agreed to serve EAI with a 90-day notice to terminate the contract, and the contract was terminated in the spring of 1996, one year prior to completion of the original five-year contract.⁸

Privatization Case Study: Subcontracting Public Education – Baltimore City Public Schools and Education Alternatives, Inc. (EAI).
Governmental Level: City (Baltimore, Maryland)
Primary Privatization Mechanism:
Subcontracting/Outsourcing

Health Care Advocacy Conference Call

LWVC has a record of support for single payer healthcare in California. Federal healthcare reform is being implemented in California now. Interested LWVC members will be monitoring implementation of federal healthcare reform in California, working with other consumer groups to both educate the public and insure the best possible outcome in California. If you are interested in joining this group, please join a conference call on Thursday, January 12 at 7 pm. Contact Helen Hutchison, hhutchison@lwvc.org, for details.

EAI proposed to operate the schools for the average annual per-pupil cost of approximately \$5,500. One criticism of the annual per-pupil cost approach was that the contract called for the district to provide EAI the average cost per pupil for the district as a whole. However, all but one of the schools managed by EAI were elementary schools, which are less costly to operate than high schools on a per pupil basis. Furthermore, on a per pupil basis, the cost to teach special needs students is much higher than the cost to teach students without special needs. This is an important cost consideration because the schools managed by EAI served proportionally fewer special needs students than the other schools served by the Baltimore City Public School District.⁹

According to the Superintendent of Baltimore City Public Schools, during the time EAI was managing the schools, EAI had the autonomy to determine whether it would provide the services directly or whether it would contract back to the school system for delivering those services. However, EAI had partial discretion with respect to selecting staff, curriculum delivery, instructional methodology, training and other areas supporting instruction, although the contract language on this point was ambiguous.¹⁰

Critics have argued that as a result, EAI inappropriately exercised its discretion and transferred all counselors and specialists (art, music, physical education and special education teachers) out of the schools managed by EAI.¹¹ For example, EAI eliminated all special education programs in favor of complete inclusion in the classroom. Since the student to teacher ratio is lower for special education classes than for traditional classrooms, this decision eliminated the more costly special education programs in favor of an increase in the number of less costly traditional classrooms. Students in need of special education services were simply moved into traditional instructional programs. These moves effectively lowered the student to teacher ratio for the majority of students. Integrating special education students into a traditional classroom setting helped a majority of students but came at the expense of students with special needs.¹²

EAI reportedly guaranteed improvement in student test scores after the first year. When compared to a control group (non-EAI students), reading and mathematics scores of EAI students dropped after the first and second years, but the test scores of the control group increased. The EAI student test scores caught up with those students in the control group after the third year.¹³

The University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) evaluated and compared EAI managed schools with schools managed by Baltimore City Public Schools. Here are some of the conclusions cited by the study:

- Schools managed by EAI cost 11 percent more to operate than district run schools;
- Parent involvement levels in EAI and district run schools was approximately the same; and
- Overall effectiveness of teaching was the same among EAI and district run schools.

The UMBC study concluded that “the promise that EAI could improve instruction without spending more than Baltimore City was spending on schools has been discredited.”¹⁴

The superintendent of the Baltimore City Public Schools at that time cited the following lessons learned:¹⁵

Anticipate conflict – some in the education community embraced the EAI partnership while others were distrustful;
Secure the support of all constituencies beforehand – school leaders cannot impose innovations on school communities;

- Establish specific performance objectives at the outset with milestones to monitor progress and accountability mechanisms linked to funding;
- Establish a reasonable time frame for changes to occur and inform the public about realistic expectations;
- Agree to terms of severance – when preparing the contract, be very specific about the disposition of leases, equipment, materials and supplies when the contract is terminated;
- Anticipate the need to reopen the contract and of the agreement as needed – when implementing innovative changes, flexibility is needed to resolve unexpected issues.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

