

The Voter

League of Women Voters of Berkeley • Albany • Emeryville

APRIL 2008



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CALIFORNIA'S BUDGET CRUNCH: WATCH THE DONUT

Election news may command the headlines, but here at home we need to follow the money. The State budget for 2008-09 is roughly \$16 billion in the red, and the State now spends over \$400 million more per month than it receives in revenues. In January the Governor proposed to address the growing structural deficit not by imposing new taxes, but by initiating a sweeping 10-percent across-the-board cut to all government-financed programs. In its alternative budget, the Legislative Analyst's office proposed a less blunt instrument: prioritizing programs to serve critical human needs and adding some \$2 billion in new revenue proposals.

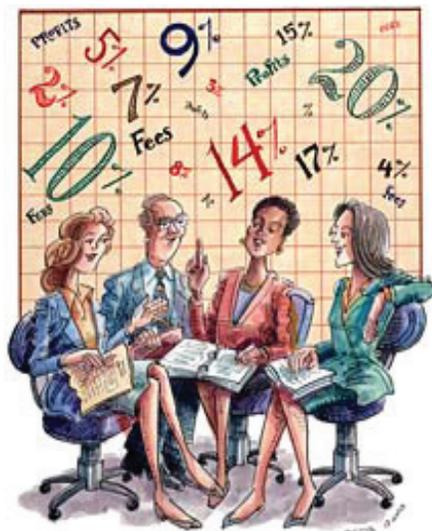
But all politics is local. The California Budget Project has broken out the Governor's statewide totals county by county. For us in Alameda County, the proposed cuts to children in Health and Social Services would mean:

- 5,800 children dropped from CalWorks coverage;
- 840 fewer poor children eligible for child care and pre-school;
- 3,640 low-income children dropped from Medi-Cal coverage;
- 20,590 children now enrolled in Healthy Families, which offers low-cost health insurance to poor families, at risk of dropping out because of increases in family premiums and co-payments.

For seniors, the poor and the disabled, the results would be equally dire:

- 53,310 low-income seniors and people with disabilities would lose State-funded cost-of-living supplements to their Social Security Income and State Supplementary Payment cash assistance grants;
- 15,370 of the same people eligible for In-Home Supportive Services would have fewer hours of help;
- 218,540 low-income Medi-Cal recipients would have greater difficulty in getting medical care because of cuts in state payments to Medi-Cal health care providers.

(continued on p. 3)



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

You readers hear from me every month, but this month I want to hear from you! I want to hear what subjects you are interested in. I am not asking you to tell me what you want to get busy and work on. I want to know what topics you and your friends want to know more about but don't have the time to research yourselves.

The League of Women Voters has a reputation for informing ourselves and our fellow citizens. We cover lots of subjects in our monthly Brown Bag lunches, in our Environmental Concerns meetings and at our two annual dinner meetings; but the subjects are limited to what we few League leaders are particularly interested in. What have we overlooked?

One item that is usually considered a sleeper is the budget. But the budget affects us daily because it's directly linked to taxes. We could look at federal, state or local budgets – they all hit each of us. Is there any interest? If so, what questions do you have?

In the past, our League has been very active on housing issues and juvenile justice. What's going on in those fields now? Does anyone want to know? Is there any interest in becoming informed about our adult prison system? These questions are meant to provoke your thinking. What topics are you curious about?

Please call me at home, 510-548-5292, or leave me a message at the League office, (510) 843-8824, or email me at jinkybsg@comcast.net. Tell me your name and your interest(s) – more than one interest is encouraged! I want to hear from you.

Jinky Gardner, President

NEW MEMBERS

Our Warmest Welcome
To Our Newest Members:

Ann Goldman Linda Oppen Li-hsia Wang

And To Our Rejoining Member:

Harry Heckman

THE VOTER

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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The VOTER is free to members, \$10/year for non-members. Current and past issues of the VOTER are posted on our website at lwvbae.org.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the active and informed participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

OBSERVE A COMMISSION, LEARN ABOUT YOUR CITY

Zero Waste in Berkeley? Is this an achievable goal? At a recent meeting of the Zero Waste Commission I heard a presentation about Berkeley's Measure G action plan, and I thought the Commission's discussion following the presentation was an excellent example of thinking globally while trying to figure out how to act locally. I look forward to following the work of this commission, which meets at 7 pm at the North Berkeley Senior Center on the fourth Monday of the month. Let me know if you'd like to accompany me.

