



# VOTER

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE SAN JUANS  
P. O. Box 784, Friday Harbor, WA 98250-0784**

**Summer 2011**

## Calendar

**September 6, 2011 - Tuesday, 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm at the San Juan Island  
Library: Board Meeting**

There will be no board or general meetings in August. The September board meeting will be held on Tuesday since the first Monday is a holiday. All members are encouraged to attend.

**September 12, 2011 - Monday, 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm at the San Juan Island  
Library: Membership Meeting**

The topic of the September membership meeting will be civic engagement. Remember that we have a book assignment for summer reading: *Hot, Flat and Crowded* by Tom Freidman.

## LWVSJ Happenings

**July 11, 2011 - Board Meeting**

The decision was made for a second printing of the TRY.

Sarah Crosby presented her plan for general meeting programs for the year, and board members gave input. By the end of the discussion, the programs planned were as follows:

*Board meetings are generally on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month and Membership Meetings are usually on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday. Annual Membership meetings are usually in May of each year. If you are coming from another island, call any board member and we'll arrange a ride from the ferry.*

Sept.: Civic engagement  
Oct.: Election forums  
Nov.: Consensus report  
Dec.: Christmas party  
Jan.: Prioritization and education (required by state)  
Feb.; No general meeting because of Lobby Day  
Mar.: Emergency preparedness  
Apr.: Campaign finance reform  
May: Annual meeting with Planned Parenthood speakers from Mt Baker and Orcas

Of course, plans are subject to change.

Jill Johnson gave a report on voter services saying there will be election forums starting near the end of September and going into October.

It was decided to hold a board retreat on August 16<sup>th</sup> at Sarah Crosby's home. It will be a potluck lunch, and the following topics will be discussed:

- Firming up the September meeting and future programs
- Recruitment of new members and exploration of larger venues for general meetings as well as possible changes to meeting times
- Combination meetings
- Use of teleconferencing and Skype for including members from other islands at meetings

There will be no board or general meetings in August.

### **June 13, 2011 – Membership Meeting**

LWVJSI's June 13<sup>th</sup> meeting attracted a capacity crowd of members and friends.

State Senator Kevin Ranker and State Representative Kris Lytton provided a summary of their work at the recently concluded legislative session. Kris gave the perspective of a first-time legislator and impressed us all with her grasp of the issues. Kevin, as always, was forthcoming and informative. He explained the need for the state park parking fee and responded to questions about his positions on various bills.

Glenna Hall presented information about the library levy lid lift measure on the San Juan Island ballot.

### **June 6, 2011 – Board Meeting**

Marj Stanley gave a membership report stating that 41 of our members have not paid their dues. She has created two lists, one of paid members and one of those in arrears. She will email those who need to pay and there will be follow-up phone calls. She will bring the lists to the June 13<sup>th</sup> general meeting and ask members to check that they are paid.

Plans were finalized for the June 13<sup>th</sup> general meeting with our three legislators, Kris Lytton, Jeff Morris, and Kevin Ranker presenting a legislative wrap up panel discussion with time for questions from the audience. A brief factual presentation will be made concerning the upcoming library levy lid lift election.

The next board meeting is July 11<sup>th</sup> since the first Monday is July 4<sup>th</sup>. There is no general meeting in July.

The Board sends sincere condolences to Louisa Nishitani for her recent loss. The Board also sends best wishes to Jill Johnson for a speedy recovery from her injury.

### **May 9, 2011 – Board Meeting**

Arrangements were made for the new TRY. Pat will take care of the printing, and Ann will pick them up, distribute them, and handle publicity. The Board will ask Marty to distribute the TRY electronically so that members can print their own copies, thus saving on printing costs.

Plans for the June 13<sup>th</sup> general meeting were discussed. Susan will conduct the meeting which will feature a legislative wrap-up panel discussion by our legislators, Kris Lytton, Jeff Morris, and Kevin Ranker (or their staff.) There will also be a brief informational presentation about the upcoming library levy lid lift election.

