



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2013

JANE PERSON, PRESIDENT

CHARLENE MCALLISTER, EDITOR

JANUARY MEETING TO LOOK AT STATE LWV PROGRAM

By Barbara Matheson and Charlene McAllister

League members will review state positions in the Program Planning meeting at 10 a.m., Tues., Jan. 8, at the Caspar Community Center.

Program is the League's basis for advocacy and education. Advocacy is based on member study and agreement on selected issues. It involves concerted efforts to achieve public policies consistent with League positions.

League Program arises from members' suggestions. At every level of League, the board of directors reviews suggestions and recommends all or some of them for adoption according to procedures established in bylaws.

LWVMC members vote on local League action or advocacy at our annual May meeting.

Program Planning takes place every two years for National and for State Leagues prior to conventions (odd years for state Leagues and even years for the national League). Convention delegates vote on positions that will be the basis for action.

Program planners at all levels look at existing positions and ask whether to keep those positions, update them or drop them. Are positions effective as they are? Do we need to make changes to them? Once we ascertain our stands on current positions, we ask ourselves if we need to study an issue on which we have no position.

Program planners apply knowledge and experience to develop a list from comments and suggestions. Before state or national conventions, local Leagues may be lobbied by other

Leagues to support a particular issue for study—or we may have ideas of our own to submit to a convention. Before selecting a new issue for study, we should ask if that issue is timely, and if it will result in effective League action. It is also important to ask if this is something we can fund and support with volunteers to staff a study committee.

To prepare for our meeting Jan. 8, please review the current state positions attached to this VOTER in a separate pdf file. Positions also are at

<http://ca.lwv.org/issues/all>

As you read through the positions, please make a note of the three you would select as Issues for Emphasis for 2013-15 and be prepared to share your thoughts Jan 8. The 2011-2013 issues are Initiative and Referendum, Redistricting California, and State and Local Finances.

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"I'm here to talk about what happened with these 11th hour contributions during the November 6 election and how they were ratted out just in time." LWVC's Chris Carson talks about Money and California Politics at the League's November meeting in Caspar.

Related Story Page 8

SAVE THE DATE MARCH 15

Please mark your calendar, save Friday, March 15, 2013, and plan to attend the League's eighth annual

"Meet & Greet Your Local Elected Officials" reception.

The event will again be held at the Caspar Community Center from 5-7 p.m.

Sixty local, county, and state elected officials have been invited.

This is your chance to meet officials in a relaxed, non-political setting.

President's Message—It's time to put to rest the myth that the initiatives are written by ordinary people, that signature petition gatherers composed of those committed to that initiative, and that voter approval or disapproval is unaffected by advertising campaigns.

In fact, the ballot initiative process has become big business in Sacramento. One writer for the Public Policy Institute of California describes it as the "initiative industrial complex." Large numbers of companies, representing politically powerful groups, have sprung up providing campaign consulting, writing and legal services, and signature gathering. Just placing an initiative on the ballot can cost \$3 million dollars. Thus the fellow standing outside Safeway asking for you to sign his petition may have no other connection to it besides a paycheck.



Hiram Johnson, the lawyer who started it all 100 years ago to end the power of the robber baron railroad officials, "intended this as a vehicle for everyday Californians to effect change in California, but it has become a way for fewer everyday Californians to participate and more and more moneyed interests from outside California to impact our state," says Carl Guardino, president of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group.

We only have to look back at the past election to see the influence of money not only in promoting or fighting initiatives but in the writing of them. Molly Munger, daughter of Charles Munger, spent \$31 million on her tax-raising initiative, Proposition 38. Her brother put \$22 million into support of the initiative to outlaw political donations by unions. Tom Steyer, founder of Farallon Capital Management, a hedge fund, sank \$22 million into Prop 39 which rescinds tax benefits to out-of-state companies. Chris Kelly, a former Facebook executive, spent \$2.1 million on a proposal to crack down on human trafficking. Prop 33, the insurance initiative, is Mercury CEO George Joseph's second attempt to change insurance laws, an attempt he has largely financed himself. A list of donors to the initiatives also revealed out-of-state donors such as the Koch brothers and Monsanto.

There's a lot that needs fixing with the ballot initiatives. One example is sloppy language. Timm Herdt, writing in the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* (7/2/12), cites the omission of one statement in the actual measure of Prop 29. Included in the statement of purpose is wording ensuring that the proposed cigarette tax money would be used for cancer research only in California. But since this wasn't in the actual law itself, the tobacco industry jumped at the chance to tell voters that the tax money could be used outside California. The proposition lost by 28,000 votes.