Lillie Anderson, a new member of the League, has been visiting commissions in search of one that interests her. *Candy Simonen* has agreed to observe meetings of the Berkeley City Council.

Since we will have local elections in the fall, I hope that someone will want to attend meetings of Berkeley's Fair Campaign Practices Commission (third Thursdays, 7:30 pm, North Berkeley Senior Center).

Berkeley residents may find a partial list of Berkeley commissions on the LWVBAE website, and may go to www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/commissions for a complete list of Berkeley commissions. Albany and Emeryville commission information may also be found on the LWVBAE website. If you are observing a commission, please let me know at (510) 525-6614.

Phoebe Watts
Director of Observer Corps

BERKELEY POLICE REVIEW COMMISSION

At the Brown Bag Lunch on March 4, attorney *Sherry Smith*, a former president of our League and a current Commissioner on the Berkeley Police Review Commission, provided a stimulating presentation to an attentive audience about how the PRC operates; the lack of openness of review procedures following the investigation of complaints against police officers; and the responsibility of the PRC for making policy recommendations to the Berkeley City Council.

The PRC was formed in 1973 as a result of a citizens' initiative. The Mayor and the City Council appoint nine PRC members for periods of two years. There is no limit on the number of terms served. The PRC meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. Subcommittees of three are formed to hear complaints against Berkeley police officers. Currently, about 45 such hearings are held per year. Three City employees work full-time for the PRC, two of them are employed as investigators. The number of hearings is down from previous years. Recently, only about 20 percent – fewer than ten – of the cases brought to a hearing are sustained by the PRC per year. Overall, from the perspective of citizen complaints against police officers, Berkeley has an excellent Police Department.

Sherry noted the League's commitment to openness in public matters and her frustration at the secrecy required (by the Peace Officers Bill of Rights) in hearings to investigate complaints against the Berkeley Police Department. The City of Berkeley has fought the mandatory secrecy, but has lost in court thus far.

Sherry also discussed the role of the PRC in making recommendations to the City Council regarding policy. She gave as an example recent recommendations that grew out of felony charges of grand theft, possession of heroin and possession of methamphetamine against Berkeley police officer Cary Kent. (Kent has subsequently pleaded guilty to the charges.) Sgt. Kent was believed to have stolen drug evidence from the police drug evidence vault. *Sherry* was one of five members of the PRC Subcommittee on Evidence Theft Issues who (1) identified policies related to the handling and storage of drug evidence, and (2) evaluated

whether the policies were adequate to provide proper management and to deter future thefts of drug evidence. The Subcommittee made 27 recommendations to the Berkeley City Council, all but one of which were adopted.

Brad Smith

CALIFORNIA'S BUDGET CRUNCH

(continued from p. 1)

Education K-14, which receives the biggest chunk (about 40%) of State General Fund revenues, would take the biggest hits. If, as the Governor proposes, the Prop. 98 guarantee is suspended, the loss to education K-14 will amount to more than \$4.825 billion, up from the original \$4.4 billion loss estimate in January.

The California Budget Project looked at the County numbers (roughly 193,330 students in Alameda County public schools) and then broke those numbers down to losses to individual school districts. Here in north county, the reductions per student would be severe:

- \$557 per student in Albany, for a total district loss of \$1.952 million;
- \$654 per student in Berkeley, for a total district loss of \$5.418 million;
- \$622 per student in Emeryville, for a total district loss of \$486 thousand;
- \$595 per student in Oakland, for a total district loss of \$22.413 million.

The statewide suspension of Prop. 98 funding would also affect our community colleges. Under the Governor's proposals, Peralta Community College District stands to lose \$9.2 million, and a further loss of \$760,000 if his proposed mid-year cuts to the 2007-08 budget remain.