It was decided that the forums will need to be in the last week of July since the primary is in the third week in August.

### **LWV of Washington**

*The following is a portion of the LWVWA Legislative Newsletter, issued in June. The remaining categories of legislation will be reprinted in the next issue of the LWVWSJ Voter.*

The 2011 Legislative Special Session ended on May 25<sup>th</sup>, following grueling negotiations among legislative leaders to close a \$5.1 billion budget shortfall for 2011 - 2013. Both the Governor and Legislators said this was the most "painful" budget they have had to approve, given the unprecedented budget shortfalls. The budget approved makes substantive cuts in most areas of state government, while maintaining a reduced level of funding for state services. The LWV Lobby Team worked hard this session to try to preserve and advance our Legislative Priorities. We thank LWVWA members statewide who called, sent e-mails, talked with your legislator when at home, and generally played a huge role in helping us move our various priorities.

### **HEALTH CARE**

With our state facing a \$5.1 billion deficit and the legislature handcuffed by the passage of I-1053, which requires a 2/3 supermajority or public referendum to approve any new revenue (including closing tax loopholes), we knew this year would be difficult. Governor Gregoire originally proposed entirely eliminating Basic Health coverage, Disability Lifeline support, and the Children's Health Program. The final budget

includes \$4.5 billion in painful cuts to nearly every essential service, but at least partial funding for these programs was preserved.

New admissions to Basic Health will continue to be frozen throughout the 2011-13 biennium. The Basic Health Plan provides health care coverage to individuals under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). In the past two years, the Basic Health Plan has seen drastic reductions. There were over 100,000 participants in 2009. The 2011 Budget reduces Basic Health by \$129 million, caps the number of participants to 34,000 and admits no new participants.

The Disability Lifeline (formerly GAU) program provides small, monthly cash grants and medical coverage for 21,000 disabled adults who are unable to work. The 2011 budget eliminates the Disability Lifeline (DL) program effective October 31, 2011. The Medical Care Services (MCS) part of the program remains with the same eligibility criteria based on incapacity. In place of DL, financial assistance will be provided by three new programs:

- (1) Aged, Blind or Disabled (ABD) Assistance, providing financial support (currently \$197 per month) and MCS. This is for people likely to be eligible for SSI (like current DL-X) or found permanently disabled by the SSA but not eligible for other reasons.
- (2) The Pregnant Women's Program, a new program for women ineligible for TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) due to time limits. The TANF program assists parents with incomes so low they cannot meet basic needs for themselves and dependent children. Financial support and Medicaid are provided to those eligible for the Pregnant Women's Program.
- (3) The Essential Needs and Housing Support (ENHS) program. Eligibility for this program is linked to eligibility for MCS. All MCS recipients will have access to "necessities banks" for personal hygiene, laundry, transportation and other items, and some will have housing support. The housing support will first go to currently homeless recipients. A contingency fund will help with housing for people who can document that they will lose their housing within 30 days once their cash grant ends. This program is limited to \$64 million. ENHS, administered by the Department of Commerce, will contract with one government or non-profit agency in each county to provide the services. DSHS must review each recipient annually to determine if they qualify for the ABD program.

The Apple Health for Kids Program provides health care for children from families earning up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), regardless of citizenship status. One portion of this program, the Children's Health Program, provides health care coverage for 27,000 undocumented immigrant children. The final budget reduces this program by \$1.5 million by requiring families on the Children's Health Program whose family income is above 200% of FPL to pay increased premiums, up to but no greater than the average state per capita cost of coverage.

Other health care bills that were followed during the 2011 legislative sessions and were enacted into law were:

ESHB 1311: requires the Health Care Authority to convene a collaborative to identify health care services for which there are substantial variations in practice patterns or

high utilization trends in the state that are indicators of poor quality and potential waste in the health care system. It also requires all state-purchased health care programs to implement certain evidence-based practice guidelines or protocols and strategies.

