



The Voter

February 2012

League of Women
Voters
of San Bernardino
1955-NOW!

February 2012

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President's Message

This month we focus on Campaign Finance, and in particular, on the Supreme Court's "Citizens United" [*Citizens United -v- Federal Election Commission*] decision. We are fortunate to have Jonathan Anderson, Chair of the Department of Public Administration at California State University San Bernardino, as our speaker. And he will be a member of our League since he was a member of the Juneau, Alaska League when he moved here last summer. Thanks to Susan Longville for finding him.

Some updates on what we've been doing recently:

We received a resolution from the San Bernardino City Council recognizing the 100th Anniversary of when women won the right to vote in California. Thanks to Councilmember Virginia Marquez for sponsoring this and to Dennis Baxter for his help.

We held a city clerk candidates meeting that was taped at the Channel 3 studio and it is being shown periodically up until the deadline for sending in ballots, February 7.

(If you go to <http://www.iemediagroup.org/> and search "clerk" you can view the City Clerk Run-off Election Forum on your computer.)

We have also been following the Board of Supervisors proposals for reducing their compensation packages and for

charter changes regarding employee pensions. We support the reduction of Supervisors' benefits, but have no position on the issue of pensions.

We have contracted to assist with the student referendum at Cal State on February 29 and March 1. Since we must cover 4 sites on campus, we need lots of workers. If you haven't already signed up, please contact me to volunteer. We will be paid for our services so it's very important that we have enough people to do the job well.

We hope to see you at our February 11 meeting at Coco's - 11 AM to 2 PM to welcome Jonathan Anderson (no relation) and discuss this important Campaign Finance issue.

Gloria Anderson
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Focus on Campaign Finance

“Only people are people and only people can reclaim our democracy.”

This is the slogan of *Common Cause’s* effort to overturn the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision [*Citizens United –v– Federal Election Commission*]. The decision, handed down two years ago, reversed 100 years of campaign finance law.

You are invited to join a lively discussion of this decision.

“Corporations aren’t people and money isn’t speech.”

Let’s discuss!

SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 11, 2012
11 AM to 2 PM

COCO’S Restaurant
2442 E. Highland Ave.
(East of the 210 Freeway)

We will also talk about what the League is doing about this issue and what you can do to take back democracy.

Please read the background information and get ready to talk about fighting back against *Citizens United*!

-Gloria Anderson



**“The Supreme Court in essence has ruled that corporations can buy elections. If that happens, democracy in America is over.—
Rep. Alan Grayson (D-FL)**

From the Citizens United Majority Opinion

... because speech itself is of primary importance to the integrity of the election process, any speech arguably within the reach of rules created for regulating political speech is chilled. The regulatory scheme at issue may not be a prior restraint in the strict sense. However, given its complexity and the deference courts show to administrative determinations, a speaker wishing to avoid criminal liability threats and the heavy costs of defending FEC enforcement must ask a governmental agency for prior permission to speak. The restrictions thus function as a prior restraint...

From the Minority Dissent to the Citizens United Opinion

Although they make enormous contributions to our society, corporations are not actually members of it. They cannot vote or run for office...

Congress has placed special limitations on campaign spending by corporations ever since the passage of the Tillman Act in 1907...The Court today rejects a century of history when it treats the distinction between corporate and individual campaign spending as an invidious novelty...

All of the majority’s theoretical arguments turn on a proposition with undeniable surface appeal but little grounding in evidence or experience, ‘that there is no such thing as too much speech’...[i]n the real world, we have seen, corporate domination of the airwaves prior to an election may decrease the average listener’s exposure to relevant viewpoints, and it may diminish citizens’ willingness and capacity to participate in the democratic process. (83, internal citations omitted)



Campaign Finance

LWVUS Position in Brief:

Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

The League's position on Campaign Finance reflects continuing concern for open and honest elections and for maximum citizen participation in the political process. We believe that a campaign finance system must allow a combination of private and public financing. The League continues to look for ways to limit the size and type of contributions from all sources as a means of combating undue influence in the election process. We also favor full and timely disclosure of all campaign contributions and expenditures, one central committee to coordinate, control, and report all financial transactions for each candidate, party or other committee, an independent body to monitor and enforce the law, and the encouragement of broad-based contributions from the public.

The League has endorsed the goals of a reform proposal developed by a group of academics in the late 1990s that included closing gaping loop-

holes in the law that allow special interests, the political parties and others to channel hundreds of millions of dollars into candidates' campaigns. Among the key goals: a ban on "soft money," closing the sham issue advocacy loophole and improving election law disclosure and enforcement. We also supported the bipartisan McCain-Feingold Act that prohibited corporations and unions from using their general treasury funds for electioneering communication that expressly advocates the election or defeat of a candidate for Federal office within 30 days of a primary election.

Why does the Supreme Court think that corporations should have the same rights as citizens?

The short answer is that in a little over a hundred years, corporations went from having duties to the people to having rights like people, not through laws but through court decisions.

In 1886, twenty years after the 14th amendment was passed, in a case called Santa Clara County vs. Southern Pacific Railroad, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously, even though there was no public debate, that corporations are persons deserving the law's protection.

After that decision, corporations pursued the Bill of Rights by a series of rulings:

1893 – 5th Amendment – Due process

1906 – 4th Amendment - Search and seizure

1925 – 1st Amendment – Freedom of press and speech

1976 – A ruling that money equals speech, and since they have freedom of speech, then they can spend as much money as they want.

2010 – Citizens United decision – rolls back restrictions on corporate and union spending in Federal campaigns. It is expected that it will then be applied to all others, even judicial campaigns.

-Gloria Anderson

**League of Women Voters
of San Bernardino 1955-NOW!**

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**The League of Women Voters: Because
Democracy is not a spectator sport.**

**We're on the web: [http://
lwvsanbernardino.ca.lwvnet.org](http://lwvsanbernardino.ca.lwvnet.org)**

Help Wanted!

**Needed: Members to help with
the CSU Student Referendum**

**February 29 and March 1
at four venues on the CSU campus**

10 AM to 3 PM and 3 PM to 8 PM

or

Shifts to fit time available

Call or E-mail Gloria Anderson

909-338-4163

glorand@juno.com

Upcoming events—save the date!

**FEBRUARY 11, 2012 11 AM to 2 PM (Saturday)
COCO'S Restaurant 2442 E. Highland Ave. (East of
the 210 Freeway)**

**“Corporations aren't people and money isn't speech.”
Let's discuss!**

**Our speaker will be Jonathan Anderson,
Cal State San Bernardino professor
(Chair, Department of Public Administration)**

April 29, 2012

Citizens of Achievement Reception and Awards

June 2, 2012

LWV San Bernardino 57th Annual Meeting

The Inconvenient Truth Behind Waiting For Superman

Last Fall the San Bernardino League of Women Voters held a showing and discussion of the film *Waiting for Superman*.

Our small event turned out to be part of a national conversation.

The conversation is continuing with a new film, produced by GEMNYC (the New York City Grassroots Education Movement), entitled *The Inconvenient Truth Behind Waiting for Superman*.

California State University San Bernardino's new Pfau Library Media Center will

show the film from noon-2p.m. Wednesday, February 29, 2012. It will be followed by a panel discussion of students from CSUSB's Doctoral Program in Education.

This is a FREE Community event—everyone is invited. This means you.

Please come!

Complimentary Parking is available—ask at the parking kiosk on the way into campus.

-Jill Vassilakos