Up and down the state, of course, opposition is vocal and intense. Things will come to a boil at the time of the May revise when the real tax revenues for fiscal 2007-08 are in and budget negotiations for 2008-09 begin in earnest. Stay tuned – and be prepared for action.

Helene Lecar
VP Election Services

NOTE: *The California Budget Project is a non-profit organization which engages in independent fiscal and policy analysis and public education with the goal of improving public policies affecting the economic and social well-being of low- and middle-income Californians. See www.cbj.org.*

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE

By *Emma Lue Kopp*
May 13, 1995

EARLY EVENTS

Soon after California women were granted the vote, Mrs. C.C. Hall called a small group of women together on October 30, 1911 at her Berkeley home on Hillside Avenue. The purpose, she said, was "... to follow up the recent victory of Women's Suffrage in California, with effective civic work." With this in mind they organized the Berkeley Center of the California Civic League. They decided to inform themselves on all phases of government and to study the issues before action.

In 1912 they supported a local school bond after hearing "...a graphic and appalling account of the Berkeley Schools." It lost. They protested a Constitutional Amendment to legalize prostitution and permit segregated districts. The Amendment lost, and members suggested that the Social Welfare Commission "...help the Red Light women who will be out of a job soon." By 1914 the League had over 400 members.

CHANGE

On March 10, 1921, the Berkeley Center of the California Civic League endorsed becoming the California Unit of the League of Women Voters after a referendum submitted to members passed unanimously. Berkeley member, Mrs. Frank C. Law, was the first president of the LWV California, from 1920-1922. Frances Packard, the 1995-96 president, is also from Berkeley.

STUDIES

Incineration was the subject of the first study group. Through the years there were discussions and studies of sanitary fill, storm sewers, recycling, child labor, Indian affairs, mental health, civil service, water and Hetch-Hetchy, housing, recreation, counseling and guidance in the public schools, a serious rat problem, rent control and many other subjects.

ELECTIONS

Shocked that less than 50% of the population voted in 1920, members helped increase registration in Berkeley by 11,665 from 1920 to 1924, with 1,702 more women registered than men. League members, Mrs. Carrie L. Hoyt and Dr. Agnes C. Moody were, in 1923, the first women elected to the City Council. Today, all of the Berkeley Council members and the mayor are women. Candidates meetings began officially in 1924 at regular meetings. Observers attended meetings of the City Council and the Board of Education. In the November 1994 elections Berkeley candidates meetings were presented on the new Berkeley Community Cable TV station.

RECENT EVENTS

Albany and Emeryville were added officially to the Berkeley name and service area in 1994. Recently, two substantial gifts have changed the financial picture. Madeleine Traynor's gift for educational purposes was accepted in December 1991. The Soulages Fund was deposited as a restricted part of the educational, tax-deductible League of Women Voters of Berkeley Foundation set up in 1992. A bequest from the will of Albany physician, Dr. Jane Paxson, was received in July 1992 and July 1993, and placed in a new Endowment Fund.

ASUC ELECTIONS

The League has monitored the elections of the Associated Students of the University of California as a major fundraiser since 1979. The 60-90 members recruited for this popular event enjoy campus life and earn money for the League to maintain an office and support activities of the League's 442 members.

SOURCES: Selections from minutes of the October 1911 and other meetings included by Dorothy Spitzer in Order of the Meeting [radio script] 1961 and League Golden Anniversary, Nov. 25, 1961. Quotations are from the latter.

NOTE: *Emma Lue Kopp was an active member of LWVBAE from 1986 until her death in 2004. A history buff, professional librarian and a former Voter Editor, Emma Lue undertook the task of researching and writing a short history of the LWVBAE, which is now published for the first time. (See an outline of the life of Emma Lue Kopp on p. 6.)*

POLL WORKERS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE ELECTION SYSTEM

“Glitches at the Polls.” “Long Lines at Polls.” “Shortage of Ballots.” I’ve seen these headlines on news stories since the February primary election. I’m happy to say that none of the above happened at the polling place where I worked – and I’m sorry that news stories never mention how many voters thank the poll workers for being there. Whenever I’ve been a poll worker, voters have thanked us!

