



League of Women Voters Eden Area

V O T E R

Vol.62 #2 Political Responsibility through Informed and Active Participation March 2019

International Women's Day Celebration – Hayward City Hall

Friday, March 8, 2019, 5:30-8:00pm, 777 B St., Hayward

Join us for an evening of dynamic speakers, networking, and fellowship to celebrate International Women's Day. Learn about how education transforms the lives of women and girls. The event is co-sponsored by the City of Hayward, Dining for Women, **League of Women Voters Eden Area**, AAUW Hayward/Castro Valley Branch, Hayward Ghazni Sister City Committee and Eden Area Interfaith Coalition.

Speakers

- Special Welcome by City of Hayward, **Mayor Barbara Halliday**
- **Pooja Rathaur**, Student, Mount Eden High School. "Why, Because I am a Girl"
- **Dr. Karen Hossfeld**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Sociology & Sexuality Studies, San Francisco State University.
- **Najia Karim**, BS, M.Ed., RD, Founding Director of Cultural Society of Afghan Women and Founder of Armaghan Foundation.
- **Daniel Perlman**, Ph.D., Director for Girls Programing and Evaluation, OASIS Initiative, University of California, Berkeley. The event is free and open to the public. Free parking and close to Hayward BART.

Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/international-womens-day-eden-area-celebrat...>

Meet Your Electeds Event – Castro Valley Library

Tuesday, March 12, 2019, 5:30-7:30pm, 3600 Norbridge Ave., Castro Valley



The League of Women Voters Eden Area presents its biannual "Meet Your Electeds" event, where the community can get to know their local elected officials. Join us for a reception and brief presentation celebrating the current elected office holders in the Hayward, Castro Valley, San Leandro, and San Lorenzo areas.

RSVP: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/meet-your-electeds-2019-tickets-55530179261>

Special thanks to the Castro Valley Library for the use of their facility.

Annual Legislative Interview with Congressman Eric Swalwell



Each year, the LWVC encourages local leagues to interview legislators. Earlier this month, LWVEA president Penny Peck interviewed U.S. Congress member Eric Swalwell's district director. Mallory DeLauro works at Swalwell's Castro Valley office and offered her take on what he is doing to address the topics in the questions. The four questions asked were sent to us by the LWVC.

Redistricting: Congressman Swalwell strongly believes we need to get rid of "dirty maps and dirty money" in politics at all levels, so he is looking at legislation to compensate for the changes that occurred after the Citizens United court case. He is a co-sponsor of HR 1, the For the People Act, which includes provisions to end partisan redistricting and curb big money's influence by requiring all political organizations to disclose large donors, updating political advertisement laws for the digital age, establishing a public matching system for citizen-owned elections, and revamping the Federal Election Commission to ensure "there's a cop on the campaign finance beat."

Swalwell is working on an updated Civil Rights Act, since the current situation allowed for voter suppression in many states. He has introduced HR 356, the Protecting Our Democracy Act, in the last Congress to create an independent commission to determine who is using electronic means to undermine our elections and how to prevent it in the future; he expects to reintroduce that bill soon. That and other legislative solutions to voter interference are outlined on this website:

<https://swalwell.house.gov/issues/campaign-finance-reform-elections> .

Water Resources: Congressman Swalwell believes drought and conservation should always be on the minds of all Californians. He consistently opposed

proposals to divert water for agricultural uses at the expense of the environment. He also cosponsored HR 4239 in the 113th Congress, a bill to provide emergency drought relief to California and other affected states: www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/4239?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%224239%22%5D%7D

Public Education: The achievement gap, where students in poverty and students of color often struggle in school, is an issue for all families. The lack of preschool opportunities ties into this gap since many children begin school unprepared. Swalwell believes "your educational opportunities should not be dependent on your zip code." He also believes it is important for students to have access to training in the new trades and advanced manufacturing, to be prepared for good jobs in the future. He works with local companies to provide internships for students so they will be prepared for these jobs. Some of his other education legislation is a STEM bill, which outlined pathways to STEM employment (Science, Technology, Education, and Math). See <https://swalwell.house.gov/issues/education-and-student-loans> for his education-related efforts.

Local Issues: Coastal oil drilling is a major concern for the congressman, so he is cosponsor of HR 731, the California Clean Coast Act (<https://swalwell.house.gov/issues/energy-and-environment>), which would permanently ban offshore oil and gas leasing off California's coast.