Another problem is that initiatives in the form of constitutional amendments have made California's Constitution the third longest in the world. Once such an amendment is in, it can be gotten out only by another ballot proposition. Then there's the problem that the initiative may direct money in perpetuity (unless there's a sunset clause) to a project without specifying where the money is to come from. Much of the headache of coming up with a budget, say lawmakers, is that a great deal of money has been earmarked by previous initiatives, leaving budget writers little leeway.

The initiative process has taken on other aspects as well—it's become a way of exercising political influence and a way of launching political careers. It's not lost on anybody that Arnold Schwarzenegger ran for governor after successfully spending a million dollars to sponsor his educational initiative in 2002. Some critics say Facebook's Chris Kelly, who ran unsuccessfully for attorney general in 2012, had this intention with his human trafficking initiative.

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The public recognizes the need for reforms. Herdt writes that last year polls conducted by the Public Policy Institute found that 68 percent support a process to allow initiatives to be revised to avoid drafting errors such as the one in Proposition 29. At this point, after petitions to place an initiative on the ballot are submitted, nothing can be changed.

Moreover, the poll found that 73 percent supported a requirement that initiatives be required to explain how they were to be paid for.

Democratic Assemblyman Mike Gatto introduced several bills this year attempting to deal with some of these problems, but they were defeated by a handful of votes. Still, he vows to keep trying.

The California League's 2013 study about Initiative and Referendum (please see Page 6) comes at the right time. Although the initiative process won't go back to grass roots, reform could make the process more streamlined and more fair.

Jane Person

ACTION BY BARBARA MATHESON

ORDER

Our League, answering a call to action, sent the following letter to Representative Mike Thompson and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer:

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County supports a new direction for federal fiscal policy that recognizes the importance of a fair tax system, provides for social needs, and will carefully manage the deficit and the economy.

We urge you to fix the "fiscal cliff" by:

- **Raising taxes on the top two percent by repealing the Bush tax cuts for high-income tax payers and ending the special treatment for capital gains and dividends**
- **Reducing the deficit over the long term but protecting our fragile economy against steep deficit cutbacks**
- **Protecting the social safety net, including Medicaid, Social Security and Medicare**
- **Reducing military spending**

More than 20 million people are in need of full-time work, and unemployment continues to hover around 8 percent. But budget "hawks" are pushing for huge spending cuts that will harm the economy. At the same time, the top two percent of taxpayers are not paying their fair share. Millions of seniors, children, people with disabilities, and others depend on social programs to get by. Our fiscal policy must support people in need, while carefully balancing the deficit and the economy.

The time has come for our leaders to come together and move our country forward with a new direction for federal fiscal policy.

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2013 LWVMC Calendar

Tuesday, Jan. 8— General Meeting 10 a.m.
Caspar Community Center
League State Program Planning
Coffee at 9:30 a.m.

No Board Meeting in January

Board Meeting 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, Feb. 5, Fort Bragg Library
Library Meeting Room

Tuesday, Feb. 12— General Meeting 10 a.m.
Caspar Community Center
Initiative and Referendum Study
Coffee at 9:30 a.m.

Board Meeting 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, Mar. 5, Fort Bragg Library
Library Meeting Room

Friday, Mar. 15— Meet and Greet Your Elected Officials
Reception 5-7 p.m.
Caspar Community Center

Board Meeting 9:30 a.m., Tuesday, Apr. 2, Fort Bragg Library
Library Meeting Room

Tuesday, Apr. 9— General Meeting 10 a.m.
Caspar Community Center
Another Look at Sustainability
Coffee at 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, May 14— Annual Meeting and Luncheon
Time and Program To be Announced

All League meetings are open to the public at no charge
All Board Meetings are open to League members

MISSION STATEMENT

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS,
A NON-PARTISAN POLITICAL ORGANIZATION,
ENCOURAGES INFORMED
AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT,
STRIVES TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING
OF MAJOR PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES,
AND INFLUENCES PUBLIC POLICY
THROUGH EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY.**

Juanita Bullard Scholarship Honors CR Social Science Student

Anya Jindrich is the winner of the 2012-2013 Juanita Bullard Memorial Scholarship at College of the Redwoods. The annual scholarship is funded by an anonymous donor in memory of the community work of long-time League member Juanita Bullard, who died in October, 2008. Anya is a native of Chicago and continues to maintain a 4.0 grade point average.

