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# The *Fresno* **VOTER**

## East/West split for Fresno Unified?

by Kay Bertken

**T**he Fresno Bee has reported on the renewed efforts to split Fresno Unified by community members calling themselves Reform Fresno Unified. Their current proposal calls for splitting the Bullard, Fresno High and Edison areas from the eastern schools—Hoover, McLane, Sunnyside and Roosevelt. The east side schools would be the new Fresno Unified. The west side schools would form a new district.

The League has been watching this group and has concerns about the equity implications of such a split. It is far from certain that the State would allow this division. Early efforts that imagined a separation of the Bullard region would have failed State tests for ethnic and financial parity. This new configuration may assure that both districts would have about the same ethnic distribution, but the bonding capacity of the two is suspect. More problematic is the voting power of the Bullard area vs. the low voting turnout of the Edison and Fresno High areas. It is a concern that the Bullard area would dominate any vote to separate.

The most interesting moments of the recent Fresno Unified School District meeting included Bullard area trustee Michelle Asadoorian voting against the contract for the rebuilding of Bullard which she has been promoting for years, and another vote by Fresno High area trustee and International Baccalaureate cheerleader Carol Mills voting against the renewal of the IB elementary school charter. Both votes passed 6 to 1. But the no votes were notable.

Trustee Asadoorian voted against the contract with Harris Construction to rebuild Bullard because she asserted Harris had captured too many of the District's construction contracts and had contributed to her fellow board members' campaigns. Mills voted against the Dailey School charter after asking many questions about how many Fresno High area students were accepted by the charter. There is state law that says that charters must accept all applicants but may favor the chartering agency's students (students from Fresno Unified). Trustee Mills' vote seemed to reflect her dissatisfaction that the school did not favor the students from Fresno

*(continued on page 4)*



**Wednesday, October 22**

**Lunch & Learn**

**Mental Health Services**



**In the Schools**

**Migrant Ed Office**

**See flyer page 3**

**Tuesday, October 28**

**Regular Board Meeting**

**5 p.m., League Office**

**Tuesday, November 25**

**Regular Board Meeting**

**5 p.m., League Office**

**Wednesday, December 3**

**Transit Lunch & Learn**

**More info to follow**

**Sunday, December 7**

**Holiday Party**

**More info to follow**

# President's Message



**W**ith the polarized political climate, partially due to manipulation of redistricting, the Supreme Court decisions on Citizen United and McCutcheon vs FEC, assaulting campaign finance reform efforts, and the Shelby vs Holder decision gutting the Voting Rights Act, national and state LWV's have spent enormous amounts of time, energy and money trying to stop the damage done by these decisions.

The situation ultimately led to the adoption of a three-part program at the National Convention that would study and review key specific structures of American democracy.

## **Part 1 A study of the processes of amending the U.S. Constitution.**

An example of current efforts to overcome the Supreme Court decisions is that 16 states and 600 communities have passed resolutions supporting a Constitutional Amendment to address campaign finance and thereby undo Citizen's United and Shelby vs Holder.

## **Part 2 A review and update of campaign finance**

It has been 40 years of change since Watergate reforms, and we need to understand new schemes and structures used to influence elections and how to counter them.

## **Part 3 A review of the redistricting process for the U.S. Congress**

The Florida LWV just prevailed against the Florida legislature in court over illegal redistricting legislation. This is just one of many similar battles the LWV is currently waging.

Convention delegates directed the National League to get information on the program to state and local leagues as quickly as possible. Everyone recognized the importance of addressing wrongs at the outset, before they can threaten the foundations of our democracy.

*Nyla*

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# Member News



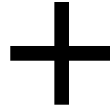
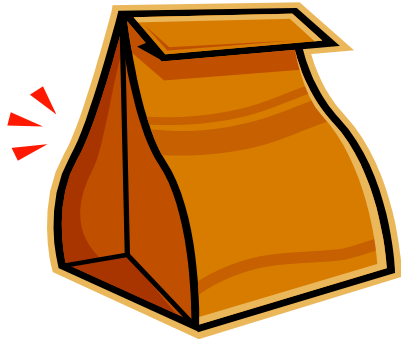
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- ◆ **Migrant Education Office Conference Room**
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California cities must now, by law, plan for "Complete Streets" in their general plan updates. The City of Fresno's general plan update devotes several pages to the requirement and employs it as a unifying theme in the city's transportation planning.

**In the new transportation thinking, well-traveled city streets should allow people to travel in several kinds of ways.** A complete street allows you to drive your car, board a bus, ride a bicycle, or use your own feet for mobility. Such a street will have traffic lanes, bicycle lanes (or bordering trails), bus pads or turn-outs with shelters or benches, and sidewalks wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs.

A fully furnished complete street might even have pedestrian crossings at mid block, and "pedestrian refuges" at intersections. (A pedestrian refuge does not protect you from rain and wind – it gives you a safe island on which to wait if you don't make it across the street in time.)

