



# *League of Women Voters of San Diego County* **COUNTY VOTER**

**Summer 2007**

An Inter-League Organization (ILO) - City of San Diego • East San Diego County • North Coast • Escondido

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## **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

The last two months I have been “on the road” to keep the County League updated on the convention results of the LWV of California and LWV of the United States. The May 18-20 State Convention was in Bakersfield and the June 9-11 National Council was in Washington D.C.

In the near future you will be receiving more e-mails from LWVC and LWVUS. Both are increasing computer technology capability to enable them to communicate more directly with League members, to escalate League visibility, empower leaders and increase membership. The California SMART VOTER website will also be technically expanded. Items such as e-newsletters, advocacy activities, and other items of interest will be arriving on your computers.

During the next year the Education and Advocacy priorities for LWVC will be Education, Redistricting, and Health Care. The major priorities for LWVUS will be Campaign Finance Reform, Civil Liberties, DC Voting Rights, and Election Administration. Improved ballot design, development of high quality paper ballots and opposition to election photo IDs will be on the LWVUS agenda for election administration.

League membership was also addressed through lectures and workshops at the State and National meetings. LWVUS has developed, tested and refined an innovative approach to attracting new members to League. Oakland, CA was one of the 5 national pilot Leagues that participated in the Membership Recruitment Initiative. All pilot Leagues

increased their membership by 5% using the MRI policies. During the second year of the Initiative, selected states will participate in the MRI to assist recruiting members at the grassroots level. After training by LWVUS, the state Leagues will take the lead in teaching and nurturing local Leagues to implement the communications and outreach strategies that have been developed.

Both of these significant meetings were inspiring. Listening and talking with League members from California and other states demonstrated how involved, active and committed Leagues are throughout our country. We are part of it!

Now I will sort out the handouts and booklets from the meetings (increased my suitcase weight by 5 lbs) for our LLs and start the ILO board on selecting the County League priorities.

Nancy McCleary  
County League President

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## **SOCIAL POLICY SUMMARY 2006-07**

Social policy covers many topics, groups and causes. During the last twelve months I have reported on the problems of getting cold weather housing for the homeless, especially in Escondido. The North County cities are fearful of attracting more homeless and generally do very little. The churches and church organizations share the burden of feeding the homeless year round and they promote indoor shelter at night with a schedule of two week cycles at churches of all faiths. Interfaith Community Services of Escondido and Oceanside and groups such as Bread of Life, Brother Benno's

and the Salvation Army play a vital role in providing food and shelter to North County residents.

With a contribution from the City of San Diego and others, a large tent is created downtown to shelter well over a hundred people at night. Increasing numbers of homeless families are in need. Project Homeless Connect fairs were held in San Diego and Oceanside last year. Housing help, medical treatment, legal advice, clothing and trips to the Social Security office were among the services offered.

I attended a SANDAG meeting where there was a presentation by the outgoing Mayor of Tijuana. Many of the Mayors knew him because of his famous cross-border parties to encourage business/government cooperation across the border. At the same meeting the Native People were given a membership on the SANDAG board but the Marines were denied a separate delegate of their own, even though Mayor Sanders pointed out that the Marine Corps and Navy each control many more people here than all the reps of the various small cities.

Last winter many ILO Board members attended a Planned Parenthood meeting in San Diego where a lady from Montana spoke about her success in getting a measure on the ballot to save the right to legal abortion in her state. She convinced pro-life voters that legal abortion to save a woman's health and ability to have more children was a pro-life position.

In addition I attended many NORCAN meetings at the San Marcos Regional Center. This is a group supported by the San Diego Social Services Dept. in encouraging shared knowledge among providers of hospice care, assisted living and other services. It helps them keep up to date on changes in elder care and disabled services available from private and public groups.

Lastly, I watched the progress of the Sprinter train from Escondido to Oceanside due to open in August. It stops at CalState San Marcos and will be heavily used by students and employees of the college. A computerized ride delivery system is also being piloted for North County. Some expert soft-

ware companies are bidding to set up a system that will coordinate all current car, taxi, and bus services to get more efficient transportation service for the elderly and disabled. Three counties in Northern California and the City of Pittsburgh now have a smaller system of this type and it is very successful. So many causes, so little time.

Elaine Barton, Director of Social Policy

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## ILO 2007 - 2008 BUDGET

The ILO 2007 - 2008 Budget was adopted at the June 16, 2007 County Council. It should be noted that more than 35% (\$3,725) of our total projected income (\$10,623) is based on a very successful fundraiser. We ask for your support when you are contacted in January 2008, to participate in a raffle for great prizes that reflect the many activities available throughout San Diego County.

