



LWV Whittier VOTER

LWV Whittier 562-947-5818 LWV website www.whittier.ca.lwvnet.org Editor: Ginny Holloway 562-777-4343

October 2014

The League of Women Voters of Whittier serves Whittier, La Habra Heights, La Mirada, Montebello, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, Los Nietos, South Whittier and surrounding communities.

Calendar

October

Fri. 3 1 PM Pro and Con presentation for seniors at Hollenbeck Palms

Mon. 13 7 – 9 PM Candidate Forum for 32nd Senate and 57th Assembly, Whittier City Hall

Thurs. 17 3 pm Pro and Con presentation Whittier City Hall—to be recorded

Mon. 20 : Last Day to Register to VOTE

RRCC Midnight Madness registration events

Mon. 27 Last Day to order Vote-by-Mail ballot

Thurs. 30 Mail that VBM ballot!! To make sure it is counted

November

Tues. 4 7am-8pm Election Day! VOTE!



LWV Whittier Has Kicked Off for 2014-15!

League of Women Voters of Whittier held its "Annual Fall Kick-Off Brunch" at St. Matthias Episcopal Church on Saturday morning, September 20. League members provided brunch fare for all and program speaker Gar Culbert, Assistant Professor of Political Science at CSULA provided plenty of food for thought.

Professor Culbert blazed through the American election experience from the founding of the Electoral College when there were no political parties to the complexities of current political parties, selection of candidates and ultimately election to office. And as the American political process has evolved, the amount of money that has entered the campaigns has skyrocketed. Although Congress has periodically worked with limits on campaign financing and enacted provisions for publicly financed presidential elections, recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions have re-envisioned campaign contribution limits and hugely expanded possibilities for advocacy/opposition expenditures. Among laws enacted by Congress were the 1907 Tillman Act, the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (commonly known as McCain-Feingold). U.S. Supreme Court rulings that were reviewed included Buckley v. Valeo (1976), Citizens United (2010) and McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission.

With so many limitations on campaign finance struck down and the likelihood that greater demands for disclosure may be blocked through concerns about privacy, Professor Culbert suggested that an avenue for reform may be found through a Constitutional amendment. Although there are no known current movements that are advocating for campaign finance change through the amendment process, he emphasized that the longer term impact on reform may be found with this path. He reviewed the use of the amendment process for a multitude of changes to the U.S. Constitution, including women's suffrage. Those attending raised questions and expressed appreciation to Professor Culbert for the thoroughness of his presentation and the originality of his remarks.

Thanks are given to all who helped to organize the "Kick-Off," including Ruth Kadota, Jan Baird, Kathie Kingett, Joan Ewing, Ginny Holloway, Beverly Walker, Margo Reeg and Sally Rivera. And huge gratitude is given to Gar Culbert for his excellent presentation.

Update: City of Whittier Election of Council Members Changes

In response to strong criticism of Whittier's at-large city council representation system which was depicted as preventing the election of a Latino to the Whittier City Council (critics cited the election of a sole Latino Whittier Council member decades ago), the Council voted to place Measure W on the June 3, 2014 Primary ballot. City of Whittier voters were to decide whether the City Charter was to be amended so that four Council districts in the City of Whittier would be established with candidates for each district required to reside in the district to be represented; Council terms would be four years; a mayor would be elected at-large for a two-year term with responsibilities to be equal to those of Council members; and elections for two Council seats and mayor would be held every two years. Measure W was approved: YES, 3,772 votes, 52.36%; NO, 3,432 votes, 47.62%. City Clerk records show that there were 46,005 registered voters in Whittier for the election, so voter participation on this measure was 15.7%. Although 7,204 registered voters voted on Measure W, 8,056 City of Whittier registered voters (17.5%) are listed as casting ballots in the June 3 Primary. The discrepancy of 852 votes on Measure W can be explained in many ways, including: lack of interest in W; down-ballot fatigue; protest that W was appearing on the ballot by not voting for or against it; canceling the vote on the measure by voting YES and NO; imprecise marking that made voter intent unclear; first-time voters who did not understand the process.

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Board's Message

Welcome Back to LWVW

Welcome to the new year with the Whittier League of Women Voters. We will continue our tradition of Voter Service throughout the year.

We have plans to sponsor open meetings on timely topics such as Water—Precious and Disappearing; Whittier's Council Districting project; a study of Vote-By-Mail for county elections; Common Core Curriculum and new testing.

Our fundraising committee has been very successful with their clever "Instead of Work" non-event solicitation. Contributions from our loyal members and friends have exceeded \$1800. Jan Baird, Jois Hofmann, Lois Czuba, Kathie Kingett, Carole Restovich, and Joan Ewing modeled for the brochure, did the mailings, collected the donations and thanked all of our generous donors. A big Thank You to everyone on the committee and all our donors as well.

I am looking forward to greeting all of our members and their guests at the Kick-Off Brunch on Saturday, September 20 at St. Matthias. Sally Rivera has arranged for Dr. Gar Culbert, Cal State LA political science faculty member, to share with us his insights into how Elections Procedures, like the Top Two Primary, early voting options, registration and polling place ID, and the effects of money in campaigns affect voter interest and voter turnout. This is sure to be very enlightening.

With a major general election in November, voters are being presented with a long list of state wide and local offices to decide on as well as six state ballot measures and one county measure. LWVW will present a Candidate Forum for our area **32nd Senate District and 57th Assembly District on Monday October 13, at Whittier City Hall beginning at 7 pm.** Please join us to hear the candidates' opinions on issues vital to our state—education policy, water and drought, health care, Prisons and public safety, budget priorities, and other pertinent issues. Be there to ask your questions.