It’s a difficult task to assemble enough temporary workers for elections. Please consider being a poll worker yourself, and please encourage friends and family to try it. To be a poll worker you must be either (1) a registered voter in Alameda County, (2) an employee of Alameda County, or (3) high school student, at least 16 years old, and a participant in the Student Poll Worker Program. You’ll be given training, and you’ll be paid.

To find out all about it, go to www.ac.gov.org/rov/workers.htm or call (510) 272-6971. Poll working is an enjoyable and rewarding way to be part of our democratic process.

Phoebe Watts
Director of Observer Corps

FEBRUARY & MARCH DONATIONS

TO THE LWVBAE GENERAL FUND

Elisabeth De Vogelaere
Charlotte and Martin Lichterman
Doris Maslach
Jean Safir
Frances Townes
Alba Witkin

TO THE LWVB FOUNDATION

Michael E. Driscoll,
for the *Eva Alexis Bansner* Scholarship Fund
Frances Townes

Many thanks for remembering your League.

Louetta Erlin
Donations Secretary

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday, May 22, 2008
LWVBAE Annual Meeting
6:00 - 8:30 pm
Northbrae Community Church

After a delicious dinner and the business meeting, watch Norman Solomon’s

WAR MADE EASY

a look at how U.S. politicians and news media have used propaganda to sell and prolong wars from Vietnam to Iraq. Help us decide if, as a League, we want to bring films like this to Berkeley, Albany and Emery High students and teachers.

BROWN BAG LUNCHES

At our March 4 Brown Bag Lunch meeting, Berkeley Police Review Commissioner, attorney and former LWVBAE president *Sherry Smith* presented an in-depth review of the structure, procedures and current concerns of the Commission. We are indeed fortunate that *Sherry* and the other six Commissioners are devoting their time, energies and considerable talents toward upholding the ideal of citizen review (see p. 3).

Our next Brown Bag Lunch meeting will take place on Tuesday, April 1, from 12:15 (sharp!) to 2 pm, in the Edith Stone Room of the Albany Public Library, 1247 Marin Avenue, Albany. The LWVBAE Election Committee will brief us on June primary issues and will also give us a peek at what we need to know and do to prepare for the November election. The doors of the Edith Stone Room open at 12 noon; you may, of course, bring your lunch, but no liquids, please, other than water.

The final Brown Bag Lunch meeting of the season will be held on Tuesday, May 6. Various topics for this Brown Bag are currently under consideration, two of which are presidential signing statements and reform of the “sunshine laws” in Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville. Stay tuned!

Luanne Rogers
VP Program

DESK VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED!

In our attempt to have the LWVBAE office open and available to Leaguers and the general public as much as possible, we are asking our membership to volunteer for Desk Duty! Desk Duty can be once or twice a month, in shifts of 2-4 hours, and is a wonderful way to become acquainted with the daily workings of our League and of our office.

Desk duty includes answering the office phone, fetching and processing the mail, and doing whatever else needs doing. Now that we have three new, up-to-date computers in the office, there will certainly be other tasks that desk volunteers can perform. Please respond to this call and sign up for a shift or two by contacting me, *Jane Barrett*, at (510) 845-8055 or janebarrett@onebox.com. Desk Volunteer training is available!

Jane Barrett
Co-VP Administration

LWVBAE OFFICE HOURS

LWVBAE Office Manager *Cheryl Nichols'* office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 1:15 to 5:00, and some Mondays and Thursdays from 1:15 pm to 5:00 pm. You may leave a voicemail message for *Cheryl* at (510) 843-8824, and she will return your call.

PITTSBURG'S RAILROAD AVENUE CORRIDOR

On Monday evening, April 14, Environmental Concerns' monthly gathering will feature *Jessica Coleman*, our third *Eva Alexis Bansner* Fund for Sustainable Communities grantee. *Coleman*, who is a graduate student in UC Berkeley's Department of Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning, will tell us about her project to re-energize the Railroad Avenue Corridor in Pittsburg, CA as the city enters a new phase of development, including downtown plans and a new e-BART connection.

Environmental Concerns meetings are open to all interested persons and are held at the home of *Horst Bansner*, 1340 Arch Street (at Rose Street), Berkeley, from 7:30-9:00 pm. Contact *Carol Stone* at (510) 549-0959 for additional information.