1. The first school managed by EAI was South Pointe Elementary School in Dade County (Miami) Florida in 1990. The contract to manage South Pointe Elementary School was not renewed by the school district.¹⁶
2. In November 1994, EAI signed a 5-year contract with the Hartford, Connecticut, Board of Education to manage the school district. EAI was given the responsibility of operating 32 schools in the district, while the Board of Education retained authority for policymaking. Controversy began when EAI's proposed budget for the 1995-96 school year included cuts in teaching positions. Most school board members would not support the reduction in teachers. The school board terminated the contract with EAI in January 1996, reportedly because EAI would not operate under the contract as written. EAI countered, saying that it ceased services because the school district failed to pay for services rendered in accordance with the contract.¹⁷
3. Maryland became the first state to exercise its authority to seize control of failing schools under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The Maryland State Board of Education ordered new management of the schools, but the legislature immediately passed legislation to delay the takeover. The Governor subsequently vetoed the bill but the Governor's veto was overridden.¹⁸
4. EAI was specifically mentioned as being less successful than privatization advocates predicted in a study comparing privatization of public schools in the United States and Great Britain. The study notes that the relatively low level of per capita funding for public education has made it difficult to make a profit and has contributed to a recent lull in public education privatization initiatives in the United States.¹⁹
5. During the first year of the contract with Baltimore City Public Schools, EAI was paid \$26.7 million and reported a gross profit of \$1.9 million or 7.1 percent; however, EAI's refusal to produce a public budget aroused suspicions about the company's reported profits and losses.²⁰

6. One criticism of the EAI - Baltimore City Public Schools experience was that the administrators didn't give teachers time to develop an open attitude toward the program.²¹

7. EAI changed its name to the Tesseract Group, Inc. The Tesseract Group filed for bankruptcy in October 2000.²²

Ted Volsky (LWVNC) is a member of the LWVEF Education Study Committee on Privatization of Government Services, Assets and Functions.

Produced by the Privatization of Government Services, Assets and Functions Study, 2011

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Potential Dumbarton Rail Revival Generates Buzz

By Cecily O'Connor

A plan to connect the Peninsula with the East Bay using a train service along the old Dumbarton rail corridor is chugging along and under environmental review.

The Dumbarton Rail Corridor Project, which could cost as much as \$800 million, outlines three commuter rail options and one bus alternative to improve public transportation, reduce roadway congestion, and improve air quality. The final choice is expected next fall.

The oft-delayed undertaking — stalled previously due to factors such as ridership concerns and escalating costs — would restore the Dumbarton rail line, which freight trains stopped crossing nearly 30 years ago. It also would link Caltrain, the Altamont Express, Amtrak's Capitol Corridor, and BART, as well as AC Transit bus lines, at an inter-modal transit center in Union City.

"Two things made this a very real project," said Susan Lempert, former commissioner at the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. "One, there's a new proposal for how the Dumbarton rail will work, with a robust system for serving more passengers and more stops."

The other is Facebook's recent relocation to Menlo Park, which would be immediately serviced by the Dumbarton rail connection, she added.

"I'm somewhat optimistic after this long slog of having the project go up and down," Lempert said. Several studies have been conducted since the early '90s looking into using the corridor for passenger rail service. Plans took shape in 1994 when the San Mateo County Transit District bought the right-of-way between Redwood Junction and Newark Junction for future rail service.

Then in 2000 and 2005, MTC allocated funding for the project in its regional transportation plan. In 2006, environmental analysis began. But three years later, engineering studies revealed increased construction costs and updated ridership forecasts were lower than expected, with about 6,000 daily riders.

So the project idled until the current rail alternatives were identified and submitted for state and national environmental review. Meanwhile, open-house meetings held this past November brought commuters up to speed about commute patterns and ways to improve them.

The Dumbarton project "is a critical part of the regional rail plan for the San Francisco Bay Area," said Yoriko Kishimoto, co-founder of Friends of Caltrain, a transit advocacy group.

Rail corridor reconstruction would include track improvements, a new rail bridge, four stations, and a centralized traffic control system. Proposed rail service, operated by Caltrain, would span the southern portion of the San Francisco Bay and connect East Bay communities (Union City, Fremont, and Newark) with those on the Peninsula (Menlo Park, Redwood City, San Jose, and San Francisco).

