



## Call to 2014 Annual Meeting - Wednesday, June 4

All members are called to attend the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Membership of the League of Women Voters of Oakland. Guests are welcome.

The event will begin at 5:45 p.m. in FAZ Restaurant, 1111 Broadway at Oakland City Center next to the City Center BART Station. Parking is available on the street and in city lots nearby.

At the Annual Meeting, the members shall:

- Adopt the 2014-15 Local Program
- Adopt the 2014-15 LWVO Budget
- Adopt amendments to LWVO Bylaws
- Elect 2014-16 Officers & Board of Directors

Dinner and the meeting agenda will be followed

by “Money in Politics and What We Can Do about It,” a conversation with Helen Grieco of Common Cause and John Diaz, political editor at the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

The cost of the event (dinner, meeting, and program) is \$15. Wine will be available by the glass, with full no-host bar also available. Reservations are required.

RSVP by Friday, May 30 by mailing a check to the League office, 1305 Franklin Street, Suite 311, Oakland, CA 94612, or by calling (510) 834-7640.

To save paper, please bring the insert included in this newsletter with you to the Annual Meeting.

### Panel Program on Immigration Policy May 14

Join the League for a lively and informative discussion of how immigration reform and pending legislation will impact us in Oakland. Hear from a panel including state legislators and staff, local nonprofit organizations (the ACLU), and immigrant rights organizations. Bring your questions and a friend. The program will be held on Wednesday, May 14, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Oakland City Hall in Hearing Room 3 (Officer John Hege Hearing Room). Street and City Hall garage parking is available, or you can take the BART to 12th Street City Center.

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# President's Message

The Call to Annual Meeting inserted in this Voter gives you a mission, should you choose to accept it (who remembers that line from 1980s television?): To participate in setting the direction your Oakland League will take in the coming year. Will we be strong and flexible and ready to meet the challenges of a major election, many changes in Oakland city government, plus the accelerating pace of technological and cultural evolution in how the public engages with their city? At the Annual Meeting on June 4, our members will adopt a local program and budget and vote on a new Board for 2014-2015. My favorite part of the program is the traditional "Advice to the Board." Here's your chance to tell the Board what they are doing wrong, what they are doing right, and what they can do differently in the future. Please take this seriously and start thinking now about what you want to tell us; we need to hear from you!

Please also plan to attend the May 14 program on Immigration (see page one), and as always bring a



Katherine Gavzy

friend. Oakland is home to a diverse and vibrant population of immigrants. How will immigration reform and pending legislation affect them? How can LWVO address this issue and make democracy work for everyone?

Meanwhile, with all the growing excitement about the November election, it is easy to forget that we will have statewide primaries in June. Pages four and five contain information about the ballot measures and links to more resources. So be sure to get registered, get informed, and get out and vote. Ranked Choice Voting in Oakland means we have no June primaries, but November will be huge, including a mayoral election. We are looking for volunteers to help make candidate forums non-partisan, informative, and civil events. See Judy Merrill's article on the next page for opportunities. It's a great way to get involved while learning more yourself about the candidates and offices, and better yet it is a brief commitment that ends on Election Day.

## League of Women Voters of Oakland 2013-14 Board of Directors

Katherine Gavzy  
President  
(510) 508-9062  
president@lwvoakland.org

Mary Bergan  
Action  
(510) 532-1856  
action@lwvoakland.org

Rosalee Schubert  
Administration  
(510) 834-3401  
admin@lwvoakland.org

Annamarie Hallin  
Secretary  
(510) 531-9569  
secretary@lwvoakland.org

Alec MacDonald  
Voter Editor (Off-Board)  
(773) 505-0717  
voter@lwvoakland.org

Leslie Smith  
Communications  
(415) 218-0590  
communications@lwvoakland.org

Emily Wilson  
Treasurer  
(510) 390-0959  
treasurer@lwvoakland.org

Judy Merrill  
Voter Service  
(510) 654-9600  
voterservice@lwvoakland.org

Bev Solo  
Webmaster  
(510) 891-8027  
bevsolo@jong.com

Louise Anderson  
At Large  
(510) 482-1188  
atlarge2@lwvoakland.org

Louise Rothman-Riemer  
Membership  
(510) 385-1371  
membership@lwvoakland.org

Sandy Venning  
Voter Registration  
(510) 530-5799  
registration@lwvoakland.org

Judi Bank  
InterLeague Rep  
(510) 531-5449  
interleague@lwvoakland.org

Yolanda Schonbrun  
Programs  
(510) 316-5052  
program@lwvoakland.org

Dawna Williams  
At Large  
(510) 921-9153  
atlarge1@lwvoakland.org

Finally, I write in the midst of feverish final preparations for our 23rd annual All-City Luncheon. By the time you receive this Voter it will all be over and (hopefully) we will all be celebrating another

huge success. Look for a story and lots of photos in the June issue. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Annual Meeting.