ESSB 5445: requires the state to establish a health benefit exchange consistent with the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA). Its board is to be appointed by the governor by December 15, 2011, based on nominations by the legislature. The board may apply for and administer grants, establish information technology infrastructure, and undertake administrative actions necessary to begin operation of the exchange by 1/1/2014. This law authorizes the Health Care Authority (HCA) to enter into information sharing agreements and interdepartmental agreements with relevant federal and state agencies.

ESSB 5394: promotes the adoption of primary care health homes (coordinated health care provided by a licensed primary care provider coordinating all medical care services, and a multidisciplinary health care team comprised of clinical and nonclinical staff) and, within them, advances the practice of chronic care management to improve health outcomes and reduce unnecessary costs. Several pilot projects using primary care health homes have been set up in Washington State and have demonstrated up to a 20% reduction in costs previously due to emergency room visits.

ESHB 1183 will help to reduce the shortage of primary care providers in Washington, particularly in rural and underserved areas of the state. No entity that receives state funds can prohibit a hospital or physician from entering into an agreement to provide student clinical rotations or residencies to qualified osteopathic or allopathic medical students. The effect of this law will be to give more opportunity for new doctors to practice in needy areas of the state

The Washington Health Security Trust bill did not receive a hearing this year, but efforts will be made during the 2012 Legislative Session to promote this important bill that would enable all Washingtonians to receive health care coverage under one state sponsored plan.

## **EDUCATION**

The LWVWA Education Priority for the 2011 Legislative Session was “a funding system for the K-12 basic education structure” that would implement HB 2776 (2010) and HB 2261 (2009). The court’s ruling in *McCleary v. State* said the Legislature must proceed with “real and measurable progress to establish how the State will fully fund the actual cost of amply funding K-12 education with stable and dependable State sources.” There was no attempt to do this; instead K-12 funding was again reduced. It will be interesting to see how the Supreme Court views this in the June 28<sup>th</sup> hearing on the appeal by the State of the *McCleary* ruling.

## **BUDGET**

The 2011-13 operating budget reduction of \$4.5 billion included cuts of \$1.8 billion to K-12 education. The biggest cuts to public schools were: \$1.2B by suspending I-728 (class size reduction) and I-732 (teacher COLAs), \$215M by eliminating K-4 class size enhancement, \$179M from K-12 employee salary reduction (1.9 percent for certificated and classified staff, 3 percent for administrative staff), \$61M from changes to the

national board bonus program, \$57M in student assessment system changes (moving to one math assessment for the class of 2015), \$41M from reductions to the alternative learning experience (ALE) programs, and smaller cuts to other items. \$128M of the June 30 State apportionment payment to School Districts was shifted to July 1, effectively moving the cost into the next biennium. Levy Equalization was not reduced.

The operating budget also includes some additional funding including: \$33.6M for K-3 class size reductions in high poverty schools (those with more than a 50 percent free and reduced-price lunch eligible student population), \$25M to implement the new funding formula in the move to the new prototypical school model, \$5M to implement the transition to a new pupil transportation allocation, \$5M for all-day kindergarten in high poverty schools, \$4M state match for a public-private partnership with Microsoft called the IT Academy, \$3M to promote dropout prevention and intervention programs and \$3M for the teacher/principal evaluation pilot program.

## **National LWV**

### **League of Women Voters Launches Clean Air Promise Campaign**

#### ***New TV Ad Calls for Elected Officials, Citizens, and Community Leaders to Protect Public Health***

**Washington, DC** – The League of Women Voters today launched a months-long campaign, including a significant national advertising effort, seeking to renew America's promise to protect clean air and public health embodied in the highly successful and popular Clean Air Act.

"Americans from all walks of life will be asked to make the 'Clean Air Promise,'" said Elisabeth MacNamara, president of the national League of Women Voters.