Carol Stone, Co-Chair
Environmental Concerns

HELP SUPPORT THE LEAGUE

When you order *Andronico's Scrip*, 6 percent of the amount you pay comes back to the League. In other words, for every \$100 you buy, the League receives \$6. Every two months your Scrip will either be delivered to your home, or you may pick it up at the LWVBAE office. If you are interested in participating in the Scrip program, please contact *Ruthann Taylor* at (510) 527-0673 or at clydetaylr@att.net.

Ruthann Taylor

EMMA LUE KOPP A LIFE OF SERVICE

Emma Lue Kopp was born in Anderson, Indiana on September 5, 1924. She earned a Bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois and a Master's degree in Library Science from Columbia University. *Emma Lue* began her professional life as a librarian at Purdue University, followed by short periods at St. John's Hospital in Anderson, Indiana and the American Medical Association Library in Chicago. For most of her career *Emma Lue Kopp* was a tenured faculty member at the University of Kansas Medical Center Library, from which she retired in 1986.

Emma Lue's professional affiliations included membership in the Medical Library Association, the Special Library Association and the Health Sciences Library Group of Kansas City, where she held office as chairperson and editor. In 1980-81 she served on the Kansas Governor's Committee for Library Resources.

Upon her retirement, *Emma Lue* moved to the Bay Area and joined the League at the urging of her sister, *Florence Butter* of Alameda. *Emma Lue* became a committed LWVBAE volunteer and devoted the major part of her retired life to League activities, including LWVBAE Voter Editor (1987-88, 1989-91) and the 75th Anniversary Oral History Project. In 1995 *Emma Lue* moved to Alameda where she served on the LWVA Board. She was an avid reader, who also loved writing, history, photography and travel – a true Renaissance person!

Emma Lue Kopp died in Alameda, California on May 2, 2004, and was survived by her sister, brother, eight nieces, four nephews, many grandnieces and nephews, and one great-nephew.

ADK

NOTE: Information on *Emma Lue Kopp* was graciously provided by her niece *Karen Butter*, who is University Librarian and Assistant Vice Chancellor, Library Services and Instructional Technology, University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). (See "A Brief History of the LWVBAE" on p. 4.)

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS: ANOTHER TARGET OF THE PROPOSED BUDGET

The threatened closure of 48 California state parks, part of Governor Schwarzenegger’s proposed budget cuts, was discussed at Environmental Concerns’ February 11 meeting with California State Parks Foundation President Elizabeth Goldstein. The Foundation is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to protecting, enhancing and advocating for California’s State Parks.

In the Governor’s proposal, parks with the lowest annual visitation and lowest revenue were chosen for closure, and in addition, there would be no funds for rangers to patrol the closed parks for illegal fires and camping. In all, the parks budget would be cut by some \$13.3 million, and 136 permanent positions would be eliminated. The proposal follows years of cost cutting, staff reductions and lack of maintenance, including a loss of 572 Parks Department positions in the mid-1990s. According to park administrators, the parks have \$1.2 billion in deferred payments on the books.

The Foundation contends that it will be impossible to keep people out of the “closed” parks, and that increased deferred maintenance will only cost more in the long run. The closures and the cuts will shut out at least 6.5 million Californians from our state parks, Goldstein said, at a time when state residents need low-cost, accessible places for recreation, fitness, education, or simply an experience with nature.

At risk of closure are 17 state parks; 17 state historic parks and museums; 3 state beaches; 9 state recreation areas; and 2 state reserves. Nine of these are in the Bay Area. Sixteen state beaches have also been slated to have significantly reduced lifeguard staffing. These proposed cuts are said to result in a savings to the state of about \$8.8 million, but they would require the state to forgo at least \$4.8 million of revenue it would have otherwise brought in through visitor fees. The closures represent 17 percent of the entire state park system. 230 parks would remain open, the largest number of any state in the country. Visitation at the 16 state beaches that will have reduced lifeguard staffing represents more than 30 percent of the visitation to the entire state park system. (In 2006-07, there were 24.5 million visits to the state beaches and 79 million visits to the entire system.)

