



# The Voter

March 2012

League of Women  
Voters  
of San Bernardino  
1955-NOW!

March 2012

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## President's Message

Mark your calendars! Come to the April 21 meeting on our Charter School Study. Susan Nieblas and her committee have been hard at work gathering information about the schools in the San Bernardino City Unified School District. This is your opportunity to learn about the schools and to add your voice to the discussion.

Next, an update on last month's CSUSB student fee referendum. (LWVSB provided poll workers.) The vote was so close that CSUSB requested (and received) our help with a recount. The process included checking numbered ballots against signatures, etc. from five polling sites. Each site binder contained 427 pages of student names! Only about 1000

votes were cast. The fee increase passed by a very slim margin. A HUGE thank-you to Shirley Harlan for helping me with this. And again, thank you to Dennis Baxter, Sophia Green, Shirley Harlan, Carol Hartman, Mary Saxon Hobbs, Susan Longville, Marilyn Patterson, Carol Robb, Judy Rogers, and Barbara Sokoloff for helping me at the polling places.

The Big Bear Democratic Club has asked LWVSB to moderate a candidates forum for the 3rd District Supervisor's race on April 3 in Big Bear. I have been working with their president on format, questions, etc. and I will moderate the forum.

I have also spoken to two groups on the election changes coming up - the Top Two Primary and the changes in districts

brought about by the Citizens Redistricting Commission. One of the groups was at the Yucaipa Terrace Senior Housing Center, and the other was at the Jocelyn Senior Center's discussion group in Redlands. I'm hoping that some of the discussion group members who said that they are interested in the League will join.

A couple of reminders: We have sent nomination forms for this year's Citizens of Achievement. They are due to me by April 2. If you need a nomination form, you can get it on our website or you can contact me. Our reception and awards will be on April 29. Please let me know if you can help.

In League,  
Gloria Anderson  
909-338-4163



## Welcome, New Members!

Join me in welcoming our new members!

Mary and Jonathan Anderson - San Bernardino

Jim Smith - San Bernardino

Carol Robb - Grand Terrace

## Charter School Consensus Meeting April 21, 2012

LWVSB's Charter School Committee has conducted a year-long study of charter schools in the SBCUSD. Come to the Saturday, April 21, 2012 lunch/meeting to hear our report and participate in a group discussion so that LWVSB can formulate a consensus position from which to advocate on the role of charter schools in the San Bernardino school district.

Here are some of our findings:

There are currently 11 charter schools in the District, with at least two more slated to start up next school year. Some of these schools are owned and administered by local citizens and others by corporations which have similar schools throughout the state. All charter schools have local governing boards and are subject to the Brown Act.

Some of the charter schools focus on high school age students who will not have enough credits to graduate from their comprehensive high schools in the District, and so they emphasize completion of basic credits. All charter schools must meet state curriculum standards, but may purchase "boxed" curricula or develop their own. This freedom results in a wide variety of learning environments in charter schools.

In the SBCUSD, approximately 5.75% of district students (2,912) are enrolled in charter schools.

All charter schools must conform to the same credentialing standards for teachers as traditional public schools, and must provide a free education to all students. They cannot discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, race, gender, or ability to learn.

Charter schools are financed by public funds based on average daily attendance. This costs the District budget approximately \$18 million per year in lost revenue. Most of the charter schools are strapped for funds due to hefty deferrals until next year of ADA monies owed them by the state. Some of these schools are borrowing money at exorbitant fees and furloughing teachers in order to keep their doors open.

Average API (State testing) scores for charter schools are no higher or lower than District scores, with significant variations between individual schools.

There are two charter schools in the boundaries of the District that are not a part of SBCUSD. One is chartered by County Schools and the other by Inyo County. These schools were visited by the committee but are not



included in the official study.

The SBCUSD has a full time administrator to oversee charter schools for compliance with state laws and local expectations. Charter Schools must have their charters renewed every three to five years. The SBCUSD is responsible for oversight.

