

Make It Fair Town Hall

Making Democracy Work

Several LWVSM members (Barbara Inatsugu, Sharon Hart, Joanne Leavitt, Cathie Gentile, and Janet Carter) attended the Los Angeles *Make It Fair* town hall on Saturday, October 7, 2017. It was one of six town halls going on around the State.

As the town hall's brochure indicated "it's time to close the commercial property tax loophole and invest in our communities." A coalition of over 250 organizations has endorsed Make It Fair California (www.MakeItFairCA.com) movement, including the League of Women Voters of California, the ACLU of Southern California, SCOPE, and Community Economics.

The tax reform campaign's goal is to modify the Proposition 13 California Amendment (which passed in 1978); to end corporate property tax loopholes that allow some corporations to avoid \$9 billion in annual taxes; and to require all commercial and industrial properties be assessed at fair market value; and to guarantee existing protections for residential properties, including renters. Closing the tax loophole would restore over \$2.9 billion a year to Los Angeles County. These restored funds could support school and public services for our local communities.

The morning's moderator, John Kim, indicated that "it is good public policy and good budget policy to reform Proposition 13." He also said this "is the fight for the soul of our state, good for the next generations, and the big fight of our generation." Kevin Coby presented a history of Prop. 13, including statistical data explicating the loss of tax revenue for our local counties/communities, estimated to be \$9 billion annually state wide. State Senator Holly Mitchell and Torie Osborn (Principal Deputy for Policy and Strategy for LA County, Sheila Kuehl's Supervisor's office) addressed the associated costs due to decades of lack of investment. Deputy Osborn proposed that the influx of moneys could be used for criminal justice reform, affordable housing, and health care services. Mr. Kim then moderated a panel discussion followed by personal comments from local representatives from Los Angeles County. Barbara Inatsugu, our LWVSM president, shared her thoughts as a home owner from Santa Monica and how Prop. 13 has had a negative impact on our local schools. She pulled together many of the issues of the day when she said "We all have a stake in Making It Fair!"