"Twelve years ago I was given the opportunity to tutor a little boy named Shannon who was living in a homeless shelter in Chicago and struggling academically. I found the experience to be extremely rewarding and I have continued to stay involved in his life to this day. Shannon has now graduated from high school and is enrolled in a vocational program. This experience has stayed with me and shown me that one person can make a profound difference in the life of others.

"Over the next year and a half (after completing the school's nine-month Fine Woodworking Program) I found the next step through my job working as a teacher's aide at Redwood Elementary School in Fort Bragg. As a result of my experience there, I have been inspired to work towards an AA degree with an emphasis in behavioral and social science.

"As a teacher or social worker, I would have the honor of serving children who are at risk or in need and try to provide support for them so they can realize their full potential....I hope to one day be in a financial place where I, too, can contribute to the education of those who are struggling to overcome obstacles and make their dreams a reality."



Anya Jindrich (right) receives her first College of the Redwoods scholarship in 2009 from Marcia Williams, the college's Administrator of Student Financial Aide.



State LWV Convention Set For May 17-19 in San Jose

We encourage and urge League members to attend the California LWV convention at the Hayes Mansion in San Jose this spring. It's a way for delegates to vote on important issues and a means to share leadership skills and look at the organization's future. The public is invited to attend workshops and observe open sessions. For early details, visit

<http://ca.lwv.org/event/2013/may/event-may-2013-convention-myleague>

FEBRUARY 12 MEETING WILL FOCUS ON LWVC STUDY TO UPDATE INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

By *Charlene McAllister*

During the 2012 LWVC Convention in May, delegates adopted an update of the initiative and referendum process in California. The state study committee was chosen, adopted a study scope and budget and set a timeline. Committee members were responsible for developing the study material that all local Leagues in California will use to come to consensus. Our local League study committee began meeting in December and will present the material and consensus questions at the Feb. 12, 2013, meeting. If you would like

to be a part of this study (researching the background material and preparing for the presentation) contact Study Chair, Charlene McAllister at 937-4463 or charm@mcn.org.

The LWVC study committee determined much of the current Initiative and Referendum Position serves the League well and is still relevant. However, there are areas the committee identified (after much research and discussion) as being in need of update, amendment, expansion, or possible deletion. These are the areas we will examine when

we meet on Feb. 12, at 10 a.m., at the Caspar Community Center to develop consensus.

For further information you can join the Facebook group (League of Women Voters of California Initiative and Referendum Study) or a Yahoo Group that you can link through the LWVC members only page.

You can also go to the League website archives for the study guide at <http://archive.lwvc.org/lwvonly/studies/2011-initiative-and-referendum/>

A Glossary of Terms for the Initiative and Referendum Study

Initiative: Process where voters may propose legislation (statutory initiative) or constitutional amendments (constitutional initiative) by filing a petition bearing a specified number of valid signatures.

Direct Initiatives: Initiatives in which the measure proposed by petition is placed on the ballot for approval or rejection by voters.

Indirect Initiatives: Initiatives in which the measure proposed by petition is submitted to the legislature, which is required to enact it (or a measure substantially like it). If the legislature fails to act within a specified time or rejects the measure, it is placed on the ballot for approval or rejection by the voters.

Referendum (or Plebiscite): Process where a proposed or existing governmental policy or institution is referred to the voters for approval or rejection. Referendum (California) is the power of the electors to approve or reject statutes or parts of statutes (except urgency statutes), statutes calling elections, and statutes providing for tax levies or appropriations for usual current expenses of the state.

Petition Referendum: A referendum brought about by the voters demanding that a measure enacted by the legislature be referred to the electorate before going into effect.

Optional Referendum: A referendum which a legislature may decide to hold on a measure. The legislature determines whether the outcome will be binding or advisory.

Legislative Referendum: When a proposed or newly enacted law or proposed constitutional amendment is placed on the ballot by the legislature for voter approval.

Compulsory Referendum: When a referendum is required by the constitution for the approval of certain types of measures (such as constitutional amendments, taxes and bond issues).

WHY STUDY THE INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM ISSUE?