On Thursday, **October 17 at 3 pm** our League speakers will present **Pros and Cons** on the state and county ballot measures in City Hall. Come hear the presentation and ask questions.

See you on the 20th at St. Matthias for our delicious brunch and thought-provoking speaker, Dr. Culbert who will make the process of elections fascinating.

Margo



VOTE November 4

If you missed the TV showing of Ken Burns' 'The Roosevelts: An Intimate History', a seven part, 14-hour documentary, it is already being offered on DVD!

It is well worth watching again, too!

THANKS TO THE DONORS!!

Members who donated to support the League:

Jan Baird
Loretta Boyce
Terry Cleary
Lois Czuba
Gloria Duran
Carol Engelhardt
Judy Ennis
Joan Ewing
Ann Farmer
Barbara Franklin
Sam Guyan
Sheila Hartfield
Jois Hofmann
Tillie Henderson (through K Kingett)
Ruth Kadota
Mary Karasawa
Kathie Kingett
Bill Miller
Helen Moshak
Margo Reeg
Carole Restovich
Sally Rivera
Rita Rubin
Marcia Scully
Margaret Snyder
Beverly Walker
Myra Weiss

A total of \$2135 was raised for LWV Whittier!



Update: City of Whittier
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Typically many ballots with multiple items in an election are undervoted; voters can vote for as many or as few items as they choose. As long as marking is in accordance with directions and voter intent is clear, the ballot is valid. The City Clerk has reported that the majority of City of Whittier registered voters are Latinos. Typically turnout for Whittier City Council elections in April is less than 20% of registered voters, so the Primary reflected similar turnout. As has been pointed out by many observers, the June 3 Primary (25.2%) was the lowest participation for any statewide election; the final percentage of ballots cast in Los Angeles County was 17.08%.

Following placement of Measure W on the ballot, a lawsuit was filed by three Whittier citizens who were strongly supported by the Whittier Latino Coalition. Some objections and responses were as follows: 1) the City Council election scheduled for April 2014 should not be held, but the Court ruled that it should proceed; 2) placement of Measure W should be on the November ballot, not the June or April ballot, but it was argued that plaintiffs and the Whittier Latino Coalition had criticized April as low turnout and the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk had stated that the November ballot was full (space limitations under the current InkaVote Plus system) and could not accommodate Measure W; and 3) there was no provision in Measure

Beverly Walker,
**Thank you for your service
to the community!**

W for the City Council elections to be moved to November so that it could be included on the General Election ballot rather than the April ballot (the April election is conducted by the City Clerk, not the RR/CC) even though the RR/CC had stated that ballot design for the current system would not permit the addition of the Whittier City Council election to the November ballot.

On September 8, 2014, Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Michael Johnson "ruled the city's actions to change from an at-large voting system to one that is districted, something the suit sought, alleviates the issues in the original lawsuit. 'There can be no question that the City's adoption of a new voting system has made Plaintiffs' original complaint moot,' Johnson stated in his ruling. The judge also rejected the plaintiffs' motion for an amended complaint, which was filed June 23 after the city voted in the districted elections on June 3. The plaintiffs' proposed amended complaint was 'unworkable and inconsistent with the law,' Johnson wrote. On the amended complaint, Johnson ruled the court cannot find that a future election violates the Voting Rights Act. 'This requires evidence of racially polarized voting, based upon 'actual voting patterns,'" the ruling states." (*Whittier Daily News*, Peter Fullam, posted 9/11/14)

In the same article, the Whittier Latino Coalition remarked, "Creating districts was a very small part of our complaint.... We wanted to change the date of the election, which is critical." A notice of appeal of the 9/8/14 Court ruling has been filed by the plaintiffs' attorney, Rod Pacheco, former Riverside County District Attorney and California State Assemblymember.

Although the RR/CC cannot add the City of Whittier Council/Mayor election items to its current November ballot design, when the under-development voting system for Los Angeles County is fully implemented, there is strong likelihood that the local elections can be merged onto the November General Election ballot. In the meantime, it has been proposed that the City could run its Council election in tandem with the November General Election as follows:

- The City would set up its own precincts for the November Election Day;
- The precincts may or may not be in the same polling location where the General Election is being conducted by the RR/CC;
- After voting in one election, the voter would then sign in and go through the steps at the other polling station (in the same location or elsewhere).

Under the parallel elections, concerns have been raised that the voter will be confused, will not have the patience to go through a second election (whether in the same polling station or traveling elsewhere), and will actually be less inclined to vote - thereby reducing voter participation. Long Beach has had this system and the electorate seems to understand how it works, but many cities have been skeptical about it.

The City of Whittier is now working with Compass Demographics of Glendale to start the process of establishing criteria for the redistricting process. In prior statements, the City is basing the process on standard redistricting considerations: equalizing population as much as possible, "geography, cohesiveness, contiguity, integrity,... communities of interest...." Compass Demographics has prior experience in redistricting through contracts with Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, Pasadena, Oakland and Boston.

- Sally Rivera

LWV WHITTIER

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Sally Rivera *1st Vice-President/
Voter Service*

Beverly Walker *2nd Vice-
President/Membership*

Sheila Hartfield *Secretary*
Margo Reeg *Treasurer*

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VOTER **Ginny Holloway**

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Arrangements **Kathie Kingett**

Website **Kathie Kingett**

RHC Elections **Margaret Snyder**

Nominating Committee:
Eleanor Wright

Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan, political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Whittier in both its values and practices, affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWV on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

League of Women Voters of Whittier
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Many Voices, One Vision



**VOTE LIKE DEMOCRACY DEPENDS
UPON IT!**