Approximately 20% (\$2,000) of the total projected income is designated for the Dollars for Scholars program. This program provides scholarships that enable Juvenile Court and Community Schools students to further their educational goals. Only 16% (\$1,732) of the projected income is from PMPs (per member assessments) from the local Leagues. The assessments have not been raised for several years, despite the fact that there has been a decline in total countywide membership. Projected areas of expense include program, Voter Service, County Voter, and national/state convention delegates.

Susan Peterson  
Vice President, Strategic and Financial Planning

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## SANDAG BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING OF JUNE 22, 2007

The following actions were taken at the June 22, 2007 SANDAG Board meeting

- 1) to agree to transfer funds from a project that was under budget for the Trolley (electrical wiring improvements) to a Trolley project that is over budget (the new City College Station).
- 2) to approve the increase of \$37.7 million to the I-15 Managed Lanes project, bringing the total for

this project to \$1.29 billion. The report stated that construction costs had escalated above the budgeted amount.

3) to approve the transfer of \$15 million from unallocated reserves to fund right-of-way costs in excess of the budgeted amount, increasing the budget for this project from \$144.3 million to \$159.3 million.

4) to approve the FY 2008 Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds distribution to the region's transit operators and for non-motorized transportation. The TDA program also sets productivity goals for the region's transit operators. The region will receive approximately \$124 million for allocation by SANDAG. The Report noted that the estimate of available TDA funds is lower than earlier predicted. Transit operators on the Board noted that gas and other operational costs have increased.

5) an information report was submitted noting that the first review will be conducted of the Memorandum of Understanding implementing the Regional Housing Needs Assessment policy and implementation guidelines. The review will include lessons learned, the relationship between the Needs Assessment goals and SANDAG's Smart Growth goals, and a review of new funding sources.

Nan Valerio, Director, Regional Governance  
LWV San Diego County (ILO)

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## 2006-07 ANNUAL REPORT TO LWV/SAN DIEGO COUNTY

In the name of League, I serve as Director of the San Diego County Chapter of Health Care for All/CA, which launched the OneCareNOW.org campaign last summer to pass the single payer health care reform bill, Senate Bill 840 (Kuehl) The chapter sponsored a total of 19 events and forums throughout the county with other supporters.

A special introduction by LWVC out-going president Jackie Jacobberger was added to the 22 minute DVD produced by HCA to educate the public on single payer financing of health care.

Also as your representative I serve on the boards of San Diegans for Health Care Coverage and the Business Health Care Connection. These aligned

groups, an outgrowth of the Improving Access to Health Care project started in 1998, worked to get SB50 sponsored by Senator Denise Ducheny as a pilot project for encouraging employers to participate in a program to purchase health insurance coverage for their workers in the San Diego region. The bill failed in committee.

### **San Diego County Healthcare Safety Net Study Report of July 2006**

San Diego County Board of Supervisors contracted with consultants The Abaris Group in 2005 for \$600,000 to analyze the way the region provides safety-net health care and write the Healthcare Safety Net Report. The CA Endowment paid half and the County half. They found at least 3 hospitals serving many poor and uninsured people south of I-8 were in danger of financial collapse. Few physician specialists accept such patients and the county lacks a system to coordinate their care.

The study found 24 serious weaknesses in San Diego County's broken safety net that more than 900,000 Medi-Cal beneficiaries and uninsured residents depend on for care. This population is growing, so it keeps getting worse. San Diego County ranks last in the state for county spending per uninsured resident and lacks coordination and leadership.

Community clinics don't offer after-hours services; patients have long waits to be seen by a hospital emergency room or clinic staff; and there's limited coordination of care for uninsured people diagnosed with cancer, mental illness or chronic disease. By 2025, the number of hospital beds and emergency department treatment stations is expected to increase but not to the expected need of 959 more beds-and will not be added to facilities in central and South County, where they are needed most. Medicare's payment formula lumps San Diego County with 32 rural California counties and Medi-Cal pays hospitals in San Diego County less than their counterparts in many urban regions.

The county government shares some of the blame, according to the report, because it did not pursue millions of dollars in health funds (\$8 million alone, available from the Children's Health Initiative, a program of The California Endowment.)