HISTORY OF LWVC POSITION

The League of Women Voters of California first studied the initiative and referendum process in 1983, adopting a position in 1984. An update study was undertaken in 1997, with the updated position adopted in 1999. The update study used essentially the same consensus questions as before, as well as study material that was very close to the 1983 material.

The 1997-1999 update study was prompted at least in part by specific bills and ballot measures on which the League might have liked to advocate but had no applicable position. For example, the League took no stand on a proposition that would have allowed a measure to go into effect differently in various regions of the state, depending on how each region voted on it. The discussion of the proposed update study at the 1997 LWVC convention included such topics as the sun setting of obsolete laws established by the initiative process, the inability to make corrections or amendments to initiatives in circulation, proposed improvements in the state ballot pamphlet, court interpretation of conflicting initiative provisions, word limits, and changes in the time allowed for circulation.

USE OF CURRENT POSITION

After adopting the position in 1984, the LWVC sponsored two bills, one to adopt an optional indirect initiative, and another to establish a pre-circulation review process for initiatives. The bills were re-introduced for four successive legislative sessions. In 1991, the Legislature voted to adopt the pre-circulation review bill, but it was vetoed by then-governor Pete Wilson. The indirect initiative bill was a constitutional amendment and therefore required a two-thirds vote of each house of the legislature. In 1991, the bill advanced from one house, but it was never able to achieve a two-thirds vote in both houses. Since that time, the League has spoken occasionally on issues concerning the initiative and referendum process, participated in and spoken at various commissions, and worked with other groups considering various reforms. We have not sponsored any particular bills but have, for example, supported attempts to more narrowly define the meaning of a single subject and to improve disclosure of campaign spending on initiatives; opposed proposals to tie approval of a measure to the voter turnout in an election; highlighted reform of the initiative and referendum process as a Legislative Priority through 1992 and again immediately after the 1997-1999 update study.

WHERE THE LWVC COULD NOT OR DID NOT ACT

As ideas around reform of the initiative process have gained momentum in recent years, the League has frequently remained silent. Using our current position, we couldn't support proposals to change the number of signatures to qualify a petition, nor those to change the length of time required to qualify a measure. Even if we had wanted to (and it's not clear that we did), we could not speak to proposals about limiting paid signature gatherers or giving added weight to signatures collected by volunteers. Finally, the League could not take a position on pay-go initiatives. Pay-go is the term given to a requirement that initiatives that cost money designate where the money would come from. The League's State and Local Finances position is clear about being opposed to unjustified earmarking, but our Initiative and Referendum position is silent about the financing of proposals. Because of this, League leaders were not able to discern what position on the idea of pay-go requirements for initiatives League members would support.

Money in Politics—Election Day, 2012

A Strange and Mysterious Story About Spending \$11 Million To Influence the Vote on Two California Ballot Propositions

Editor's Note: The League of Women Voters of California's position in brief on money and politics includes support of state campaign finance practices for candidates and advocates of ballot measures that ensure full disclosure of campaign contributions and expenditures. The following is a timeline that begins in 1867 and advances to the November 6, 2012, General Election. It spins a tangled web—and tale—about money in state politics.

- **1867 Navy Appropriations Bill** prohibits government employees from soliciting political contributions from Navy yard workers.
- **1907 Tillman Act introduced earlier by Theodore Roosevelt** prohibits political contributions from corporate treasuries.
- **1947 Taft Hartley Act** prohibits political contributions from corporate treasuries and union dues.
- **1971 Federal Election Campaign Act** establishes the Federal Election Commission and requires disclosure of sources of campaign contributions, limits candidate campaign expenditures and political action committee expenditures and has several prohibitions on campaign contributions, including contributions directly from corporations, unions and national banks.
- **1976 U.S. Supreme Court *Buckley v. Valeo*** overturns limits on campaign expenditures by candidates and political action committees.
- **January 21, 2010 U.S. Supreme Court *Citizens United v. FEC*** affirms corporations' rights to spend unlimited money in elections.
- **June 14, 2011 United States District Court For District of Columbia *Cary v. FEC*** decides "super" political action committees have no contribution limits but cannot give directly to candidates.
- **May, 2012 California Fair Political Practices Commission establishes new regulation with this requirement: When a non-profit organization makes contributions to California candidates or in support/opposition to state ballot measures, that non-profit must identify donors.**
- **October 15, 2012** Americans for Responsible Leadership contributes \$11 million to the Small Business Action Committee of California. According to the Secretary of State's office, the Small Business Action Committee is spending funds on the No on Proposition 30 and Yes on Proposition 32 on the November 6 California ballot. Proposition 30 is the governor's tax hike initiative. Proposition 32 is a measure to restrict organized labor's ability to collect cash for political campaigns.
- **Friday, October 19, 2012** California Common Cause files a complaint with FPPC and demands investigation of the \$11 million donation. Common Cause complains Americans for Responsible Leadership, of Phoenix, has not disclosed names of individual donors who are alleged to have ties to out-of-state ultra-conservative interests that seek to influence votes in California. Common Cause also announces it will enter a partnership with the League of Women Voters of California and the FPPC to introduce stronger campaign finance disclosure legislation when the Legislature convenes in 2013.