"There are a lot of employment centers and housing coming up where these stations are going to be," said Jim Bigelow, chair of the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee.

The first rail alternative has trains running during weekday peak periods in the morning and late afternoon, with one train an hour departing from Union City, and crossing the rail bridge to San Jose. Another train would travel from Union City to San Francisco every hour.

The second is a rail shuttle with peak period weekday service running every 15 minutes between Union City and Redwood City.

The third is a hybrid, blending the first two alternatives to result in hourly trains from Union City to San Francisco and San Jose in the morning and late afternoon. A rail shuttle also would operate every 30 minutes between Union City and Redwood City.

In addition, the proposal lays out a bus alternative, placing buses on the existing Dumbarton road bridge. It has not yet been determined who would operate the buses.

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Lastly, there is a “no build” alternative. Each rail alternative would cost “in the order of” \$700 million to \$800 million, based on previous estimates from a March 2011 study, said Christine Dunn, public information officer for the San Mateo County Transportation Authority. The bus option is estimated at \$82 million, with an additional \$129 million (2009 dollars) for removing the existing bridge.

Currently, \$304 million has been earmarked from various sources — including bridge tolls and transportation agencies in Alameda and San Mateo — to pay for the project, Dunn said.

It’s not clear yet how the shortfall will be made up. One possibility lies with Senate Bill 653 (Steinberg), which would enable counties to raise taxes to pay for certain projects like transportation. But the bill was actually sent to the state legislature’s inactive file in late August.

In the meantime, the Alameda County Transportation Commission is considering additional funding in a new expenditure plan it expects to take to voters in 2012. This would position SMCTA to apply for state and federal funds, Dunn said.

The rest will likely come from a mix of local, state, and federal sources, said Aidan Hughes, interim executive officer of planning and development at SMCTA. If a rail alternative is chosen, he said he expects ridership will be between 9,000 and 16,000 trips a day.

Said Lempert: “If people get behind this, the money will be found to do it.”

ACTION COMMITTEE UPDATE

John Smith gave the committee a short tutorial on redistricting. He also reminded us that in the June 2012 Primary election, we will have the new Top-Two method for deciding who will be running in the November General election. This may cause the League to do some voter education in preparation for the June election. 2222.

Alex noted that the next Ohlone Board of Trustees meeting will have them selecting a new trustee to fill a vacancy. They will also be choosing the new redistricting alignment for their elections henceforth.

On January 5th we will tape a new Voting Matters program using the services of Walter Garcia. We will put this program on YouTube.

The December meeting will be our annual Holiday restaurant/meeting. Lots of good food mixed in with agenda items.

VOTER SERVICE - Redistricting Maps

Go to our website at LWVFNUC.ORG . Move your mouse over "Elections/Voter Info" and click on "Redistricting California". You can link to the final districts maps for the 53 California Congressional districts, 40 State Senate, 80 State Assembly and four Board of equalization districts. For example:

- Pete Stark representing CD15 of California includes the communities of: Castro Valley, Union City, Pleasanton, Hayward, San Lorenzo, San Ramon, Livermore, Dublin, and southeast part of the Town of Danville if you follow Crow Canyon Rd to Tassajara and then to the Alameda-Contra Costa County border. It also includes a large of part of northern Fremont—the boundary which runs along the Alameda-Santa Clara County line, cuts across near Mill Creek Rd to Tecado Terrace, follows Morrison Cyn Rd to Mowry/Peralta and then follows Peralta down until 880 Northbound.
- CD17 for Congressman Mike Honda's district includes: Newark, Cupertino, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, Milpitas and the rest of Fremont (south of the CD15 line).
- Assembly member, Bob Wieckowski, 25th District would include the lower half of Fremont, Newark, Milpitas, all of the City of Santa Clara, Berryessa and Alviso, portion of San Jose and a portion of the Alum Rock area of San Jose.
- The district north of the 25th will be newly drawn 20th and that seat will be open with no incumbents running. 20th District will include: Hayward, Castro Valley, Union City, Sunol, parts of Fremont, and the unincorporated areas of San Lorenzo, Cherryland, Ashland and Fairview.