A broader, more legalistic definition is that cities must design roadways to accommodate all users and offer a balance of multiple uses. Not all streets need to be complete streets. On Herndon Avenue, an expressway, the traffic is too fast and heavy to be safe for cyclists and transit buses, which would impair the street's particular function as an expressway. **Small, quiet neighborhood streets do not require painted bicycle lanes, nor would transit be routed through them.**

It is the streets in between that are in play. The general plan states that all of the city's arterials should be complete streets along their entire length. An

arterial is a roadway that has four to six lanes, and contains a median island separation. Motor vehicle access to adjoining properties is somewhat limited. The primary purpose is to move traffic within and between neighborhoods, and to and from freeways and expressways. Palm, Ashlan, Shields, McKinley, Kings Canyon, Jensen, and Cedar are all examples of Fresno City arterials.

**The city's statement furnishes a measure against which to evaluate the street projects prioritized for implementation in the future.** In keeping with its commitment to infill development and improvement of existing neighborhoods, will the city work methodically on projects that turn our arterials into complete streets? Or will it tend to construct complete streets on the periphery, in connection with new development? Over the years ahead, the League can monitor what actually occurs. **The "Complete Streets" concept provides not only for multi-modal travel; it furnishes a concrete, trackable indicator of city health.**

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## **Fresno Unified** *(continued from page 1)*

High, which is the home of the IB program.

New initiatives in Fresno middle schools include new counseling positions. The comprehensive middle schools now all have an academic counselor and a social emotional support specialist.

The district has also added 20 child welfare and attendance specialists for the feeder elementary schools and 4 social workers designated to providing intensive case management for high risk homeless and foster youth in grades 7–10. Restorative justice approaches to disciplinary cases have been expanded to more schools in the district.

## Specifics on Water Bond Proposition

by Diane Merrill



Although LWVC has taken a neutral position on Proposition 1, if approved by the voters on November 4, it would authorize \$7.1 billion in new general obligation bonds and redirect \$425 million in previously approved general obligation bonds to provide \$7.5 billion for water-related projects.

- ◆ \$1.495 billion Protecting Rivers, Lakes, Streams, Coastal Waters, and Watersheds
- ◆ \$2.7 billion Statewide Water System Operational Improvement and Drought Preparedness (dams and groundwater storage)
- ◆ \$810 million Regional Water Security, Climate, and Drought Preparedness
- ◆ \$520 million Clean, Safe, and Reliable Drinking Water
- ◆ \$725 million Water Recycling (wastewater and salt-water)
- ◆ \$900 million Groundwater Sustainability
- ◆ \$395 million Flood Management

Of the total \$7.5 billion, \$5.7 billion is available for water supply and water quality projects only if recipients provide a local match, in most cases 50% of the total cost.

An existing State agency, the California Water Commission, would choose projects to be funded with the \$2.7 billion for surface and groundwater storage projects. This funding could only be used to cover costs related to the “public benefits” associated with water storage projects, including restoring habitats, improving water quality, reducing damage from floods, responding to emergencies, and improving recreation. Local governments and other entities that rely on the water storage project would be responsible for paying the remaining project costs. None of the funding in the measure can be used to build a canal or tunnel to move water around the Delta.

Detailed information on this proposition is available at [www.lwvc.org](http://www.lwvc.org).

## Mental Health

by Francine Farber



An important vote occurred at September’s Mental Health Board meeting. The vote requested that the County Board of Supervisors create a Behavioral Health Board which would combine the current Mental Health Board with the current Alcohol and Drug Advisory Board. The two boards operate independently in Fresno although many other counties combine them. At the state level and within the County’s Department of Behavioral Health both mental health and substance abuse problems are integrated.

**The long-awaited Adolescent Psychiatric Facility is under construction on the Kings Canyon campus and the contract with the service provider will go to the Board of Supervisors in October.**

A representative of the Housing Authority reported on previously-stated concerns about safety from residents of the Renaissance Santa Clara facility. They had asked for additional exterior lighting, which has been put out to bid. They also requested additional security immediately outside the facility, removal of certain exterior alcoves, and moving the gates as well as relocating the reset button for easier access. **These latter concerns are still pending and may not be addressed until the end of October.**

Division Manager Stacy VanBruggen reported on the Perinatal Team and the First Onset Team. The perinatal program provides outpatient mental health services to pregnant and postpartum teens, adults and their infants, including home-based mental health intervention and support groups. **The First Onset Team provides collaborative mental health services to severely mentally ill adults who have been identified as experiencing a first onset of mental illness with psychosis within the past year.** Referrals are received from agencies, programs, hospitals and individuals. Research and experience have shown that the onset year is critical in order to prevent secondary issues involving employment, family, substance abuse and suicide.



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**What do you get when you join the League?** All for one fee, you become a member of the Fresno, California and national Leagues and receive their newsletters. You may participate in League studies of issues; receive leadership training; hone your public speaking skills; become knowledgeable about local and state issues; learn more about government, natural resources and social policies as your time and interests dictate. You will also meet some interesting and friendly women and men who represent diverse backgrounds but find common ground in keeping abreast of current issues.

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