- **Thursday, October 25, 2012** FPPC Chair Ann Ravel sues to force immediate disclosure of the names of people who gave \$11 million to the Americans for Responsible Leadership—said to be the same \$11 million that was donated to the California PAC to be spent to defeat Proposition 30 and pass Proposition 32. California Attorney General Kamala Harris joins the suit, filed in Sacramento Superior Court.
- **Wednesday, October 31, 2012** (late in the day) Sacramento Superior Court Judge Shellyanne Chang orders Americans for Responsible Leadership to turn over documents (communications related to the \$11 million donation) to the FPPC by 5 p.m. Attorneys for Americans for Responsible Leadership say they will appeal to the District Court.
- **Friday, November 2, 2012** Attorney Matt Ross, spokesperson for Americans for Responsible Leadership, says the FPPC does not have legal authority to examine donor records before the election. He cites freedom of speech issues of the *Citizens United* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Third District Court agrees in part and Justice Vance Raye denies the FPPC petition without comment. The FPPC appeals to the California Supreme Court. Gary Winuk is the FPPC attorney.
- **Sunday, November 4, 2012** The California Supreme Court, in a 7-0 decision, rules in favor of the FPPC and tells Americans for Responsible Leadership to turn over records to the FPPC by 4 p.m. The ruling is described as an emergency action, typically reserved for death penalty cases. Attorneys for the Americans for Responsible Leadership say they will appeal to the United States Supreme Court, then decide not to go forward with that appeal.
- **Monday, November 5, 2012** The FPPC publishes a press release: Americans for Responsible Leadership has informed the FPPC that the organization is an intermediary and “not the true source” of the \$11 million donation. The “true source” is identified as Americans for Job Security “through a second intermediary, The Center to Protect Patient Rights.” Americans for Job Security is an Arlington, VA organization. The Center to Protect Patient Rights is based in Phoenix. The FPPC press release is one of the first references to the \$11 million donation as “money laundering” and describes it as the largest contribution of its kind ever disclosed in California history. The money trail is identified, but not names of individual donors. IRS codes say certain non-profits do not have to reveal names of donors. But California law requires that some non-profits that make contributions to ballot measures must identify donors.
- **Tuesday, November 6, 2012** California voters approve Proposition 30 and defeat Proposition 32.
- **Thursday, November 15, 2012** The FPPC announces a new investigation into who paid into the \$11 million donation and says it will continue to pursue sources of the money trail that leads from Americans for Job Security (in Virginia) to the Center to Protect Patient Rights (in Arizona) to Americans for Responsible Leadership (in Arizona) and ultimately to the Small Business Action PAC (in California) which spearheaded an effort to defeat Proposition 30 and pass Proposition 32. FPPC Chair Ann Ravel tells the San Jose *Mercury News* if the three groups have broken California law, they could face fines of some \$33 million and the California Small Business Action Committee also could be fined “if they knew they were receiving money and improperly identifying it.”

Sources: Chris Carson presentation to the LWVMC Nov. 13, 2012, and the following websites: California Fair Political Practices Commission, Common Cause of California, Secretary of State of California, Small Business Action Committee, Americans for Responsible Leadership, Center to Protect Patient Rights, Americans for Job Security, San Jose *Mercury News* coverage by Steven Harmon. Additional sources of information about money and politics listed on the bottom of Page 14 of this VOTER.

Honoring and Remembering Betty Smith

Betty Smith, educator, community leader and long-time member and supporter of the League of Women Voters of Mendocino County, died October 26 in Fort Bragg. The family plans a memorial to honor her Saturday, January 12 at the Woods Clubhouse in Little River and the League will contact members about the time of the tribute.

Betty Wilton Smith was born in Rochester, New York, in 1922. She was the youngest of three children and called herself “the caboose child.”

She attended Rochester’s John Marshall High School and graduated in 1943 at the age of 21 from Keuka College in the Finger Lakes region of New York. Her major was biochemistry and while she achieved honors and success for her leadership in early childhood education, she always maintained a love of science and curiosity about the world around her.

When they were both in high school, Betty Wilton met Bill Smith at the Maplewood Ice Skating Rink. Bill later was drafted into the Army during World War II. He

was stationed in the South Pacific and came to Los Angeles on leave to marry Betty who had moved to Los Angeles and taken a job as a medical lab technician. The couple never returned to New York.

Betty’s passion for early childhood education began during the time she raised her three children in Los Angeles. An appreciation for the concept of cooperative children’s play groups led her into a pursuit of an academic career in early childhood education. She studied at Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena, then worked several years for the Los Angeles Unified School District, specializing in teacher training that included work at Los Angeles Trade Tech at a time when the Los Angeles school district had an active vocational and trade program.



She also hosted her own early-morning television show for several years in Los Angeles, sponsored by the Los Angeles City Schools, where she interviewed parents and discussed importance of early childhood education.

She began to teach early childhood education part-time at the Fort Bragg campus of the College of the Redwoods.

She was a leader in education as well as the community and was one of the first commissioners appointed to First 5 Mendocino. She was honored for her commission work by the County Board of Supervisors in April, 2008. The award was presented to her during a Board of Supervisors meeting by her daughter, Fourth District Supervisor Kendall Smith.

“I so admired Betty’s indomitable spirit and, of course, her love and advocacy for the children of our community and beyond,” says Charlotte Stone, College of the Redwoods. League member Jary Stavely says, “I always loved talking with Betty. She was always kind and understanding AND I loved her upstate NY accent.”

“Betty Smith. What a trooper she was and so involved in the League,” Charlene McAllister says. “She was one of those people we relied on so much. We are a better because of her.”

Betty was honored by College of the Redwoods as the Associate Faculty Member of the Year for 1988-1989. But she wasn’t

just a teacher. She was a student. “She believed in the concept of lifelong learning,” Kendall says. So she took classes—and especially liked Teresa Sholars’ wildflower classes (where one field trip took them to Death Valley) and the mushroom identification class.



Betty Smith was honored for her work as a First 5 Commissioner in April, 2008. The award was presented to her at the County Board of Supervisors by daughter, 4th District Supervisor Kendall Smith.

“She had come full circle back to her scientific background and a love of classification and knowledge about the natural environment.”

Betty cared deeply for the care and education of very young children and had great concern for the kind of world we would leave the grandchildren, daughter Kendall says. She celebrated her 90th birthday in August at the Fort Bragg Senior Center with friends and family.

She is survived by daughters Kendall, of Fort Bragg; Nancy, of Santa Rosa; and son, Steven, of Mendocino.

FUNDING CRISIS TURNS COMMUNITY ATTENTION TO SUPERIOR COURTS

Mendocino County officials recently announced coastal court services would be drastically reduced starting January 1, 2013. Officials asked for public comment and coast residents circulated a petition to oppose reduced services at Ten Mile Courthouse in Fort Bragg.

At a public hearing in Fort Bragg's Town Hall November 29, Presiding Superior Court Judge Richard J. Henderson announced services would not be cut and urged audience members to write state legislators in support of adequate funding for the superior court system. Funding for the system comes from the state.

Several League members attended the public meeting and Action Chair Barbara Matheson was the League spokesperson. League President Jane Person's letter of opposition is on Page 13. The League thanks and recognizes Judge Henderson's honesty and response to public comments.

Here is an overview of the California Superior Court system and the selection process for judges:

California uses two different systems for selecting judges. Appellate judges are appointed by the governor and confirmed by a commission. Superior court judges are elected by popular vote.

Federal district judges are appointed by the U.S. President who generally follows recommendations given by the state's Senators.

State Trial Courts

Candidates for superior court run for office in nonpartisan races in June and November of even-numbered years. If only one candidate runs in June, election is automatic without the need for a vote and the name is not listed on the ballot. When two or more candidates run in June, the candidate who gets more than 50% of the vote is elected. When no candidate gets more than 50%, the top two are in a run-off election in November.

Judges of California Superior Courts run in the next general election if they are appointed by the governor in the case of a vacancy before the end of a term.

Each of California's 58 counties has a superior court. Trials take place in more than 450 courthouses in the state. Superior courts hear civil, criminal, family, probate, and juvenile cases. All courts are superior courts (municipal courts have been merged into superior courts) and some are specialty courts such as traffic, small claims, law and motion and writs and receivers.

Judges

California Superior Court judges are elected to 6-year terms in non-partisan county-wide

elections. Once elected, a justice can run for re-election at the expiration of the term.

If a midterm vacancy occurs, the Governor appoints a new judge. To qualify as a superior court judge, a candidate must have been an attorney admitted to practice law in California, or must have served as a judge of a court of record in the state for at least 10 years immediately preceding election or appointment.

A county with two or more superior court judges must have a Presiding Judge. Presiding judges provide leadership and direction for their courts and are chosen by their peers. They assign judges to cases.

Richard J. Henderson is Presiding Judge for Mendocino County Superior Courts for calendar year 2012. He and Judge Clayton L. Brennan ran for re-election in 2012. As unopposed incumbents, their names did not appear on the ballot. After the primary election, both were automatically re-elected.

The other Mendocino County Judges are: Ann Moorman, Cindee F. Mayfield, David A. Riemenschneider, David E. Nelson, Jeanine B. Nadel, and John A. Behnke.

Sources: www.Judgepedia.org
<http://www.courts.ca.gov/partners/courtsbudget.htm>,
<http://www.courts.cagov/partners/courtsbudget.htm>
 Fort Bragg Advocate-News

November 29, 2012

The Hon. Richard Henderson,
Presiding Judge, Superior Court of Mendocino County
100 North State Street
Ukiah, CA 95482



SUBJECT: The League of Women Voters Opposes Court Closing

Dear Judge Henderson:

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County is a non-partisan, political organization that is governed by a set of principles. One of our principles states "The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government." This means government must be accessible to all. Moving the criminal and juvenile cases from Fort Bragg to Ukiah, requiring victims, witnesses, potential jurors, and interested coastal residents to travel 65 miles over the hill on a two-lane highway does not accomplish this goal.

Approximately 30 percent of county residents live on the coast. This should qualify for at least one full-time judge to be assigned here. This is an ill-advised plan and should be reconsidered.

The League joins the District Attorney, Sheriff, Fort Bragg Police Department, Fort Bragg City Council, and most coastal residents to strongly oppose this plan.

Sincerely,
Jane Person, President
League of Women Voters of Mendocino County



Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Mendocino County Richard J. Henderson (left) and Sheriff Tom Allman talk before the beginning of the Nov. 29 public meeting.

Membership in The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County is a bargain and a statement. You will be saying that you are committed to the ballot as a means for change and for providing non-biased information to voters. The issues your League follows are those that affect every resident's family and community. Get involved in the League of Women Voters. Dues for 2012-2013 cover the period between September, 2012 and September, 2013.

Please consider joining at one of these levels:

Susan B. Anthony Individual Membership \$55 _____
Amelia Bloomer Two-member Household Membership \$80 _____
Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership \$100 _____
Carrie Chapman Catt Membership \$250 or more _____
Donation _____

Name/Names: _____
Address _____
City: _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____
Phone _____ **E-mail:** _____

Please make checks payable to: **LWV Mendocino County**
And mail to: **LWVMC**
P.O. Box 1128
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

**The League of Women Voters
of Mendocino County
P.O. Box 1128
Fort Bragg, CA 95437
(707) 937-4952**

www.lwv.org

www.ca.lwv.org

www.mendo.ca.lwvnet.org

**Television Coverage
of Listed Public Meetings
In Mendocino County
can be viewed at**

**Mendocino Coast Television
Community Access Television**

www.mendocoasttv.org

**Status of the bills in Congress
www.thomas.loc.gov**

**Mendocino County
Election Office
(707) 463-4371**

Sources of Information about Money in Politics

www.moneyoutvotersin.org

<http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/Campaign/Candidates/>

<http://www.fppc.ca.gov/index.php?id=14>

<http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/Campaign/Measures/list.aspx?session=2011>

http://ca.lwv.org/sites/ca.lwv.org/files/Campaign%20Finance%20FACTS_1.pdf

<http://www.fec.gov/finance/disclosure/srssea.shtml>