



# The Voter

April 2012

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS - CORPUS CHRISTI

**League of Women Voters**  
PO Box 8276  
Corpus Christi, TX 78468-8276  
<http://www.lwv-cc.org>

**LWV-CC Officers, 2011-2012**  
President - Judy Telge  
[jtelge@stx.rr.com](mailto:jtelge@stx.rr.com); [judyt@cbcil.org](mailto:judyt@cbcil.org)  
813-6397 (cell)

Secretary - Matilda Saenz  
214-240-5655.  
[rsaenz87@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rsaenz87@sbcglobal.net)

Treasurer - Bobbie Wood-Hughes  
993-0052; [BobbieCPA@aol.com](mailto:BobbieCPA@aol.com)

VP, Program  
Pam Maupin, 949-8708  
[pammaupin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pammaupin@sbcglobal.net)

VP, Community Relations  
Maria Jimenez, 888-7560  
[nick.maria.jimenez@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nick.maria.jimenez@sbcglobal.net)

VP, Member Services  
Sandra Heatherley, 814-9120  
[sheatherle@cs.com](mailto:sheatherle@cs.com)

**Directors**

Peggy Banales  
241-6842, 726-9404  
[msbanales@yahoo.com](mailto:msbanales@yahoo.com)

Frank Pimentel  
[econ.dev@hotmail.com](mailto:econ.dev@hotmail.com)

**Off-Board Chairs**

Nominating Committee  
Pat Jalufka, Peggy Duran

**Website Editor** - Lois Huff  
774-1500; [huffs@the-i.net](mailto:huffs@the-i.net)

**The VOTER Editors**

Ricky Walraven, 992-8031  
[wilraven26@yahoo.com](mailto:wilraven26@yahoo.com)  
Chris Davis Garcia, 991-2784  
[cgrg@att.net](mailto:cgrg@att.net)

**Immediate Past President**  
Evy Coppola

## April 19 luncheon meeting at Del Mar

League co-sponsoring Tax Assessor-Collector Forum

The League's April luncheon meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 19, at Del Mar College. LWV-CC and Collegiate High School, located at Del Mar, will co-sponsor a Tax Assessor-Collector Candidate Forum therein the Coles Building Room 326 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

A box lunch plus drink (cost \$10) will be served upon arrival and the candidates will address the league members and students from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.. The collegiate high school students are described as well informed on issues and we are looking forward to questions and responses from those in attendance.

It is important that members arrive early enough to pick up their lunch, pay, and be seated so the Forum is able to start at 11:30 a.m.. Parking for this event is available. Take Staples to Louisiana, turn left, another left at Naples and parking lot is to your right. The Coles Building is to the left of the White Building (Library).

Please call the League's answering service at 880-6501 by Monday, April 16, to reserve your seat and lunch.

## Plans Taking Shape for 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

LWV-CC members need to mark their calendars and RSVP for the 67th Annual Meeting, set for May 18 at the Corpus Christi Country Club. The 2012 event is all about the annual business meeting, a great meal and socialization, and an unprecedented conversation between senior Texas legislators addressing the issue of education in the upcoming 82<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislative Session.

Representative Todd Hunter (R ) is confirmed, and State Senator Chuy Hinojosa (D) – appointed by Lt. Gov. Dewhurst to the Joint Interim Committee to Study the Public School Finance system – is tentatively confirmed.

(See Plans, page 7)

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan, 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.

# President's Message

As we gear up for the primary elections on May 29 with the Candidates' Forum on April 30 and wind down our fabulous VOTE 18



**Judy Telge**  
**LWV-CC president**

Voter Registration/Education Project to meet the deadline for voter registration that same day, our League members are planning the May 18 LWV-CC Meeting and publication of the VOTER Guide, and preparing to attend the annual LWV-Texas Convention in San Antonio this week.

You might think that's more than enough on our LWV plate. And, after all that's done, we should have some breathing room because there's always an interim before the next round of super-charged activities.

Don't count on it! Take the Texas Legislative Session, that meets in a regular 140-day session every two years:

With the 82nd behind us, its impacts are beginning to take hold, and undoubtedly the next session will continue to address financial

constraints and dwindling resources. Who makes those decisions and who has influence is the most obvious election dynamic as we approach the next Legislative Session.

Here's the makeup of the House of Representatives and Senate in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Session: in the 150 member House of Representatives (101 Republicans and 49 Democrats) there will be 47 returning members; thirty members or 20 percent are leaving (6 are retiring); and 19 percent or 29 will be new members.

Among the 31 members of the Senate (19 Republicans and 12 Democrats), nine or 29 percent are returning, four are leaving (three are retiring), and four or 13 percent will be new members.

The November General Election will impact who goes to Austin and who stays home, which of course is impacted by the redistricting effects. Leadership and committee make-up in addition to membership are at stake.

Another dynamic is the activity in the "interim" between legislative sessions. The lieutenant governor and speaker of the House appoint Interim Committees to study key issues and research information, hold

hearings and take public testimony to guide the Legislature's focus in the regular session, beginning January 8, 2013.