According to the Foundation, California’s parks and beaches remain popular, and the demand for state parks is increasing, not decreasing. When

reservations opened last November for Memorial Day Weekend 2008, park demand broke a record, with over 8,400 reservations made in a single day. (Parks that have sold out or are at 90% of capacity for that popular weekend are affected by this proposal, including Seacliff State Beach (SB), Bolsa Chica SB, Doheny SB, San Clemente SB, San Elijo SB and South Carlsbad SB.) In addition, many state parks are critical to local economies and are often a key association or landmark for a local area – part of its identity and character. In general, for every \$1 spent supporting the state park system, \$2.35 is returned to the state’s General Fund in the form of economic activity from park visitors, through purchases in local economies and in the state parks themselves.

In 2007, user fees accounted for \$122 million of the state park system’s budget, and in 2008 user fees are expected to account for more than one-quarter of the total budget for the state park system. The Foundation strongly opposes any fee increases, which, they say, may cause parks to be unaffordable for the public.

Proposition 84 funds of \$400 million for state parks may only be used for facilities and capital projects. Prop. 84 funds may not be used for basic staffing, maintenance or operations of the state park system. According to the Foundation, the very reason that voters support park bonds is because they feel the money will be used to improve and augment the state park system in order to keep it available for future generations. Park users can’t be expected to pay more for inadequate or declining services.

The Governor’s budget proposal isn’t final, and it’s not definite that any of the parks will be closed. The Foundation is asking all Californians to urge the Legislature to reject these proposals. For more information visit www.savestateparks.org or contact the Save Our State Parks Campaign at (916) 442-2119; Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, (916) 445-2841; or the California Legislature, www.legislature.ca.gov.

*Gail Schickele, Co-Chair
Environmental Concerns*

NOTE: *The League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) is closely watching the budget issue. As you read in this newsletter’s front-page article, the Governor’s proposed budget drastically cuts everything. LWVC is now joining in coalition with other civic groups to push for reduced cuts and increased funding. Once the May revise is done on the budget, we will have more solid figures to work with and will be ready to put the League’s name on our lobbying. Watch for action alerts in early June. For now, any lobbying you do on the parks or on other budget-related issues must be done by you as an individual and not as a representative of the League.*

Jinky Gardner, LWVBAE President

SUPREME COURT WEIGHS VOTER ID REQUIREMENTS

by Nina Totenberg

Politics is front and center at the Supreme Court on Wednesday, as the justices examine the constitutionality of laws requiring voters to show a government-issued photo ID in order to cast a ballot. Although 24 states have enacted such laws in recent years, Democrats contend that they suppress voter turnout. Since the fateful 2000 election, Republicans in many states have pushed for voter ID laws to stave off what they see as a major problem: voter fraud through voter impersonation at the polls. But studies have shown the problem does not exist.

Tova Wang, a Democracy Fellow at The Century Foundation, co-authored research and filed a federally mandated report on the question. "We found that although there is fraud in the system, it doesn't take place at the polling place," Wang says. Royal Masset, a consultant who by his own estimate has been involved in some 5,000 Republican campaigns in Texas, agrees. "My experience is that in-person voter fraud is nonexistent," he says. "It doesn't happen, and if you really analyze it, it makes no sense because who's going to take the risk of going to jail on something so blatant that maybe changes one vote?" Voter fraud does exist, say the experts, but in more systematic ways, through ballot box stuffing, voter machine manipulation, registration list manipulation and absentee balloting.

Documents Required to Vote Still, 24 states have passed some sort of voter ID law. Indiana's is the strictest: It requires anyone voting in person to present a current government photo ID. If you don't have one, you can vote provisionally at the polls, but you must present the required ID at an appropriate government office within 10 days or your vote will not be counted. People who don't have IDs can get them free from the state, but they must have appropriate documents, such as a certified birth certificate, and other secondary proof. The Democratic Party and the American Civil Liberties Union went to court seeking to block the law, noting that there is not a single recorded case of voter-impersonation fraud in Indiana's history. A federal appeals court acknowledged that the law poses a heavier burden on groups that tend to vote Democratic — minorities, the poor and the elderly. But, the court said, the burden is slight.

