



League of Women Voters Eden Area

VOTER

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Political Responsibility through Informed and Active Participation

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Aiwa Zelinsky and René Besold Receive Accolades at the 2017 Hayward Volunteer Awards Dinner

Two League of Women Voters Eden Area board members received awards at the 40th Hayward Volunteer Recognition dinner on October 10, 2017. René Besold received The Lifetime Achievement Award for her work with the Literacy Council and LWVEA, and Aiwa Zelinsky received an award for her work with our League. Congratulations to both!

René Besold's Award Speech

Dear Aiwa, Joanne, and the LWVEA Board,

In respecting the wishes of Ginny Martini, my thank you speech at the award ceremony was only one minute in length so I was unable to tell the 400 gathered there how important all of you are in my life and in my work with LWVEA.

Although we are of different ages, coming together from different backgrounds, having been raised in different parts of the country, educated in different institutions of higher learning and cherishing different ideals and beliefs, nevertheless we have formed a bond on this Board that is unmistakable.

It is because of this bond that I wanted to write to all of you and express my sincere appreciation for who you are and what you bring to my life and to our community.

Words are just words unless they are backed up by action in one form or another, and that's what you do. Over and over again, you take on responsibilities that would make many cower; you set up booths at BART stations and colleges to register prospective voters, face high school students and explain why it is important for them to register to vote and have their voices heard, present the pros and cons on often highly charged issues in front of biased crowds, make phone calls, write and text politicians and editors, study complicated issues at the local, state, and national levels, plan events and do so many other tasks too

numerous to mention. It is because of your willingness to step up and take action that I, too, am comfortable doing so. It is because of you that this award was bestowed upon me and I thank you sincerely.

It truly does "take a village," and you're my village! We stand arm in arm educating and empowering our community so that they can go forward and make a real difference in the trajectory of our future.

Thanks for being there for me and for providing unwavering support. I cherish you and your work ethic more than I can possibly ever put into words.

To me, you're just the BEST. Sending a hug and a huge debt of gratitude,

René Besold

SPEAKERS AT EDUCATION FORUM FIND CONSENSUS



"The State of Education in the Eden Area" was the focus of the LWVEA's most recent forum, moderated by Jim Negri, former superintendent of the Castro Valley School District.

Funding for schools was one topic that was mentioned by each panelist, with everyone concurring that school funding in California is so inadequate that it causes a significant negative impact on our schools.

Norm Fobért, former school principal, superintendent, and school board president (who is also the LWVEA treasurer) began the discussion with anecdotes of about great teachers. The overwhelming majority of teachers do a wonderful job, yet too often the news focuses on the very small percentage of unsuccessful teachers; “We cannot take a broad sweep of all teachers...or students”. He went on to say that funding needs to increase, because “quality, robust, holistic student support is essential.”

Charter schools representative Patrick Walsh also believed funding was a critical issue, and that reforms to Prop. 13 could result in greater resources. He also was concerned that local newspapers and other media avenues do not report often enough on education. Regarding charter schools, he noted that “quality is much more important than the type of school we have,” and “parents and the public need to know how their schools are performing”.

Mercedes Faraj, teacher and union advocate, described how unions set a high bar for educational standards in our schools. It is important that all community partners are at the table when discussing spending priorities, which often occurs during the LCAP (Local Control Accountability Process)

meetings. She said “Send your children, send your grandchildren, grab your neighbor’s children—send them to public schools. You need all the voices at the table to have a voice to say what they need”.



The final speaker was university administrator Maria Ochoa, who described two new community college practices that should assist in student success. First, they have eliminated remedial courses because students did not earn graduation credits for these courses, and they added expense and time to their college years without measurable improvements. Instead, regular courses will build-in more support for those struggling with reading, writing, and math skills. This is called the California Acceleration Project.

The other new practice is that community colleges will offer classes for free for the first year that a student enrolls. This is intended to motivate more students to take classes and complete their AA degrees more quickly. Many finish two years at community college and then transfer to a university to complete their bachelor’s degree.

Ochoa finished her remarks with a moving tribute to the late Delmo Della-Dora, who was her mentor and head of the teacher education program at Cal State Hayward (now Cal State East Bay). Della-Dora was also a former president of our league. She concluded that “until we confront and resolve

disparities that contribute to income inequality, we will fall short for all who desire advanced learning”.