- Katherine Gavzy

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## Plan Ahead for the November Election

We will be into another very busy election season when we all return from summer vacations, so now is the time to look ahead and anticipate where you'd like to help out. We need you to step up!

Our speakers bureau, which will be training people to use Ranked Choice Voting and also introducing them to the ballot propositions in a neutral way, needs more people in order to go to more groups. These are hour-long presentations, mostly September through October, on weekdays, evenings, and weekends. We can use you. If you are even potentially interested, let us know at [lwvoterservice@gmail.com](mailto:lwvoterservice@gmail.com).

Candidate Forums will be taking place for local, state, and national positions; almost all are in the evening in August and September. Some of these are in City Hall and others at local venues we cosponsor with a neighborhood group. We need helpers at the forums, including moderators, and also people interested in helping plan in advance. If any of these options appeal to you, contact Judy Merrill at [judy@apstate.us](mailto:judy@apstate.us).

There's a one-day event, usually on a weekday near the end of September, when we organize thousands of local and state Easy Voter Guides for distribution around Oakland in the morning and then head out in the afternoon to distribute them. Some people choose one or the other of these two tasks, others do both. Either way, it goes faster with more people. So if this will work best for you, contact Louise Anderson at [Louisezaidi@yahoo.com](mailto:Louisezaidi@yahoo.com).

We need people to help register teens in their classrooms and to train citizens to register online. In addition, Midnight Madness is a tradition for LWVO, where we register people outside a supermarket the night of the final voter registration deadline for the election; we've had people drive up in their pajamas. For any of these voter registration options, contact Sandy Venning at [sandy@sandyv.net](mailto:sandy@sandyv.net).

We need more people to "adopt" a box of voter registration forms and check on it weekly as the election nears, so that it always has forms in it. If this fits your style best, contact Pete Bank: [petebank1@aol.com](mailto:petebank1@aol.com).

- Judy Merrill

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## Action Committee Report

Following the April 30 community meeting to discuss an independent redistricting commission, a final draft of the proposed charter amendment is nearing completion. Now is the time to lobby councilmembers to put the measure on the city ballot in November. Five Council votes are needed; there is concern, in particular on the part of Councilmember McElhaney, that having a number of measures on the

ballot will hurt support for the public safety measure. The League argues that there are always multiple issues on the ballot, and that public safety will garner the most attention because most Oaklanders name that as their number one concern.

The Public Safety Initiative has become somewhat more difficult to follow. Councilmembers have been

*(continued on page 4)*

## Action (*continued*)

seeking advice and support from several groups and individuals as they craft an ordinance and parcel tax proposal. We are eager to achieve a proposal that LWVO can support; we know the money is needed.

Councilmember Dan Kalb is preparing a “good government” package. He has been quite receptive to League suggestions, and we expect to have drafts to review at our next Action Committee meeting.

Three committee members attended the Public Ethics Commission planning retreat March 28. We were impressed with commission members’ active involvement in the issues and their commitment to PEC’s goals. They are eager to have the PEC’s role(s) and authority more clearly defined and to build their capacity to do their jobs well and timely.

No sooner had City Administrator Deanna Santana signed off on the records management policy submitted by the PEC than she was gone. Fred Blackwell was gone before we could schedule a meeting to bring him up to date on the longstanding need for the policy. Current C.A. Henry Gardner has been very supportive of the League in the past, so we are hopeful that he will welcome a meeting and see that the policy moves forward expeditiously.

Hot Topics discussions will resume in September with Vote with the League. Given the likely number of state and local measures on the November ballot, we anticipate having to do two meetings, with the second in early October. Watch the Voter and LWVO website for dates and venues.

- Mary Bergan

### Superintendent Forum Held

On April 9, LWVO and the other leagues of Alameda County held a forum for the five candidates competing to become Alameda County Superintendent of Education. KTOP filmed it and provided copies for other local government TV stations to use. Watch for it on YouTube, KTOP, and linked to on SmartVoter.

## Vote with the League

The League of Women Voters of California supports both statewide propositions on the June ballot.

Prop 41 authorizes \$600 million in bonds for affordable multifamily supportive housing for low-income and homeless veterans. LWVC’s support is based on the League’s position on housing, which states that all Californians should have safe, adequate housing.

Prop 42 makes access to public meetings and public records a constitutional requirement for local governments. It’s a common-sense measure that helps us hold our elected officials accountable. LWVC support for Proposition 42 is based on our position on the public’s right to know.