County Medical Services program (CMS, for last-resort health care for medically indigent adults,) fails to pay for prevention programs and has a long qualification process fraught with hurdles for patients. Under court order the county expanded the program's eligibility criteria but many of the working poor fall through the cracks because they earn too much to qualify. They can't get care or medicine unless they become so sick they go to an emergency room.

**The county's good news:** The large network of 90 community clinics has the second highest utilization rate in the state – 160 patients per 1,000 population. The county's six-hospital trauma system, and several other programs provide services to the mentally ill, substance abusers and the homeless.

The year ended (June 3 '07) with the SharpHealth (the largest system in County) nurses union (more than 3,000 nurses) filing a quality-of-care complaint with the Department of Health Services alleging 900 violations at Sharp's seven hospitals. United Nurses Associations of California/Union of Health Care Professionals in its complaint said that understaffing, lack of training and defective equipment are compromising patient care at the hospitals. The nurses said its complaint is the largest quality-of-care complaint in California history. They charge Sharp with deceiving DHS by temporarily increasing staff levels near inspections; maintaining inadequate supplies and outdated equipment; and increasing the risk of patient infection because of a shortage of housekeepers. Sharp said they will investigate the problems and address them.

Sylvia Hampton, VP Health Care, MTA (Management Training Advisor)

### **HI TECH TID-BITS**

- Great video explaining the single payer health plan at [www.grahamazon.com/sp/whatisinglepayer.php](http://www.grahamazon.com/sp/whatisinglepayer.php)
- Gail Tullao, North Coast treasurer and web master has agreed to set up a County League website. Thanks Gail!

## **IS "EFFICIENCY" THE NEW "RELIABILITY"?**

From an article by Bob Fesmire, Guest Editor of EnergyBiz Insider

Utility representatives and state regulators joined a who's-who of federal energy administrators in Washington to discuss transmission-related topics like regional planning, cost recovery, and siting. In a nutshell, the National Electricity Delivery Forum was all about "efficiency" while the main buzzword at the summit was "reliability." The latter's focus was understandable given that many of the provisions in the Energy Policy Act of 2005 had recently reached milestones (e.g., the completion of the Act's mandated congestion study), so there was a lot to talk about. But the shift in language, if not sentiment, toward the concept of energy efficiency was not as expected.

The ongoing disparity between transmission expansion and demand growth remains an issue. The Energy Information Administration projects that demand will grow by 43% in the US by 2030. While transmission investments have increased over the last few years, the growth from one year to the next is still lagging the annual increase in demand for electricity. Without a significant investment, reliability will eventually suffer and it is clear that the US will need to deploy a variety of tactics to ensure the grid we depend on today will continue to be among the most reliable in the world. The consensus among regulators and the industry is that there is a need for a smoother siting and permitting process and with FERC's newly minted backstop siting authority, one would think that large transmission projects might have an easier time. But old ways die hard and the new siting regime has yet to be tested. The energy department has yet to even designate the National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors.

The long-term prognosis for transmission expansion looks reasonably good but we are still left with the near term which brings discussion back to efficiency. Efficiency has been called the "fifth fuel" by Jim Rogers, Chairman and CEO of Duke Energy. He said that the industry needs to revitalize its focus on efficiency in spite of the greater atten-

tion paid to fuel costs, security and environmental issues. The energy department's proposed efficiency standards for distribution transformers would produce 8.5 billion kWh in savings each year.

Another example-the largest consumers of electric power are industrial motors using 65% of all electricity for industrial applications. They run at full speed all the time because they lack variable speed drives. These drives would result in energy savings of up to 60%. All of that saved energy represents power generators don't have to make and the transmission and distribution system doesn't have to deliver. Fuel costs can be avoided while maintenance can be deferred and it's all megawatts that can be used to serve other purposes during peak periods – all without a single dollar invested in transmission.

In June the reliability council began to enforce some of the 107 reliability standards it has established. We should see some activity from the energy department on National Corridor designations. These are major steps and are integral to the continued health of the nation's transmission system, and by extension to grid reliability as a whole. But there are many other, smaller changes that can be made to improve efficiency along the supply chain, especially within the realm of end use itself. If the National Electricity Delivery Forum was any indication, there seems to be a renewed appreciation of just how interrelated efficiency and reliability really are.