The program concluded with a robust question and answer session led by Jim Negri. The panelists agreed that local school districts should decide their funding priorities, not the federal government. Other topics addressed included teacher evaluations, which often can assist in newer teachers becoming successful.

A key question focused on what the average community member can do to support schools. Suggested actions included local businesses offering internships and paid positions to students, because income inequality significantly impacts students. Parent involvement is also essential to student success and should be empowered.



Lynda Foster and Rita Duncan, the LWVEA Program Chairs, organized a powerful program with a thoughtful discussion that resulted in actions we can take to support schools. Congratulations and thanks to Lynda and Rita, our panelists and moderator, and those who assisted and took the time to attend the program.

Penny Peck

CO-PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Education, Empowerment, and Fulfillment...

On October 19, 2017, LWVEA held a successful education forum on the State of Public Education in the Eden Area. The forum was presented by an informative panel of speakers and moderators. It provided an opportunity for the public to learn more about the education issues in Eden area. The topics discussed at the forum ranged from the Charter school system, teacher performance and evaluation, education resources and funding, inequality, parent and community involvement, and student achievement. The forum once again highlighted the importance of the role of education in our lives and society. It reminded us of the League's position on education. Here we'd like to refresh our memories on the position that LWV has taken on public education.

- The League of Women Voters Eden Area has put education as one of its priorities and believes that education plays a vital and predominant role in the fulfillment of one's life and impacts the well-being of the society.

- The League of Women Voters of California has positions supporting Pre-K through 12 education, as well as Community College education. We work actively to educate ourselves and the community about innovations in education as well as financing for education. The League is tracking legislation related to the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), as well as its implementation. Enactment will be over the course of at least seven years and will require increased parent and community oversight: <https://lwvc.org/issues/education>.
- The League of Women Voters of California supports a comprehensive system of public higher education that serves the personal, professional, and occupational goals of all adult Californians and advances the social, economic, and civic needs of the state. To achieve these objectives, public higher education must prioritize access, affordability, equity, and excellence. These priorities require state funding, including student financial aid that is stable, predictable, sustainable, and timely: <https://lwvc.org/issues/education>.
- The League of Women Voters believes that an equitable, quality public education is critical for

students. The League believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12. For detailed explanation of the national League’s position on education, please visit the website: <http://lwv.org/content/federal-role-public-education-position>.

It is a truism – in today’s world education is the ultimate pathway to success. Education plays a key role in society, encouraging and empowering individuals to seize and exploit opportunities for achievement and success, and providing hope and means for those in the worst of social and economic situations.

“In the good society there are two further and vital services of education. One is to allow people to govern themselves intelligently, and the other is to allow them to enjoy life to the fullest.” (Galbraith, 1996)

*Aiwa Zelinsky and Joanne Young,
Co-Presidents*

HOLIDAY PARTY SET FOR DECEMBER 8 – Save the Date!

Our League’s annual holiday party is set for Friday, Dec. 8, 2017, from 5:30-8:30pm at the Balch Pavilion of St. Rose Hospital, 27200 Calaroga Ave., Hayward. There will be food, friendship, and our fundraising auction. Save the date! More information to come in the next VOTER newsletter.

BOARD BRIEFS

“National Voter Registration Day:



Richard Maurer, our Voter Registration chair, reported that our league had volunteers at six sites on Sept. 26, 2017, which was

National Voter Registration Day. Nineteen people registered to vote, and many more took the cards listing the website for online registration.

Payment for Affidavit Service: The LWVEA received \$4,951.25 from the Registrar of Voters for providing affidavits (voter registration forms) to more than 70 sites in our area, from January 2014 – June 2016. We may receive further payment from the money designated to the Dublin/Livermore league, since we have been assisting those communities since they dissolved their league.

Program Planning Meeting: Mark your calendars for Saturday, January 20, 2018, time to be announced, for our annual Program Planning Meeting. This will be held at the Castro Valley Adult School. More details in the next VOTER.