'A Preventative Approach' In the Supreme Court on Wednesday, Indiana will argue that the law is necessary to promote public confidence in the system. "There is concern about fraud in the future, so it's a preventative approach that hopefully can maintain the integrity of the voting process," Indiana Attorney General Steven Carter says. Countering that argument will be lawyer Paul Smith. "Under the Supreme Court's doctrine, the fundamental right to vote is protected from laws which look like legitimate regulations but don't actually serve any purpose while imposing significant burdens," Smith says. The devil, Smith contends, is in the details of Indiana's law. He cites, for example, the case of a woman who made three trips to the motor vehicle bureau in a vain attempt to get a free voter ID card. Her problem, even after she obtained her birth certificate, was that it was not in her married name. While the state does provide free voter ID cards, Smith observes, voters incur considerable costs in time and money to secure the documents the state requires as a condition for getting the cards.

'I Should Be Able to Have a Voice' The League of Women Voters has filed a brief with concrete examples. One of those examples is the case of Kim Tillman of Indianapolis, a stay-at-home wife of a janitor and mother of seven children ages 1 to 11. In order to get the free voter ID card, she had to get her birth certificate from out of state, a process that she said would have cost as much as \$50. And that was money she needed for household bills. Not being able to vote, she says, made her feel like she wasn't a citizen. "I believe that I should be able to have a voice ... to say who I would like governing the state that I live in," Tillman says. "But unfortunately because of the state laws I'm unable to do that." The state contends that Tillman could have voted if she had gone to the state offices within the 29 days before an election and sworn out an affidavit saying she is indigent, a process she would have to repeat before each election. There is no indigency affidavit provided on Election Day at the polls. . . .

There are no hard figures on how many eligible voters are without any current state or federal government photo ID. The state points out that in the hotly contested 2006 federal election in Indiana, voter participation was up by 2 percent. But the Census Bureau and the Federal Highway Administration estimate that 11 percent of voting-age citizens, some 21 million Americans, lack any form of current government-issued photo ID. The ubiquitous driver's license doesn't exist for many city dwellers who use public transportation, or for those too poor to own a car, or for senior citizens who no longer drive. The lower courts have come to different conclusions about voter ID laws in different states. Some laws have been struck down and some upheld. Without exception, though, the judges have cast their votes along party lines, with Republican appointees in favor of the voter ID laws and Democratic appointees against. Now, with the legacy of *Bush v. Gore* lurking in the background, the Supreme Court is poised to pack another political punch.

NOTE: Nina Totenberg is Legal Affairs Correspondent on the Washington, D.C. Desk of National Public Radio (NPR). This report was aired on NPR's "Morning Edition" on January 9, 2008, and appears here in excerpted form.

BOARD BRIEFS

At its February meeting, the Board unanimously approved sending a thank-you letter to the Peralta Board of Trustees for having an updated website. LWVBAE holds the position that the Peralta website needs to have current information with respect to meeting times and locations, and the Board therefore recognized Peralta with its thanks.

The Board heard a presentation on jail voting rights made by *Cheryl Nichols*, Tommy Escarcega and attorney Bob Evans, who requested that the League ask the Corrections Standards Authority to communicate with local detention facility administrators regarding the voting rights of inmates. The consensus of the Board was to present the request to the League Alameda County Council, which is composed of the seven Leagues of Women Voters in Alameda County, LWVBAE President *Jinky Gardner* will forward the request by email to the boards of the other Alameda County Leagues and to the State League.

Kristina Lim
Secretary

PROGRAM PLANNING

The February 27 program planning meeting focused on priorities for National, State, Bay Area and local consideration for the coming year; the results of our efforts will be reviewed at LWVBAE's annual meeting on May 22.

Luanne Rogers
VP Program

LEAGUE SPEAKERS BECOME THE BEST INFORMED VOTERS

As part of the League's Election Services, members who will explain what is on the June 3, 2008 primary ballot will be available to address community organizations. Members who take part in the Speakers Bureau are among the very best informed voters on election day. If you would like to participate in this interesting League activity, speaker training will take place on Thursday, May 1, 7-9 pm, at the LWVBAE office. Parking is available in the Andronico's lot. If you know of an organization which might like a speaker, let us know by leaving a message at the office (510-843-8824) or with *Eloise Bodine* (510-845-0974), email: ebodi@comcast.net.