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### LWVC CONVENTION 2007 AMENDED CHANGES TO ENERGY POLICY

“The League supports development of a state energy policy that will ensure reliability of energy resources and protection of the environment and public health and safety, at reasonable customer rates, giving primary consideration to conservation, energy efficiency, **and renewable resources.**”

Under **Resource Adequacy #2 (old)**

**There is a change of words and an addition:**  
2006 Version is changed from:

a. **potential for mitigating** greenhouse gas emissions  
to:

- a. **reduction of** greenhouse gas emissions;
- b. development and deployment of renewable resources;
- c. contribution to the diversity of the resource mix;
- d. availability at times of peak power demand;
- e. level of support for base load power requirements;
- f. **protection of public health and safety. ( addition)**

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### RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE LWVC CONVENTION, MAY 20, 2007

The following resolutions were adopted by delegates to the LWVC Convention:

#### RESOLUTION NO. R-2-2007 DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA VOTING RIGHTS

Whereas, Residents of the District of Columbia are unable to participate in essential decisions of national importance such as going to war or setting taxes because they lack voting representation in Congress; and

Whereas, This radical disenfranchisement of hundreds of thousands of United States citizens, solely on the basis of residence, has been perpetuated for over a century, representing a painful legacy of racism for its majority Black population; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the League of Woman Voters of California in Convention urges its board to notify our United States senators of our vigorous support for the rapid passage of legislation to end this injustice and provide the fullest possible voting rights for the District of Columbia, with a copy to the League of Women Voters of the United States; and

Resolved, That the LWVC board also encourage each local League to respond to the LWWUS call to action on DC voting rights and to sustain pressure on their congressional representatives until the bill is passed.

**RESOLUTION NO. R-3-2007  
ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

Whereas, The League of Woman Voters of California has an action policy on Sustainable Communities and a newly updated position on Energy; and  
Whereas, The League of Women Voters of the United States has issued an Advocacy Statement on Climate Change; therefore, be it  
Resolved, That the League of Women Voters of California leadership, with the support of the Energy Committee, encourages Local Leagues to work with their local governmental jurisdictions and residential, commercial, industrial and educational entities to reduce their contributions to global climate change.

**RESOLUTION NO. R-4-2007  
NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS**

Whereas, California's aging operational nuclear power plants continue to produce and store radioactive waste in absence of safe disposal and will continue production of increasing quantities if regulatory agencies relicense the plants;  
Whereas, Clean, renewable energy can now be produced at rates competitive with those charged for nuclear power. A shift to renewable energy sources will not cause net loss or shortage in meeting California's energy requirements; and  
Whereas, The California Energy Commission is analyzing costs, benefits, and risks of continued operation of the state's aging nuclear power plants. This analysis will enable the development of a safe, secure and cost-effective energy future; therefore be it  
Resolved, That the League of Women Voters of California urge the California Energy Commission not to accept any license renewal applications for any state nuclear power plants until the completion, adoption, and implementation of the Commission's analysis.

**RESOLUTION NO. R-5-2007  
STATE BUDGET DEFICIT**

Whereas, State structural deficits ranging from \$3 billion to \$5 billion are expected to continue between now and 2010 (according to the Legislative Analyst's Office);

Whereas, Although the economy has recovered from the downturn in 2000, the prospects for "growing out" of this deficit are not likely and the establishment of prudent reserves may not be achieved, even with any number of transfers from other funds (e.g., transportation);

Whereas, Cuts in operating programs proposed in the 2007-2008 May Revision target those most in need and make only a small contribution toward balancing the operating budget; and

Whereas, The League of Women Voters of California supports measures to ensure revenues both sufficient and flexible enough to meet the changing needs for state and local government services, which include long range finance methods that meet current and future needs while taking into account the cumulative impact of public debt, and ensure adequacy of revenues by having sources with bases as broad as possible consistent with fairness, such as reducing reliance on such volatile sources as income taxes and sales tax; therefore be it

Resolved, That the delegates of the 2007 LWVC Convention call upon the Governor and state legislative leaders to:

1. Give priority to eliminating the ongoing structural deficit.
2. Not make early repayments on the deficit reduction books.
3. Increase revenues (roughly equivalent to the Vehicle License Fees (VLF) that were reduced) through sources that would diversity the revenue mix to reduce the reliance on income and sales taxes.
4. Use new revenues to address priorities such as global climate change that would have additional benefits of changing behavior.
5. Review existing tax incentives (tax expenditures) to identify those that are ineffective or no longer needed, and include a sunset provision for any new incentives.

This Newsletter is published four times a year and contains articles sent by members or articles collected by the editors that reflect the positions and interests of the San Diego Leagues on a regional or statewide basis. Our next issue will be in the fall. Please feel free to send articles that you think will be of general interest to the members to [liznandy@roadrunner.com](mailto:liznandy@roadrunner.com).  
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