Penny Peck, LWVEA Secretary

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Corrine Hansen is from Southern California (Torrance) and moved to the Bay Area during the Dot.com era. Her educational background is in Business/Finance, obtaining her

bachelor's degree from USC and her MBA from Indiana University. She spent her career in Financial Analysis & Planning for international public companies. Corrine is retired and lives in Pleasanton. She enjoys community service, reading, gardening, and watching Netflix movies with her two dogs Molly and Rodrigo. Currently she is focused on expanding voter registration among the youth. She is also a mentor for a Puente student at Las Positas Community College.



Hank Hansen was born and raised on Staten Island in New York City. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Rochester and his Ph.D. in Mathematics from The Ohio State University. After five years of college teaching, Hank became an actuary and spent his career in the insurance and finance world. He holds retired status as a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries and is a retired Member of the American Academy of Actuaries. Hank has been an avid birder and stamp collector, and enjoys reading widely and getting back to exploring his original mathematical interests. He also enjoys volunteering as a homework helper at the Rincon branch of the Livermore Library and as a mentor in the Puente program at Las Positas.

Senator Wieckowski Honors Leagues, including LWVEA



State Senator Bob Wieckowski honored the local leagues in his district at an event on Sept. 28th at the Silicon Valley campus of UC Santa Cruz. The Community Partner of the Year Award.

SIPS AND CIVILITY

Our first Sips & Civility event, held on October 12th, provided LWVEA members a great opportunity to dialogue together about the topic of civil discourse. Carolyn Darcey hosted this first event, and it was wonderful to spend time in community together, sharing ideas and engaging critically with one another about this important topic.

The next Sips & Civility event will be Thursday, November 16th from 6:00 - 8:00pm at Norm Fobert's home: 1654 Via Amigos, San Lorenzo. Our topic for this meeting will center around education. We'll discuss education in the Eden Area (a great opportunity to process together the information we learned at the Education Forum), as well as education in the state of California (i.e. charter schools, food insecurity, homelessness, and other issues our students face). Please join us! All members of our community are welcome to attend. If possible, please bring a dish to share.

DID YOU KNOW? America's Relationship with Alcohol and Drugs

At our civil discourse meeting on October 24, we were divided into groups to resolve a "wicked" problem. The information we utilized for this exercise came from a report entitled Over the Edge Fact Sheet. Here are some of the facts reported.

- Nearly 70 percent of Americans are taking at least one drug, according to the Mayo Clinic.
- More than half of us drink alcohol, and almost half of all drinkers engage in binge drinking.
- Marijuana consumption is on the rise as more states relax their laws on its medicinal and recreational use.
- One in ten people uses drugs illegally, with marijuana and the nonmedical use of prescription drugs being the most common.
- Alcohol and drugs remain big business. According to the US Beverage Alcohol Forum, Americans spent nearly \$200 billion on alcoholic beverages in 2012. The US Office of National Drug Control Policy estimates that \$100 billion is spent on cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamines.
- The brief prohibition of alcohol from 1920 to 1933 failed to stop people from drinking, just as the criminalization of heroin in the 1920s and of marijuana in the 1930s failed to eliminate their use.
- The US Surgeon General reports that the result of combined efforts to educate the public on the dangers of tobacco has led to a steep drop in the percentage of adults who smoke cigarettes from 42 percent in 1954 to 18 percent in 2012.

Reprinted from the LWV North and Central San Mateo County November VOTER

HIGH SCHOOL VOTER REGISTRATION TRAINING WORKSHOP TO BE HELD ON NOV. 11, 2017 IN TRI-VALLEY

There will be a training session on how to implement the highly effective High School Education & Voter Registration program described in the "**Empowering the Voters of Tomorrow**" guide developed by the **League of Women Voters Education Fund**.

This training program is organized by one of our league members. The trainer will be Norma Alcalá, who is a League member and has extensive experience delivering this program to high schools throughout California. Currently, Norma is actively training additional groups to expand the reach of this outstanding program. **The training is set for Sat., Nov. 11th tentatively from 11-1pm, at Inklings Coffee & Tea, 530 Main St. Pleasanton. www.inklingscoffee.com.**

Please contact Corrine Hansen at corrinemhansen@yahoo.com, or (925) 918-3120 with any questions. Anyone interested in helping us educate our youth, is welcome!!