Eloise Bodine
Treasurer

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BERKELEY, ALBANY AND EMERYVILLE BOARD 2007-2008

President:	JINKY GARDNER
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VOTER Editor:	ALICE KISCH
Membership:	KAREN NELSON
Director of Health Care:	URSULA ROLFE
Director of Observer Corps:	PHOEBE WATTS

UPDATE FROM LWV BAY AREA

Bay Area League Day was a big success! Approximately 100 members and guests attended our regional meeting in Oakland on February 22, 2008. We learned about how climate change will affect our region and that transportation sources cause 50% of the carbon emissions.

The current update of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's regional plan will address solutions that attempt to improve transit services and reliability, relieve congestion and reduce vehicle miles traveled by automobiles and trucks. Insufficient funding for these projects is an issue, and various pricing options were discussed, as well as how these pricing strategies would affect lower-income residents or those who need their vehicles for their employment. Finally, examples of ways to improve bicycle and pedestrian access were given, including Safe Routes to Schools.

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area Convention will be held on Saturday, May 31, 2008, in Santa Clara County location to be announced. There will be a charge of \$10 per person. The Convention is our business meeting where we elect new officers, adopt a budget, decide priorities for the next two-year cycle and hear reports about what the LWVBA has done on behalf of the 20 local Leagues in our region.

Jean Safir



League of Women Voters

Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville
1414 University Avenue, Suite D
Berkeley, CA 94702-1509

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how to join

fill in coupon below and mail with your check in the amount of \$65 (\$30 for each additional household member; \$30 for a student membership) to the order of LWVBAE,

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Name: _____

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Joining at the local level makes you a member at all levels: LWVBAE, Bay Area, State and National. Dues and contributions to the League are not tax deductible. Contributions to the LWV Foundation are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

calendar

APRIL

- 1 TUES. 12:15-2 PM BROWN BAG LUNCH (SEE P. 5) *L. ROGERS, 559-1006*
ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY
- 2 WED. 7-9 PM CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM *J. BLUMENKRANTZ, 548-3845*
LWVBAE OFFICE
- 4 FRI. 5 PM **DEADLINE FOR MAY-JUNE VOTER** *A. KISCH, 985-0651*
- 7 MON. 1:30-3:00 PM HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE *C. LYNCH, 527-2173*
LWVBAE OFFICE
- 14 MON. 7:30-9 PM ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS *C. STONE, 549-0959*
1340 ARCH STREET (SEE P. 6)
- 24 THURS. 7-9 PM BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE *J. GARDNER, 548-5292*

MAY

No VOTER DEADLINE IN MAY

- 1 THURS. 7-9 PM SPEAKERS BUREAU TRAINING *E. BODINE, 845-0974*
LWVBAE OFFICE
- 5 MON. 1:30-3:00 PM HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE *C. LYNCH, 527-2173*
LWVBAE OFFICE
- 6 TUES. 12:15-2 PM BROWN BAG LUNCH (SEE P. 5) *L. ROGERS, 559-1006*
ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY
- 7 WED. 7-9 PM CLIMATE CHANGE TEAM *J. BLUMENKRANTZ, 548-3845*
LWVBAE OFFICE
- 12 MON. 7:30-9 PM ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS *C. STONE, 549-0959*
1340 ARCH STREET
- 22 THURS. 6:00-8:30 PM **2008 ANNUAL MEETING (SEE P. 5)** *L. ROGERS, 559-1006*
NORTHBRAE COMMUNITY CHURCH
- 26 MON. MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVED - **LWVBAE OFFICE CLOSED**
- 29 THURS. 7-9 PM BOARD MEETING, LWVBAE OFFICE *J. GARDNER, 548-5292*
- 31 SAT. 9:30 AM-12 NOON LWVBA CONVENTION (SEE P. 9) *J. SAFIR, 524-9088*
SANTA CLARA COUNTY

BERKELEY ADDRESSES UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED