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<http://fresno.ca.lwvnet.org>



Regular Board Meeting
Monday, March 19
5 p.m.—League Office

Regional Meeting

Saturday, March 24
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
120 North Hall St, Visalia
\$25 per person

Civil Discourse Workshop
Hosted by LWV Tulare
Led by LWV San Luis Obispo

Snack and sandwich box lunch
Roast Beef, Turkey, Ham, Veggie

9:30 a.m. registration
10:30 a.m.—2 p.m. program
Mail checks & lunch choice to
LWVT, Box 3011
Visalia, 93728

Event Q's: hdees4321@sbcglobal.net
559-732-2009

Registration Q's: phoebet8@att.net
559-732-5061

The
Fresno **VOTER**

Program Planning asks U.S. League to advocate for gun safety position; continues local priorities

This year's Program Planning meeting on February 24 focused on local and national priorities. The League board had been asked by the chairs of last year's three priority committees—civic engagement, education and housing – to allow them to continue as priorities for a second year. The three committees have been working diligently and need more time to complete their studies. The continuance was approved by the membership present. In addition, it was requested that Behavioral Health concerns be included as appropriate in each of these three important issues.

The U.S. League had issued a plea to all local leagues to continue supporting its national priority of Making Democracy Work, which includes campaign finance reform and a number of other points. Members voted to support this request, but also developed a statement which asked that the national organization place heavy support on advocacy for its position on gun safety. This position was developed more than 20 years ago and has still not met with success.

Here is the LWVF statement:

“We, the League of Women Voters of Fresno, California, are horrified that another mass shooting has struck our nation. We watched the outspoken students of Parkland, Florida plead for long-overdue action to limit access to guns in our communities. We support the League's national program, “Making Democracy Work,” but feel that we must be part of the groundswell of Americans demanding gun safety legislation.

“Our request is that the LWVUS revisit its position on Gun Control, perhaps renaming it **Gun Safety**. Since 1990 the League has worked for revision of our national gun laws, and we must continue that battle. We are asking that LWVUS direct resources during the coming two years to this work. We support a ban on assault weapons, mandatory background checks for all firearms purchases, whether from retailers or other enthusiasts, and defeat of the nationwide concealed carry reciprocity legislation.”

The letter will be forwarded to LWVUS along with notification of our vote in favor of continuing Making Democracy Work.

President's Message



Last month a group of LWVF members visited the local office of State Senator Tom Berryhill. Our League group was part of the statewide League's annual program of interviewing state legislators. These visits are an opportunity to remind our representatives of the League's advocacy work, to assess support on statewide issues of interest to the League, and to hear the priorities of that congressperson. In the coming weeks we plan to visit the offices of Senator Anthony Canella and Assemblymen Joaquin Arambula and Jim Patterson.

Visiting Berryhill's office was a stark reminder of why and how the needs of the Central Valley are marginalized at the state level. First, our senator is Republican in a legislative body with a Democratic "supermajority." Any legislative action he would hope to advance would require significant bipartisan support, a sometimes risky proposition for minority party members who want to remain popular with their voters. Next, the 8th district encompasses all of Amador, Calaveras, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, and Tuolumne Counties as well as portions of Fresno, Madera, Sacramento, Stanislaus, and Tulare Counties. Berryhill has been a reliable voice for the mountain counties he represents, but 60% of his constituents live in Fresno County. As our County's needs become more like those of California's large urban centers, it is simply not possible for one legislator to champion both the urban and rural needs of a district as diverse as ours.

With the 2020 U.S. Census looming, Republican members of the State Assembly have proposed amending the California State Constitution to direct the Citizen's Redistricting Commission to divide the state into eight regions and each region into five State Senate districts. In this scheme, the counties of Stanislaus, Mariposa, Mono, Inyo, Fresno, Merced, Madera, Tulare, Kings, and Kern would be represented by five State Senators. Since State Senate districts represent approximately 930,000 residents, it seems that most of Fresno County could be a single district. I don't know all the implications of redistricting in this way, but I do think that senate districts that represent the Central Valley exclusively would direct a fairer share of California's resources our way.

- *Marianne*

The Voter is a monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Fresno.

Mailing Address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710

Volume 77. No. 3 Editor: Francine M. Farber

Member News

Please edit your roster



JOHN ROBERT SHIELDS

John Robert Shields, 76, husband of Liz Shields and a League member since 2006, passed away February 7. He was a professor of agricultural economics at Fresno State and was active in faculty governance. He and Liz, whom he met in Botswana when he was in the Peace Corps and she was a volunteer, traveled the world for many years.

A celebration of his life will be held on March 9 at the Smittcamp Alumni House at Fresno State from 3 to 5 p.m. Please let Liz know if you will attend at elizs@fresnostate.edu

A donation to League makes a great birthday or holiday gift or as a memorial. Please make checks out to

LWVF

1345 Bulldog Lane

Fresno, CA 93710

The League is a 501 © (3) non-profit organization so your dues payments and donations are tax deductible and gratefully accepted.



Thank You!

Join a Priority Committee!

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

We are eagerly awaiting launch of our new website. Jacquie Canfield is our webmaster and Cathy Caples will be our content editor; all League members who anticipate writing for the website are invited to a training session on Saturday, March 17, 9-11 a.m. at CSUF. Contact Terri Figgs for more info at tfiggs@comcast.net.

We made contact with Fresno's Leading Young Professionals, a group of under-40 professionals who are exploring possibilities for their involvement in community issues. This is part of our investigation of opportunities to interest the wider Fresno community in our work.

Chair: Marianne Kast: fourkasts@gmail.com



HOUSING

We are checking what we have learned with the LWVF Housing Position before using it for education and advocacy. The Housing Position includes; creating additional low-income housing; disseminating information about housing practices; considering neighborhood aesthetics and practical needs; wider choices of living accommodations in all neighborhoods, tax incentives to encourage property owners to upgrade older housing; citizen participation in planning housing developments.

**Co-Chairs: Nyla Zender: Nylajz@comcast.net
Marianne Kast: fourkasts@gmail.com**



EDUCATION

The committee is working on compiling its report on charter schools, which eventually will be made public. Members have met with administrators from FUSD and Fresno County Office of Education to learn more about the process they use for evaluating charter schools that they have authorized.



Chair: Kay Bertken: kayb@csufresno.edu

Next Meeting: March 2, 9:45 a.m. 752 E. Buckingham



If you have expressed interest in volunteering for the League and haven't been contacted yet, please send an email to tfiggs@comcast.net and let her know how you'd like to help.



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Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans
Chair, Behavioral Health Board



The Behavioral Health Board learned about an ongoing Family Education and Support Group offered by the Department of Behavioral Health. The monthly group is open to any family members in the community who are interested in better understanding their loved ones who are experiencing psychosis.

The board received the Outcomes report from Central Star Youth Psychiatric Health Facility. The Youth facility has 16 beds and provides 24/7 acute inpatient psychiatric care for children ages 12 to 18 who present a threat to themselves or others, or are gravely disabled. Most referrals come from hospital emergency departments or the Exodus crisis stabilization unit. Children are hospitalized for an average of 5.8 days. During the past year aftercare services have improved, resulting in fewer readmissions. Prior to this meeting, board members visited the site to see first-hand the work that is done; they especially were impressed with safety and security, activities provided, interaction of staff with the youth, and the outdoor recreation area.

Fresno County Purchasing Manager Gary Corneulle gave the Board an overview of the process for selecting vendors to provide contracted services to Department clients. Bidders respond to a Request for Proposals. A panel is convened to evaluate the proposals that have been submitted and to select the provider with the best proposal. Board members are eligible to participate on review panels for proposals related to behavioral health services, and would like to be included whenever possible. Corneulle explained the methods for evaluating and ranking proposals. It is sometimes a tedious and time-consuming process, but important to assure the best possible services for clients.

The Board will hold a workshop on March 3 to select recommendations for goals for 2018 to be presented to the Board of Supervisors. Suggestions are welcomed.

Voter Services

by Jane Worsley



On June 5 California will have a statewide primary along with ballot measures and local elections. Here is a summary of the ballot measures with LWVC positions:

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Reserve Fund (ACA 1) OPPOSE

Add a requirement that two thirds of legislators approve the first appropriation of any money collected from the sale by CARB of Cap-and-Trade allowances. This could lead to deadlocks, inefficiency, and poor decisions

Motor Vehicle Fees and Taxes (ACA 5) SUPPORT

Raise excise taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel, provide for regular increases to those taxes based on inflation, establish a new fee on zero-emission vehicles, and raise vehicle registration fees. The new revenue from these taxes would be used for transportation-related purposes - repairing streets and bridges, addressing deferred maintenance on highways and local roads, improving public transit, and investing in needed transportation infrastructure to benefit all Californians.

Effective Date of Initiatives (ACA 17) SUPPORT

Currently, an initiative that is approved takes effect the day after the election unless the measure provides otherwise. Election results are not officially certified until five weeks after the election. While most election results are clear shortly after election day, that is not always the case. Aca17 would provide that an initiative would take effect 5 days after the Secretary of State certifies the election results.

Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act (SB 5) SUPPORT

Authorize California to issue general obligation bonds, with the money used to finance state and local parks, water conservation measures, water reliability to disadvantaged communities, and flood protection projects. California parks provide open space and recreation, improving health and community well-being

LWVC only takes positions on ballot measures based on current policy positions and League principles. Positions are developed based on grassroots member study and consensus.

Education

by Kay Bertken



The Board approved the contract with the Fresno Teacher's Association on a 6-1 vote last month. Several side letters appended to the new teacher contract called for cooperative work groups involving teachers and the district working together on issues including special education reform and the improvement of school discipline. Increased formal cooperation was hailed by the trustees as a new era in an often fraught relationship with the teachers' union.

Special tax proposal

Another side letter proposed that the work group study whether a parcel tax or other "special tax measure" might be appropriate to support efforts to "reduce class sizes, improve student achievement and enhance programs at all levels." Major class size reduction has been a goal of the FTA for a long while. Trustee Ashjian refused to vote for the agreement because he opposed the idea of an additional tax. Other trustees agreed that the Board would later have to approve such

a measure were it to come before them as a recommendation and voted to approve the new contract language.

College choices improve

Some very good results were reported out of the district's efforts to improve post graduate choices for Fresno students. This last year students received personalized packets describing the colleges for which they qualified. College applications were up by 50%. College acceptances were up by 53%. The acceptance rate of students identified as qualified for CSU and UC system schools was 98%.

Budget recommendations

The meeting also introduced the first of the staff's budget recommendations to the Board dealing with site staffing. FUSD will receive \$47 million in new funding for 2018-2019 based on the full implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula. It will also get \$500,000 in special education cost of living increases and \$20 million in one time funds for retroactive pay increases and new classrooms to accommodate class size reductions.

Direct school site funding makes up about 75% of the district's almost bil-

lion dollar budget. Elementary school classrooms are proposed to be staffed with teachers at a ratio of 1:24 in K-3 and 1:29 in the upper grades. In addition, there will be aides in the kindergartens and health professionals on site every day: an RN 1-3 days a week, an LVN or health aide 2 to 4 days.

Middle school staffing

Middle schools will be staffed with teachers at a 1:29 ratio. All middle schools will also have a counselor and a guidance learning advisor and full time nurse or health aide in addition to a principal and vice principal. All schools will be staffed with clerical personnel according to a site formula and include extra teachers to facilitate staff development and student engagement.

Discretionary funds allocated

All high schools will have a full time nurse plus counselors, a campus culture director, an athletic director, and 2 to 5 vice principals depending upon enrollment. Beyond the staffing allocations, all school sites will be given discretionary funds to be allocated by their own school site councils. The total of those site funds has increased 100% since 2013-2014 from about \$15 million to \$30 million.



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Health Care

by Richard Bertken, M.D.



Dealing with the news of yet another mass shooting recently, my thoughts traveled to the medical costs of gun violence in the U.S. The families of many of the victims are presented with large medical bills at a time of shock and grief. Their suffering must be unquantifiable, but at the same time I wonder: could we help our national health care budget by banning human-hunting arms for U.S. residents?

A similar thought occurred about the less sensational but equally devastating death and maiming caused by our crazy transportation system. Would driverless cars help solve our insolvent health care budget? These are future possibilities about which vigilance and optimism are warranted. But their maturity is years away. Meanwhile, we are afflicted with hidden inefficiencies in our current system which should be approached now.

Do you take your prescription medicines?

One sneaky example is non-adherence to prescription medications, estimated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to cost over 250 billion dollars annually for the entire U.S. population. By contrast, the first year of medical costs for the victims of gunfire and crashes has been estimated at about 10 billion. Of course, the total cost of these violent events, including rehabilitative, psychological, and long-term care, is likely to run up several-fold. Still, in comparison the damage done by not taking prescribed medications is impressive.

Over the last forty years, over 5000 scientific studies have attempted to assess the causes, scope, and potential remedies of non-adherence. Between a third and two-thirds of all hospital admissions could be attributed to non-adherence. In serious chronic illness —TB, organ transplantation, and HIV, for example —failure to control the disease was commonly due to self-determination by patients that the medications were more harmful than their illness. These decisions were not only unshared with their physicians, but were actively disguised, preventing appropriate remedies. This is normal human behavior, having been noted even by Hippocrates: “Keep a watch also on the faults of the patients, which often make them lie about the taking of things.”

Patient education required

Our health care system needs to do a better job of educating patients about their prescriptions and providing them with a readily accessible resource for their concerns. Clinicians need to minimize every patient’s portfolio of chronic medications to those that have demonstrated, for that patient, both efficacy and safety by objective criteria. All possible new prescriptions should be evaluated in the context of the patient’s current prescription regimen.

Doctors need to monitor adherence

Drug delivery systems need to expand automatic refills and refill reminders. Our electronic health records must be developed to display pharmacy dispensing data across all health care systems. And most importantly, those of us in medical education must follow the advice of adherence researcher Dr. Marie Chisholm: “Teach our young doctors to diagnose and heal the disease of non-adherence.”

Dr. Bertken can be contacted at Drbertken@comcast.net

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES AND ASK THEM TO VOTE FOR THE DREAM ACT

It’s time for our leaders in Congress to reset the policy debate and pass the Dream Act to ensure that 800,000 dreamers are protected. Dreamers are Americans and they belong in America. Congress must step up and take immediate action to protect them. The Dream Act has broad bipartisan support and sponsorship.

87% of Americans support passage of the Dream Act. As a country of immigrants, we are made stronger by our diversity. This is a moment of truth for our country.

Stand with the League of Women Voters and contact your senators and representatives.


Devin Nunes 22nd Cong. District
[Www.nunes.house.gov](http://www.nunes.house.gov)
202-225-2523

David Valadao 21st Cong. District
[Www.valadao.house.gov](http://www.valadao.house.gov)
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MISSION: The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of interested individuals and influences public policy through voter education and advocacy on issues. The League does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.

DIVERSITY POLICY: There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWVF on the basis of race, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or socio-economic level.

What do you get when you join the League? All for one fee, you become a member of the Fresno, California and National Leagues and receive their newsletters. You may participate in League studies of issues; receive leadership training; hone your public speaking skills; become knowledgeable about local and state issues; learn more about government, natural resources and social policies as your time and interests dictate. You will also meet some interesting and friendly women and men who represent diverse backgrounds but find common ground in keeping abreast of current issues.

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