Big wins! Legislative wrap-up *October 17, 2017*

The 2017 California legislative session is a wrap, and thanks to League supporters like you, we have new laws addressing many of the critical issues we face in California. Because so many of you took action, we're celebrating major legislative victories:

- The California Values Act passed, ensuring state and local resources are not

being used to fuel mass deportations, destroy families, and cripple our economy.

- The passage of SB 2 and SB 3 will generate about \$5 billion for more affordable housing over the next five years.
- Campaign ads will have to identify their big money donors prominently on TV, radio, online, and in print with the passage of the **Disclose Act**.
- Community college students will be assessed more fairly, creating a clearer path to success and preventing them from being tracked into unnecessary non-credit remedial classes thanks to AB 705.
- The passage of AB 918 means the millions of voters with limited English skills will have access to more information in their language, including facsimile ballots—a critical step in ensuring all voices are heard on election-day.

In addition to the many action alerts we sent, the League was also advocating for other bills at the Capitol. **This year, Governor Brown signed ALL of the bills supported by the League that came across his desk!** California now has 27 new League-approved laws, improving California's policies on the environment, education, voting rights, and more.

Unfortunately, our efforts to reform California's broken bail system were stalled, but we'll have another chance to fix that when SB 10 is taken up again next year. We're also looking forward to ongoing efforts to address the housing shortage and progress on key higher education bills. The League is also ready to take action on campaign finance reform and any legislative responses to new federal activity.

League of Women Voters California

A Powerful New Tool to Search and Analyze Money in Politics

As Americans unite in frustration with the outsized influence of money in politics, the question of whose money is funding candidates for public office is more vital than ever. With the sheer quantity and complexity of campaign finance data increasing in recent elections, citizens need tools that respond to the challenge, like MapLight's new Campaign Contribution Search.

MapLight/VOTERS EDGE new search tool allows users to:

- Quickly and easily search for campaign contributions to all candidates for federal office from the 2008 election to the present;
- Search for multiple donors and multiple candidates simultaneously;
- View contributions from the same organization grouped together
- Download the data for free for more detailed analyses.

For journalists, researchers, and citizens, the new search tool is a powerful and intuitive way to explore the patterns of influence in our federal government. Data tables available for download break down the data by party, employer, contributor zip code, transaction date, and other categories that allow users to perform sophisticated analyses.

Public knowledge about who funds political campaigns is essential to a functioning democracy, and promoting

access to that information is a central aspect of MapLight.

LWVUS Statement on Executive Order to End Health Care Subsidies

Oct, 2017 | by Sarah Courtney

Washington, D.C. - League of Women Voters president **Chris Carson** issued the following statement in response to the White House executive order to end health care subsidies in the Affordable Care Act:

"President Trump's executive order to end health care subsidies for insurance companies will raise premiums and leave more Americans without meaningful health insurance. These subsidies were put in place deliberately to keep costs down for everyday Americans. Removing them now is a dangerous step toward unraveling a fragile system.

"President Trump is attempting to dismantle the American health care system piece by piece, in the same dangerous and under-the-table manner that the American people made clear to their Congressional leaders is unacceptable.

"We have said many times that the Affordable Care Act is not a perfect law. Congress should work to improve it. The White House should not undo the positive impacts this legislation has had for millions of Americans who previously could not afford health care coverage."

Contact: Sarah Courtney | 202-263-1332 | scourtney@lww.org




League of Women Voters of Eden Area

P. O. Box 2234 – Castro Valley, CA 94546 • 510/538-9678
 Representing cities of Hayward and San Leandro and
 unincorporated areas of Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland,
 Fairview, and San Lorenzo

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of the public in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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CALENDAR

Mon., Nov. 27, 2017 5:45-7:30pm	LWVEA Board Meeting	Hayward Historical Society 22380 Foothill Blvd., Hayward
Fri., Dec. 8, 2017 5:30-8:30pm	LWVEA Holiday Party	Balch Pavilion, St. Rose Hospital 27200 Calaroga Ave., Hayward
Sat., Jan. 20, 2018 Time TBA	Program Planning Meeting	Castro Valley Adult School 4430 Alma Ave., Castro Valley

For up-to-date info and specific details on events, check out www.LWVEA.org