Student debt is also a key issue that impacts nearly all California families; our increased housing costs makes repayment of student loans especially difficult. College loans affect many generations, from those in college now to parents of graduates who must support children in the first decade of their careers who live at home since they cannot afford housing and loan payments. He has authored bills including the Strengthening Forgiveness for Public Servants Act – which would enhance student loan forgiveness for teachers, police officers, public health workers and others who dedicate their careers to public service and the Student Loan Interest Deduction Act, which would increase the student loan interest deduction for individuals from \$2,500 to \$5,000. He also has cosponsored a bill to let students refinance their student loan debt at the same low rate being offered currently to new borrowers.

Gun violence is also an issue that affects nearly everyone so it is a huge priority for Congressman Swalwell. He has just introduced HR 1287, the No Guns for Abusers Act, to develop better, smarter ways for law enforcement to seize guns from domestic abusers. He is an original cosponsor of HR 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019, which the Judiciary Committee approved on February 13, and he is an original cosponsor of the Assault Weapons Ban of 2019, introduced on February 15, 2019. The Congress is currently holding hearings on the matter:

<https://swalwell.house.gov/issues/gun-violence-prevention> .

For more on Swalwell's focus on local issues, see: <https://swalwell.house.gov/issues/local-issues> .

The LWVEA thanks Mallory DeLauro from Congressman Swalwell's office for taking the time to meet for this interview and for providing the links to the bills that were discussed. A major focus of Director DeLauro's work at the Castro Valley office is to assist constituents with issues regarding federal programs. For example, they often assist military veterans with their needs. To contact the office, phone 510-370-3322.

Penny Peck, LWVEA President

Assembly Member Bill Quirk Meets for Legislative Interview



On February 15th, Lenora Taylor, Janice Friesen and I interviewed Assemblyman Quirk to better understand his priorities and positions on some of the League's high priority issues. The following are his responses to our questions.

Redistricting, State and Local **Would you support a bill to**

require local governments that have district representation to establish independent redistricting commissions that would use a transparent process, and fair criteria similar to the State, including safeguards against discriminating against any political party?

In principle, yes, but you always have to look at the details of the bill.

I voted for the redistricting for the State. I will support redistricting when the current districting makes it difficult for people to tell what district they are in. I definitely will support the "right" bill.

This is what I will support:

1. No protections for incumbents
2. No looking at registrations for party preference
3. Keep community interests together (critical in the State)

It is important to work with the cities and counties because if elected officials are against it, it is difficult to get this type of bill through. It would help if each of the Leagues talks to the electeds to convince them to support this type of bill.

Water Resources

California's elected officials are called to sustain California's economy and way of life in the face of

formidable water management challenges associated with controversial and/or aging infrastructure, unrealistic water expectations, and unpredictable future supplies. These challenges must be viewed against a backdrop of conflicts between the north and the south; between coastal and inland areas; and between environmental, agricultural, rural, and municipal and industrial uses of water. It can be tempting, and expedient, to focus on water conflicts that engage constituencies in ways that are oversimplified, misleading, and counterproductive.

What ideas do you have for addressing the needs of your own constituency while advancing water management planning that benefits all Californians?

There are a large number of small water districts (10 to a few hundred users) throughout the state that do not meet the State water standards. A dozen or so are 80% of the problem and they tend to be in low income areas. We passed a bill last year that said we should set up a special fund to allow those districts to get them up to standards. One way is to get them merged into an adjacent larger water district. The State will pay, through the water board, all the costs associated with the merger. That's helped in a few cases. Many of these are farming communities and the problem was caused by the nitrogen in the fertilizer getting into the water table. They are willing to bear some of the cost but can't pay for all of it. I'm on the committee of Environmental Safety & Toxic Materials and we would like to get a subsidy in place but the problem is getting it funded. I will support a solution to fund the remaining costs be it a tax or fee. This is probably the most important initiative in terms of people having safe water. We could use grassroots support, like the League, to help getting this through. In terms of water quantity, my opinion as to what we should be doing is water reuse. It turns out to be more economic than desalinization. If I had my way, if every district that could do this, you would have water reuse of all sewage. You need storage and a number of things to do this, but it is cheaper by far than desalination. For agriculture uses, the first thing you need to do is look at the rule "First in Use, First in Right" to make water availability more equitable.