"We are deeply concerned about attacks on EPA and health protections. Any action to block the EPA from updating Clean Air Act protections, or any delay on behalf of the Administration to avoid implementing new clean air and industrial pollution requirements, is an attack on the health of our children and families, plain and simple," she said.

The Clean Air Promise Campaign will call on citizens, elected officials and community leaders around the country to join in making this simple promise to protect the health of our children and families:

*I promise to protect America's children and families from dangerous air pollution.*

*Because toxics and pollutants such as mercury, smog, carbon, and soot, cause thousands of hospital visits, asthma attacks, and even deaths,*

*I will support clean air policies and other protections that scientists and public health experts have recommended to the EPA to safeguard our air quality."*

Through the Clean Air Promise campaign, the League of Women Voters hopes to inform and engage Americans on the issue of clean air and to demonstrate what is at stake. Some public officials are trying to undermine the Clean Air Act and to strip the Environmental Protection Agency of its ability to limit air pollution and emission of toxics like mercury, arsenic and other dangerous substances which threaten public health. The League will ask its members to make the promise to protect clean air and will actively work to engage the public and our leaders to make the promise as well. Other clean air advocacy groups are expected to join the campaign in the coming days and weeks.

"We have to promise each other to protect our air. So the League of Women Voters is asking our communities to stand up and demand that our elected officials promise to keep us safe from the pollution that we cannot control ourselves," said MacNamara.

"This is a social commitment that we make to each other and which we depend on our elected officials and Congress to carry out and safeguard. Clean air saves lives, and we need to ensure clean air for our children and families in the future. We look forward to working with others to renew the clean air promise," MacNamara said.

"Air pollution causes thousands of asthma attacks and emergency room visits – but that's not all. Air pollution is also responsible for debilitating lung disease; heart attacks; damage to infants' and children's developing brains, robbing them of IQ; cancer, and deaths," said Dr. Peter Wilk, Executive Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility. "That is too high a price for the American people to pay."

"We can and we must clean America's air. We can't let politics stand in the way. Speaking on behalf of doctors and health professionals across the country, Physicians for Social Responsibility deeply supports the Promise Campaign," Dr. Wilk added.

"As the mother of an asthmatic child, I have seen firsthand the effects of poor air quality and air pollution," said Alexandra Allred, a mother of an asthmatic child and an advocate for clean air. "My son has been battling this painful and debilitating disease for years, and it's time that our political and government leaders took the common-sense steps to control the air pollution that hurts him. We need stronger public health protections so other families and children aren't forced to suffer. I say 'thank you' to the League of Women Voters for dedicating their organization's time, talent and resources to fighting dirty air," she said.

For decades, the League of Women Voters has put the health of families ahead of other concerns. The League was one of the first environmental organizations to speak out for the Clean Air Act and the EPA. Today's announcement included the release of a new television ad supporting the Clean Air Promise campaign. The ad, featuring a voice over by Alexandra Allred, asks viewers to make their own promise to support clean air and ask others to do the same. The ad features several asthmatic children conducting everyday tasks and being treated for asthma. To watch the ad, click [here](#). To learn more about the Clean Air Promise, visit <http://peoplenotpolluters.org/>

**Mission of the League of Women Voters**

*The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan, political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy.*

**Goal of the League of Women Voters**

*To empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide. Membership is open to any citizen over the age of 18 who subscribes to the League’s purposes and policies. All LWVWSJ meetings are nonpartisan and open to the public.*

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**JOIN US TODAY!**

YES! I want to become a member of the League of Women Voters of the San Juans.

**Name(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email** \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one: (Individual Membership-renewal: \$50) (Two members at same address \$75)  
(Student Membership \$25)

I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the League of Women Voters of WA Education Fund and have enclosed a separate check (to LWVWA-EF) in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

**PLEASE RETURN TO:**

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