If you are not sure which district you are in, the redistricting website shows district maps for the Assembly, Senate, Board of Equalization, and Congress.

Submitted by Sets Amann

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area

Presents

Bay Area League Day

Housing
and the

Bay Area's Future



Saturday, February 4, 2012

9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The First Unitarian Church of Oakland, 685 14th Street, Oakland, California

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area has chosen regional housing as the topic for its next annual Bay Area League Day educational forum. The event will feature a keynote speech from David Rosen of David Paul Rosen & Associates, and three panels of experts discussing 1) how to meet regional housing needs in compliance with the sustainable communities strategy mandated by California Senate Bill 375, 2) how to finance affordable housing, and 3) how to provide housing for the poor and the homeless:

1) POLICY

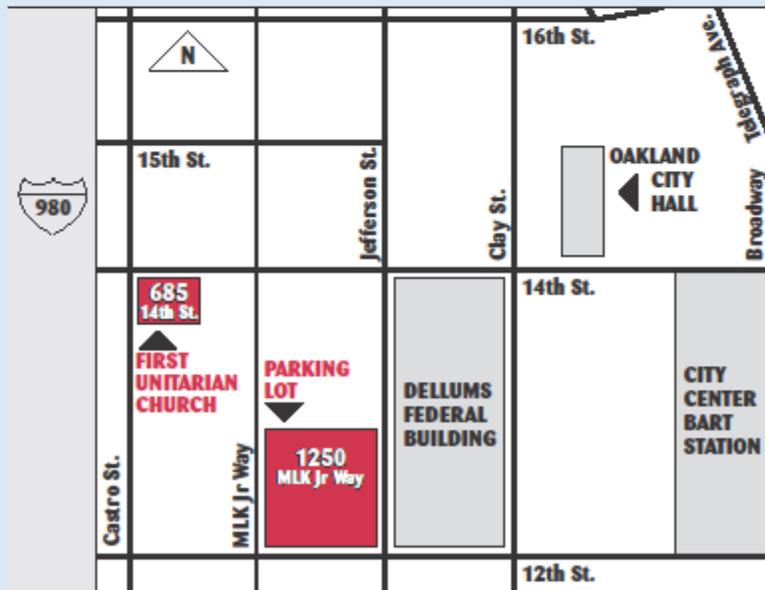
Ken Kirkey
Association of Bay Area Governments
Duane Bay
San Mateo County Housing Department
Richard Marcantonio
Public Advocates

2) FINANCE

Jack Nagle
Goldfarb & Lipman LLP
Linda Mandolini
Eden Housing
Susan Friedland
Affordable Housing Associates

3) UP AGAINST THE WALL

Tim Iglesias
University of San Francisco
Mary Murtagh
EAH Housing
Elaine de Coligny
EveryOne Home



The price of this year's League Day is \$30 (\$15 without lunch) in advance, and \$35 (\$20 without lunch) at the door. Breakfast is included for both options. Registration is available at www.lwvbayarea.org or by mail (check payable to "LWVBA") to 1611 Telegraph Avenue, Suite 300, Oakland, CA 94612. For more information, call (510) 839-1608.

CALENDAR

Jan. 19	Action Committee	12 Noon at Kay Emanuele's house
Jan 23	Abode Tour	12-1:30 Main Street Village
Jan. 24	Board Meeting	6:45 P.M. at League Office Fremont Community Activities Center 3375 Country Drive, Fremont
Feb. 5	Bay Area League Day	9A.M.-2 P.M. at First Unitarian Church of Oakland, 685 14 th St., Oakland

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 Andrea Schacter, Membership Chair, for information.

Name (s) _____

New Member Renewal

Transfer from _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

*Please make your check payable to:
LWVFNUC and mail it with this
form to:*

LWVFNUC-MEMBERSHIP
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Fremont, CA 94539

Individual Membership—\$60

Household Membership—\$90

Donation to LWVFNUC

\$ _____

Donation to Ed. Fund (*Make
separate check payable to
LWVFNUC Ed Fund*)

\$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____