Another issue is that there are areas where crops are endangered because of salt. They need to desalinize or raise different crops that are salt tolerant. Farming in the Delta needs to stop because, along with the water usage, if the western islands go down in the event of an earthquake, salt will enter the water and places like Contra Costa County will no longer be able to get their water from there. We are not sure what we need to do to find an economically feasible solution.

Reservoirs that are off river systems and the Grand Tunnel. The reason we need the tunnel is the alternative is doing the pumping we're doing. What the pumping stations do is bring the Sacramento River water down and allows farming. What happens with the

pumping is that you get these reverse flows and millions of fish, Smelt and whatever, get caught up in the pumps or if they don't, they end up in part of the river system where they don't belong. It is clear the Delta ecology is collapsing and the reason is the pumping. There is a need to keep pumping if we want to support farming. We can reduce that pumping with the off-river reservoirs and the Grand Tunnel. In high-rainfall years, you bring the water down and put it in reservoirs. There are 2 sites for off-river storage. With those 2 reservoirs and the tunnel operating, only with high flows, you're going to reduce the amount of pumping. We better have these reservoirs in reserve particularly for dry years. This is the way to save the Delta.

Public Education In California – Closing the Achievement Gap

Large achievement and opportunity gaps still persist in California by race, ethnicity, income and English learner status. School finance reforms have helped districts improve student outcomes, but these gaps still persist. The recently released Getting Down To Facts II study concludes that California's public schools need a continued focus on closing achievement gaps through multiple approaches. This time, however, early childhood education is cited as a priority because of "the disproportionate achievement gap that already exists when children enter kindergarten." In fact, early childhood education is identified as one of the three areas representing "the major (public education) policy challenges of the coming decade" and Governor-elect Gavin Newsom has clearly stated his commitment to universal preschool and early childhood education. For years closing the achievement and opportunity gaps has been both a clear state and local priority. We join with the researchers in asking a different and equally important question: "Are there ways to avoid the gaps in the first place?"

As a legislator, what are your thoughts about the findings of Getting Down to Facts II? What action(s) would you support to further these goals?

First of all, the early childhood education is starting too late. The reason for the gap is that not all children start preschool with at the same level of achievement. Parental support for learning makes a big difference. This has to start sooner than even preschool. Quality childcare and childcare workers are paid the lowest of the low. We need to pay them more and they should be unionized as well. I just supported a bill that is allowing homecare workers that are licensed to become unionized. We could do the same thing for childcare workers, to get better pay and perhaps better training. The other thing that can disadvantage kids is lead in paint. It is much more likely to have lead in the paint and peeling paint in the lower income residences. This can affect a child's ability to learn. Also, It's more important to have universal daycare. I think the money should go into subsidized daycare.

Should the Prop 13 ballot measure be defeated in the Nov. 2020 election, can changes be enacted by the legislature? Is the only way to modify it, another initiative?

Yes.

Carolyn Darcey, Membership Chair

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE BILL?

The Colorado House of Representatives passed the National Popular Vote bill recently, after a four-hour debate. The bill now goes to Governor Polis, who has publicly stated that he supports the bill.

After the bill is signed, Colorado will be the 13th jurisdiction to enact the National Popular Vote bill. The enacting states will then have 181 electoral votes - 89 away from the 270 needed to bring the bill into effect.

Meanwhile, the National Popular Vote bill is also making progress in other states. In New Mexico, the bill has passed the House and will now be considered by the Senate. Hearings are scheduled in Nevada on Tuesday February 26 and on Friday March 1 in Maine. Learn more at the [National Popular Vote web site](#) which has 14 explanatory videos and [answers to 131 myths](#) about the bill.

The non-profit National Popular Vote organization employs traveling and local representatives on a year-round basis to conduct one-on-one meetings with state legislators and groups and individuals that influence state legislators.

BACKGROUND

The National Popular Vote bill would guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The bill would give every voter a direct voice in deciding who becomes President. It accomplishes this by giving every voter in every state a direct vote over the disposition of a bloc of 270 or more electoral votes (enough to elect a President). The National Popular Vote bill would make every vote for

President equal throughout the United States. It would guarantee that **every** voter in **every** state matters in **every** presidential election.

The shortcomings of the current system of electing the President stem from "winner-take-all" laws that have been enacted at the state level. These laws award 100% of a state's electoral votes to the candidate receiving the most popular votes in each state.

Because of these state winner-take-all laws, five of our 45 Presidents (including two of the last three) have come into office without having won the most popular votes nationwide.

