

# Kern Voter

A PUBLICATION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KERN COUNTY

May/June 2010

## President's Message

The California League is proud to announce the California Election Resource website just in time for the June 8 statewide primary election. This enhanced nonpartisan site truly is a one-stop resource for all your voting needs. You can register to vote, access your personal ballot, learn about candidates, and print a copy of the Pros and Cons on state propositions. We also have the voter resource links you have relied on each election year—[smartvoter.org](http://smartvoter.org) and the [easyvoter.org](http://easyvoter.org). Absentee ballots will be mailed on May 10, and the last day to register to vote is May 24. Read more about the June election and the League's position on the propositions inside.

Meet the candidates running in 30<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Assembly Districts on May 4 at 6 pm. In the last issue of the Voter, we announced that the Kern County League of Women Voters is partnering with California Women's League to host a candidate forum in the Multi-Purpose Room in the Student Union Building at CSUB. Here are the candidates:

### 30<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

*vacated by Danny Gilmore R*

Fran Florez D

Pete Parra D

Stephanie Campbell R

David Valadao R

### 32<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District

*vacated by Jean Fuller R*

Shannon Grove R

Ken Mettler R

Shannon Holloway R

We are fortunate to have Lisa Green, Kern County Chief Deputy District Attorney, as the keynote speaker at our May 26 Annual Meeting. Lisa will share her personal experiences working in Kern County. The meeting begins at 5:45 pm at the Petroleum Club.

Be prepared to vote on the proposed budget and elect the officers and directors who will guide the Board for the next two years. In addition, we will honor a

community member who has made a significant contribution to improve our community with the Citizen Award.

A nonpartisan political organization for women and men, the League encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We do not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.

Tell a friend to join the League and stay informed! Better yet, invite a friend to attend the Annual Meeting with you.—Diane Williams

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## Calendar

**May 4**—Tuesday, 6–8 pm. Candidates Forum with candidates running for 30th and 32nd

Assembly District. Co-sponsored by the California Women's League and LWVKC. Multi-Purpose Room, Student Union, CSUB.

**May 11**—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVKC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Room USC-3.

**May 19**—Wednesday, 7 pm. Pros and Cons of Propositions on June 8th ballot. Merced Center, 2000 K St.

**May 26**—Wednesday, 5:45 pm. **Annual Meeting**. Lisa Green, Kern County Deputy District

Attorney, is the speaker at this important event. Election of officers and presentation of Citizen Award to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the community. Dinner is \$22. Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue. No cost for attendance at program only. Reservations due by noon May 24.\*

**June 8**—Statewide Primary Election

**June 8**—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVKC Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K St, Room USC-3

**June 26**—Saturday, 10 to 2 pm. Board Retreat. Location TBA.

**Reminder:** General meeting are usually on the third Wednesday of the month. If you need transportation to a meeting, please leave that message on the League Line.

*Reservations are required for dinner and luncheon meetings and special events. Please call the League Line, 634-3773, by Monday noon prior to the Wednesday event. No charge for attendance at program only. Thank you.*

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## **Lisa Green, KC Chief Deputy D A, at annual meeting**

**T**he May 26 Annual Meeting will feature Kern County Chief Deputy District Attorney Lisa Green as keynote speaker. She will talk about her experiences with the District Attorney's office and discuss crime in Kern County. Her bio is on page 4.

In addition, we will continue the tradition of presenting the Citizen Award to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the community. Election of officers and directors and the adoption of the 2010-2011 budget are on the agenda, as well. This meeting sets the direction for the following year as members select the issues of emphasis both locally and nationally. The Annual Meeting packet is included in this Voter. Please review it and bring it to the meeting with you..

Held at the Petroleum Club, the meeting begins at 5:45 pm. Cost of the dinner is \$22. As always, members may attend just the meeting at 6:30 at no cost. Please RSVP to the League Line at 634-3773 or e-mail your reservation to Patti Jepsen at [patriciajepsen@aol.com](mailto:patriciajepsen@aol.com) no later than noon the previous Monday.

Do attend and bring a friend.—editor

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## **Vote with the League on propositions on June 8 ballot**

**F**ive state propositions appear on the June 8 election. A proposition becomes law if it gets more than 50 percent "Yes" votes. Propositions 13, 14, and 15 were placed on the ballot by the State Legislature. Propositions 16 and 17 are initiatives placed on the ballot because supporters collected enough signatures. The last day to register to vote in this election is May 24. Due to space

considerations, here is an abbreviated explanation of each proposition and the League's recommendation where there is one. For further in-depth information, please see [smartvoter.org](http://smartvoter.org); [easyvoter.org](http://easyvoter.org), or [cavotes.org](http://cavotes.org).