Vote YES on Prop 41 and Prop 42, and visit <http://lwvoakland.org/positions.html> for more on the League positions that support this action.

On Alameda County ballots, vote YES on Proposition AA: Sales Tax for County Health Services.

In keeping with its position on public financing of health care services, the Alameda County Council of the League of Women Voters has voted to support Measure AA on the June ballot.

In 2004, county voters overwhelmingly approved Measure A authorizing Alameda County to impose a one-half cent sales tax to provide additional financial support of emergency medical, hospital inpatient, outpatient, public health, mental health, and substance abuse services to indigent, low-income, and uninsured adults, children, families, seniors, and other residents of Alameda County. Measure A sunsets in 2019.

If Measure AA passes, the amount of sales tax would stay the same at one-half cent, and the sunset date would be extended from 2019 to 2034. For more information see the LWVO website’s Action/Advocacy page: <http://lwvoakland.org/action.html>.

May 19 is the last day to register to vote in the June 3 election. Here are online voter resources

from the League to share with your friends and neighbors:

CAvotes.org – This website offers California election and voting information, including neutral Pros and Cons on the ballot measures.

SmartVoter.org – This website offers basic election information on how to register, what is on the ballot, and where to vote.

EasyVoterGuide.org – This website offers guides to the statewide primary elections and ballot measures in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.

- Katherine Gavzy

## Membership Updates

Welcome New Members:

Olga Bolotina

Mai-Ling Garcia

Renee Jackson

Shereda Nosakhare

Rachael Reinhard

Betsy Wood

Welcome Returning Members:

Robert Hamilton

Miranda Perry

## Go Green: Access the Voter Online

Our Voter newsletter is published 10 times a year, both online and on paper. The online Voter comes in two versions: a PDF version, and the HTML version you have been reading all along. Please e-mail Communications Committee Chair Leslie Smith at [communications@lwvoakland.org](mailto:communications@lwvoakland.org) if you would like to go green and only receive the Voter in an electronic version, saving the League a stamp and a few trees.

### SHARE THIS WITH A FRIEND – INVITE THEM TO JOIN US!

Membership in the League of Women Voters of Oakland is a bargain and a statement. It's a bargain because you will have access to valuable information and insights via the Voter newsletters and LWV websites, through membership not only in LWVO but also in LWV Bay Area, LWV California and LWVUS, and via a variety of events and dialogues with key leaders throughout the year.

Your statement as a League member will be that you are committed to providing non-biased, well-researched information to voters, and that the issues your League follows are those that affect every area in Oakland: schools, public safety, local government, parks, our economy, and more.

Join the League, one of the nation's most trusted, nonpartisan grassroots organizations where "hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement."

Individual Membership (\$65)                       Each additional member at an address (\$32.50)

Student membership (\$25)                       Limited Income (\$10 minimum)

Susan B. Anthony Membership (\$100)                       Elizabeth Cady Stanton Membership (\$250)

Carrie Chapman Catt Membership (\$500)                       Other

Name/Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Day phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to LWVO, and mail to 1305 Franklin Street #311, Oakland CA 94612-3222.

Dues are not tax deductible.

# Legislative Interview with Nancy Skinner

In March, representatives from the Oakland, Piedmont, and Berkeley-Albany-Emeryville Leagues met with Assembly Member Nancy Skinner to discuss issues of interest to the League. The interview was quite structured, with most of the questions formulated by the California League. However, we were able to discuss some issues of local interest as well.

## Money in Politics

Money in Politics is a hot topic for everyone these days. We asked Nancy Skinner about her position on the numerous bills requiring greater disclosure of the sources of contributions in California campaigns. Ms Skinner has supported such bills in the past and will in the future. However, to be successful such bills need a broader coalition of labor, environmental and good-government organizations to support them.

## Education

Our second topic was Education, specifically the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) that is being rolled out over the next few years. Ms Skinner believes that the Legislature needs to continue to oversee the school districts' use of LCFF funds. For example, she has heard that Regional Occupation Program (ROP) money directed to county superintendents is being used for base funding rather than for ROP courses. However, some money that had formerly been given to school districts for a specific use as categorical funds can now be spent according to school districts' needs or wants. The appropriate use of funds will be explored in Budget Ed Sub-Committee Chair Muratsuchi's education finance hearings.

Under new regulations, each school district

must document the needs of its students to justify state funding. Historically Oakland's student attendance information has not been accurate. Will



Nancy Skinner (fourth from left) and LWV members

Oakland get the funding it needs? Ms Skinner believes Oakland will get additional money under the LCFF, even if their records are not in good order, but the District will get even more if they improve their record keeping. Ms Skinner says she hopes that being eligible to receive more money from the state will increase the likelihood of accurate reporting. Oakland is eager to get more funding for common core implementation.