Another problem occurs in **every** presidential election, namely that presidential candidates have no reason to campaign in, or pay attention to, voters in states where they are safely ahead or hopelessly behind.

In 2016, almost all (94%) general-election campaign events were in the 12 closely divided "battleground" states where Trump's support was in the narrow range of 43%-51%. Two-thirds of the campaign events (273 of 399) were in just 6 states (OH, FL, VA, NC, PA, MI). Almost all small and medium-sized states and almost all western, southern, and northeastern states were totally ignored.

In 2012, 100% of the general-election campaign events and virtually all expenditures were concentrated in the 12 closely divided "battleground" states where Romney's support was 45%-51%. Two-thirds of the events (176 of 253) were concentrated in just 4 states (OH, FL, VA, IA).

It does not take an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to change existing state winner-take-all laws. State winner-take-all laws were enacted by state legislatures under their authority under Article II of the U.S. Constitution:

"Each State shall appoint, ***in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct***, a Number of Electors...."

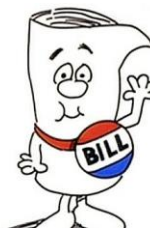
These state laws may be changed in the same way as they were originally enacted -- namely by action of the state legislature.

The winner-take-all method of awarding electoral votes was not the Founding Fathers' choice. It was used by only three states in the nation's first presidential election in 1789 (and repealed by all three by 1800). Winner-take-all was never debated at the Constitutional Convention or mentioned in the *Federalist Papers*.

Under the National Popular Vote bill, the national popular vote winner will receive all the electoral votes from the enacting states. The bill will take effect when enacted by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes -- enough to elect a President (270 of 538). When the Electoral College meets in mid-December, the national popular vote winner will become President because the enacting states will provide him or her with at least 270 electoral votes. Thus, the candidate receiving the most popular votes in all 50 states and DC will become President.

A national popular vote for President is an achievable political goal that can be in place in time for the 2020 election. The bill has already been enacted into law in 12 states possessing 172 electoral votes. It will take effect when enacted by additional states having 98 electoral votes. The bill has previously passed one chamber in 11 additional states with 89 electoral votes and has been approved by unanimous bipartisan committee votes in two states with an additional 26 electoral votes. A total of 3,199 state legislators among all 50 states have endorsed it.

For additional information, read: ***Every Vote Equal: A State-Based Plan for Electing the President by National Popular Vote*** (downloadable for free at: www.NationalPopularVote.com).



Report from League of Women Voters Eden Area on the 2019 Program Planning

Positions - Our league voted "Yes" on concurrence with the following Positions:

Criminal Justice

Voter Representation/Election Process

Homelessness

Civil Discourse



Other issues for LWVC to focus on over the next two years:

Voter and Registration Efforts –

- Reforming the voter registration process so it is easier for all populations to register or re-register after moving since Californians move households so often (for example, partner with title companies and county assessors to have them re-register home buyers).
- Reforming the voting process by expanding voting hours, making Election Day a holiday or allowing voting on weekends, making vote by mail easier, or adopting the Colorado method where anyone can vote from

any polling place (not just the one where you live).

- Outreach to underserved voters – seek out those groups who are not voting or not registering; often these are younger voters or voters of color.
- Reforming the process for candidates to run for office, to include a wider array of those running. This can include reforms to the cost of candidate statements on the ballot.
- Clarify the meaning of provisional ballots and explain how they are counted.

Education –

- Increase funding for public education.
- Analyze the current governor's budget priority on early education and consider endorsing this effort.

General topics –

- Request the LWVUS do a in depth analysis of Green New Deal (a national proposal) and report the results.
- Address homelessness, by endorsing a living wage and housing assistance.

SAVE THE DATE! Wed. April 3rd!

A special Membership Celebration is being planned for Wed., April 3, 2019, 5:30-7:30pm. Please save the date – more details in the April VOTER and on our website!





League of Women Voters of Eden Area

P. O. Box 2234 – Castro Valley, CA 94546 • 510/826-6674
Representing cities of Hayward and San Leandro and
unincorporated areas of Ashland, Castro Valley,
Cherryland, Fairview, and San Lorenzo

Just cut out and mail this coupon with your check to:
League of Women Voters of Eden Area Treasurer
P.O. Box 2234, Castro Valley, CA 94546

Name _____
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Dues: Regular \$60
2nd member same household
\$30,
Student \$25



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.

For our Calendar of upcoming events, go to:

<https://my.lwv.org/california/eden-area>

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