**Proposition 13** Limits on Property Tax Assessment. Seismic Retrofitting of Existing Buildings

Currently taxes owed on a property are based on its "assessed value" which is set as the amount paid at purchase. Prop 13 passed in 1978 placed a 2% limit on how much a property's assessed value can increase each year after that. A property gets a new assessed value when the property is sold. It may also be reassessed if it undergoes construction for improvements. Amendments to Prop 13 have created exclusions from the requirement to reassess a property's value after construction upgrades. Two of these exclusions deal with earthquake safety upgrades. This Proposition would combine the exclusions related to earthquake safety into one. The result would be that earthquake safety improvements on any property would not trigger a reassessment until the property is sold. **The League has NO recommendation.**

**Proposition 14** Primary Elections. Increases the Right to Participate in Primary Elections.

Currently California voters elect state and federal officials with a two-step process; 1) primary elections in June with each party selecting a candidate for each office; 2) general election in November in which voters choose between the winning candidates from the primary, one from each party. All voters get the same ballot in November. In the primary, voters registered with a party get a ballot with their party's candidates. Decline to state voters get a ballot with only nonpartisan officers. Some political parties allow independent voters to ask for their party's ballot in the primary; others do not. Prop 14 would change the State Constitution to start a new election process for statewide offices plus congressional and legislative representatives. For the primary, all voters would get the same ballot listing all candidates. The general election ballot would contain only the top two candidates who got the most votes for each office in the primary, even if they are in the same party. **The League has no recommendation.**

**Proposition 15** California Fair Election Act, Public Funding of Campaigns

Currently state laws ban the use of public funds for campaigns for elected office. Candidates need to raise funds to pay for their campaigns. The main job of the California Secretary of State is to oversee elections. It also reviews the activities of lobbyists. Prop 15 would lift the ban on public funding for political campaigns and set up a temporary program to test public campaign funding just for candidates for Secretary of State in the 2014 and 2018 elections. Candidates who choose to participate in the test of public campaign funding must agree to spending limits and other guidelines. It would help reduce the influence of political donors. **The League SUPPORTS this proposition.**

**Proposition 16** Local Public Electricity

Presently most Californians get their electricity through corporate utilities such as PG&E. Cities and counties, separately or together, can choose to form their own electric service or they may contract for it with a provider other than a corporate utility. A local government's decision to contract for electricity services does not need voter approval. If service from an existing publicly owned utility is to be expanded into a new area, voters in the existing service area do not usually need to approve the expansion. Prop 16 would require two-thirds of voters to approve their local government's use of public funds to start up or contract for electric service or to expand service to new areas. Prop 16 has a few exceptions, such as when electric service is provided by wind or solar or if local government is the service's only customer. Passage would make it more difficult for local governments to get into the uncertain retail electricity business. **The League OPPOSES this super-majority vote requirement.**

**Proposition 17** Auto Insurance Pricing

Currently, Prop 103, passed in 1988, set up rules about rates insurance companies can charge. For auto insurance, rates are based mostly on a driver's safety record, the number of miles driven each year, and the number of years a person has been driving. Insurance companies are not allowed to use gaps in auto insurance coverage as a factor in setting rates. Prop 17 would allow insurance companies to include whether someone has had continuous auto insurance coverage as part of how they set rates. The discount for continuous coverage could be offered to someone who did not let his or her insurance lapse for more than 90 days in the past 5 years. Insurance companies may also be able to increase rates for drivers who did not qualify for this new discount. Insurance companies would still be required to base rates on Prop 103

guidelines but this adds an additional discount that could be offered. **The League has NO recommendation.**

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**The League of Women Voters Kern County  
presents**

***Understanding the Propositions  
on the June Ballot***

**Wednesday, May 19, 7 pm  
at the UC Merced Building,  
2000 K Street**

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**The LWVKC Board passed the following resolution on  
healthcare to be presented at the May 2010 National  
Convention:**

**W**hereas the League of Women Voters of the United States believes quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents; and  
Whereas the current and proposed systems do not achieve the League goals of affordability and access to everyone; and  
Whereas an improved Medicare for all, a publicly funded and privately delivered national health care plan, is consistent with this goal;  
Therefore, be it resolved we, the representatives of local and state Leagues assembled at the 2010 LWVUS Convention, call upon the LWVUS Board to advocate strongly for bills that legislate for improved Medicare for all.

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## **Change in Voter distribution coming**

**L**League members will have the choice of receiving the Voter delivered to their “in-box” by e-mail or to their mailbox by snail mail beginning with the summer issue. Those attending the Annual Meeting will be asked to indicate their choice. Members who do not attend will receive the Voter by e-mail if they have an e-mail address unless they indicate otherwise.

If you wish to receive a paper copy of the Voter by regular mail, please call Lynne Rosenstein, 588-5566, and leave a message to that effect.

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## **CANDIDATE FORUM-30th and 32nd ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS**

**TUESDAY, MAY 4 at 6 pm**

**in the Multi-Purpose Room in the CSUB Student Union**

**Co-sponsored by the California Women's Lead and the LWVKC**

### **30th Assembly District**

### **32nd Assembly**

**District** vacated by *by Danny Gilmore(R)*

*vacated by Jean Fuller( R)*

Fran Florez (D)

Shannon Grove( R)

Pete Parra (D)

Ken Mettler (R)

Stephanie Campbell (R)

Shannon

Holloway (R)

David Valadao (R)

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*\* attendance not confirmed*

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## **STAY INFORMED**

**[www.kerncounty.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.kerncounty.ca.lwvnet.org)**

**[www.ca.lwv.org](http://www.ca.lwv.org)**

**\* [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org)**

**\* [www.easyvoter.org](http://www.easyvoter.org)**

**\* [www.cavotes.org](http://www.cavotes.org)**

**[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)**

\* Find in-depth information on California ballot propositions on these sites.

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