## California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA is a complex issue that has many supporters as well as detractors. Developers and some local government officials have negative attitudes toward CEQA due to both the perception and the real possibility of project costs being increased due to delays as the project moves through the CEQA process. It is not an easy law to modify as changes that might streamline one section may have unintended consequences and weaken protections the law was designed to ensure. In some instances Ms Skinner feels that taking a project-by-project approach to exemptions is better than trying to modify the law. She wasn't thrilled with the many exemptions the Legislature has given for sports arenas, though understands that in some cases there may be compelling arguments in support. She voted for an exemption from CEQA for one arena that had undergone environmental vetting but did not support an exemption from CEQA for a second project where no environmental review had been done.

## Fracking and Water Policy

Ms Skinner was asked about her views on fracking and the drought and what should be done about California's water situation. She said that agriculture represents a lower percent of California's GDP than many people realize, yet agriculture is responsible for about 80 percent of the state's water use, thus water use in agriculture is really the issue. While agriculture is not a large per cent of California's overall economy, it is the core economic activity in many regions of our State. Places like the Central Valley depend on agriculture for employment, and much of that employment supports low income people. California has to figure out how to have a thriving agricultural sector that does not require its current levels of use, so that agriculture can be sustained.

Fracking has occurred in California for a long time; unlike most other states where fracking is used to extract natural gas, most of the fracking in California is to extract oil. Ms Skinner is proud of her role in the 2010 Budget Conference Committee. Then Governor Schwarzenegger requested 15 to 20 new positions for DOGGR, the agency that has the power to regulate fracking. She and some of the budget staff attached a trailer to the bill agreeing to the increase in positions as long as the positions were used to improve data collection, and to develop regulations and oversight of fracking. When the department came back to the Committee for more positions a few years later, Ms Skinner pointed out that regulations on fracking had not yet been developed and appropriating new positions shouldn't occur until the regs were developed. Since

then the legislature passed and Gov. Brown signed a bill that specified a framework for fracking regulations and required DOGGR to develop and implement them. She is hopeful that good regulations will be developed, as the Legislature needs to understand how water and chemicals are being and will be used in fracking operations.

## Major Legislative Issues for 2014

Ms Skinner was asked what other major issues the legislature must deal with and what her personal priorities are. Funding for education is important to her. Under Proposition 98 the state is required to increase the funds to K-12 schools and community colleges based on increases in state revenue. However, even with the state's increased revenue, K-12 schools will not yet have the per pupil funding of pre-recession levels. Additionally California's UC system has the lowest percent of state funding that it has had throughout its entire history. Another issue of importance to Ms Skinner is addressing the care and education needs for children from age 0 to 4. Currently the state does not have funding for or a plan for universal childcare and pre-school, even though it is well known that age 0 to 4 are crucial years. Similarly, there is no increase in funding for the developmentally disabled or MediCal, but instead the Governor's 2014-15 budget includes a 10 percent cut to MediCal reimbursement rates even though the State in implementing the Affordable Care Act increased the number of people eligible for MediCal.

Ms Skinner is also concerned about the large and growing portion of state funding that is going to prisons. Ms Skinner wants to support programs that reduce the prison population and reduce recidivism. The Assembly is currently holding hearings to assess what programs work to keep people from going back to prison, and intends to incorporate funding for such programs in this year's budget.

- Sandy Venning



BRE# 00875454



### Terry Kulka

~~7~~ 8 LWV members have entrusted me with the sale of their homes – let's make yours ~~7~~ 8 #9

**(510) 682-5917**

[terrykulka@att.net](mailto:terrykulka@att.net)  
[www.TerryKulka.com](http://www.TerryKulka.com)



The League of Women Voters of Oakland  
 1305 Franklin Street, Suite 311  
 Oakland, CA 94612-3222



(510) 834-7640  
 www.lwvoakland.org  
 info@lwvoakland.org

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**CALENDAR**

Monday, May 12  6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.	Board Meeting	St. Paul's Towers 17th Floor Library 100 Bay Place Oakland, CA 94610
Wednesday, May 14  6 p.m. to 8 p.m.	Immigration Meeting	Oakland City Hall Hearing Room 3 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza Oakland, CA 94612
Wednesday, June 4  5:45 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.	Annual Meeting	FAZ Restaurant 1111 Broadway at Oakland City Center

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Is there a date at the top of it?  
 If there is no date, you are not a member of the League.  
 Join, using the form on page 5 and send it with a check to the League office.  
 Or, visit [www.lwvoakland.org/joinlwvo.html](http://www.lwvoakland.org/joinlwvo.html) to pay your dues using a credit card.