There is much more to learn about charter schools. We know you are interested in how they fit into the community. Help us reach a meaningful consensus. Please come to the April 21, 11:30 am—3:00 pm., meeting at the Coco's on East Highland Ave. (near Arden).

Susan Nieblas, Marilyn Patterson, Dotti Garcia, Barbara Sokoloff, Sally Morris

## Celebrating the Passage of the Affordable Care Act

President Elisabeth MacNamara's weekly message on March 23 focused on the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) second anniversary and the part that the League played in its historic passage. She pointed to its impact so far:

Medicare participants have annual checkups and mammograms covered at no cost to them.

Children are no longer denied coverage due to preexisting conditions.

Insurance companies can no longer impose lifetime limits on coverage.

Young adults can stay on their parents' health plans as dependents until age 26.

The prescription drug coverage gap, the infamous Medicare "Donut Hole" is gradually being phased out.

She asked us to celebrate and take note of the advances that have already taken place and those to come in the

next few years, focusing on the facts, and how the ACA has already helped the lives of so many Americans. For more information, you can go to [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).



**“ A democracy cannot function effectively when its constituent members believe laws are being bought and sold.”**  
**from**  
**Justice Stevens’ dissent to the Citizens United decision.**

## League Supports Introduction of the Disclose Act

A coalition of organizations, including the League of Women Voters, has sent letters to US Senators to promptly consider and pass this essential campaign finance disclosure legislation.

The letter says in part that in the wake of the Citizens United decision, more than \$135 million in secret contributions were spent to influence the 2010 congressional races. This amount of secret money is expected to greatly

increase in the 2012 national elections, absent new disclosure provisions. This DISCLOSE Act closes the loopholes in the Citizens United decision with effective new disclosure requirements. Unlike the DISCLOSE Act considered in 2010, the legislation focuses solely on disclosure provisions and does not contain any special exceptions for any group. The legislation also fixes the problem of untimely disclosure of donors to SuperPacs that sur-

faced during the 2012 presidential primaries.

Polls show overwhelming public support for disclosure by outside spending groups and the coalition asserts there are no legitimate policy or constitutional grounds for opposing the DISCLOSE Act.



**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.**

**Upcoming events—save the dates!**

**April 3, 6:30 pm.: Big Bear candidate forum for the 3rd District Supervisor's race (moderated by LWVSB President Gloria Anderson). Big Bear Masonic Lodge, 385 Summit Blvd., Big Bear Lake.**

**April 21, 11:30 am.-3 pm.: Charter School Consensus Meeting at Cocos on East Highland, near Arden. The committee will present their findings, then all present will discuss the questions raised and work towards reaching a consensus.**

**April 29, 2-4pm.: Citizens of Achievement Reception at the Native Son's of the Golden West hall in San Bernardino. (At the corner of Del Rosa and Date St.—Del Rosa near the 210 fwy.)**

**May 12: Health Care Meeting in Pasadena.**

**We're on the web: <http://lwvsanbernardino.ca.lwvnet.org>**

**June 5 Primaries**

In 2010, on the June 8 ballot, Proposition 14 was on the ballot:

**Ballot title and label:** "Elections. Increases Right to Participate in Primary Elections." Reforms the primary election process for congressional, statewide, and legislative races. Allows all voters to choose any candidate regardless of the candidate's or voter's political party preference. Ensures that the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes will appear on the general election ballot regardless of party preference.

Supporters believed that the old primary process pushed candidates toward extreme positions on the issues. The feeling was that this "open primary" would give moderates a stronger voice.

The measure passed. It goes into effect next month, so the June 5, 2012 Primary Election will be an open primary.

The reform applies to congressional, statewide, and legislative races – not to presidential races. So, on June 5, the Presidential Primary will be held in the traditional way, you will vote for a nominee from the party with

which you are registered, just as you have always done in the past.

At the same time, the open primary reform will apply to the election for statewide offices. For these positions, all the candidates who are running, no matter which party they belong to, will be listed on your ballot.

In November, the General Election ballot will include a Presidential nominee from each qualifying party. For statewide positions your ballot will list the two candidates who received the most votes in the Primary, regardless of their party affiliation.