Here are a few of the Interim Charges that will impact the climate at the Capital in the 83<sup>rd</sup> legislative session and will be of interest to LWV:

Budgetary and State revenue constraints despite improvements in the economy;

Public school funding pressure and finance litigation;

Infrastructure challenges (water/drought response/transportation/electric generation/nexus issues);

Sunset review of 24 agencies, including TEA; and

Medicaid/health exchanges/federal patient protection/Affordable Care Act.

There will be numerous legislative opportunities and challenges facing Texans. The League of Women Voters must be engaged in all phases of the process to educate, advocate and safeguard the political participation of all citizens. It's a tall order and the League needs all of us to make that happen. Don't sit back – get going – and stay involved!

## Discussion of gender wage gap scheduled at breakfast at YWCA

The wage gap between women's and men's earnings will be the subject of an Equal Pay Day breakfast and discussion at the YWCA, 4601 Corona, at 7 a.m. on Tuesday, April 17.

Dolores Guerrero, PH. D., of Texas A&M University-Kingsville,

will lead the discussion.

The date of April 17 signifies the point into 2012 to which a woman must work to earn what a man made in 12 months in 2011. On average a woman earns just 77 cents for every dollar that a man earns.

The event is sponsored by

YWCA Corpus Christi, the Hispanic Women's Network of Texas, AAUW, Executive Women International, and the League of Women Voters.

Reservations, which are free thanks to the sponsors' generosity, can be made by calling (361) 857-5661, ext. 15.

# VOTE18

By Sandra Heatherley, Project Co-chair

The VOTE 18 project team has been busy since our last membership meeting. On March 21 we went to Robstown High School, where Alicia Benn, Peggy Banales, Sandra Heatherley, and Matilda Saenz attended all the senior government classes taught by Mr. Bill Westfall. We also had a table open in the cafeteria during the lunch periods. As a result of our presence and efforts, 60 new voters were registered.

On March 28 we attended all of the senior government classes taught by Ms. Andrea Hernandez at West Oso High School and successfully registered 53 seniors as new voters. Maria Jimenez, Judy Telge, Peggy Banales, and Sandra Heatherley assisted with the students.

Both of these schools are located in precincts with historically lower voter turnout; let's hope these new voters and their parents will make a difference in the 2012 election participation.

To round out the month, on March 30 Peggy and Sandra went to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and registered 36 young men in the Kappa Sigma fraternity. Kappa Sigma is a newly established Greek fraternity at the university that encourages its members to become active in civic participation. As a community service project they invited the LWV-CC to return on Tuesday, April 10, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the student union to register more interested students to vote in up-coming elections.

Any members interested in assisting at that event should call Sandra Heatherley at 815-9120 or Peggy Banales at 214-6842. Please offer your assistance. Even if you have not been deputized to register new voters, you can verify that the cards are correctly completed, demonstrate the voting machine, or just assist with traffic management. We can use your help for one hour, two hours, or the entire four hours.

Since the beginning of this year the VOTE 18 project has registered 211 new voters for Texas!!



Sandra Heatherley (third from right) with students from Kappa Sigma fraternity at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi



## Candidates Forum Scheduled for April 30

The League of Women Voters of the Corpus Christi (LWV-CC) area and Leadership Corpus Christi Alumni (LCCA) are sponsoring a Candidates Forum for the May 29 Primary Elections. The forum will be held at City Hall in the City Council Chambers on Monday, April 30, from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. City Hall is located at 1201 Leopard in Corpus Christi. The League has a tradition of holding Candidates Forum in a nonpartisan manner, a forum which includes candidates in contested races only, in accordance with League Bylaws. Pat Parr as Chair of the Voter Service Committee has spearheaded this event, which is also being coordinated by Dr. Matilda Saenz.

All candidates are invited to attend, but the League will feature only contested races at the forum. Candidates in the various groups 1) will be presented to the public, 2) will be given an opportunity to give a brief (2 minute) opening statement, 3) will answer prepared questions from the League and 4) may also respond to impromptu questions from the audience as time permits. The candidate races and the tentative group order are listed in the table below.

| Candidate Races                      | Group Order | Candidates in Primary |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| U.S. Representative District 27      | 1           | 8                     |
| Nueces County Sheriff                | 2           | 2                     |
| 214th District Court                 | 3           | 2                     |
| County Court at Law #3               | 4           | 2                     |
| Nueces County Tax Assessor-Collector | 5           | 3                     |
| Justice of the Peace, Precinct 5     | 6           | 3                     |
| Constable, Precincts 1, 3, 5         | 7           | 7                     |

Official welcome from the League President Judy Telge will begin at 6 p.m. Both Judy Telge and LCCA President Cecil Johnson will moderate the event.

The League has also collaborated with the Collegiate High School at Del Mar College, which will have government students assist as “ambassadors” for the event.

The League of Women Voters of Corpus Christi and Leadership Corpus Christi Alumni would be honored by your attendance at this important Candidates Forum. The forum will provide League members and public attendees with information regarding the candidates and with an opportunity to hear the candidates respond to questions. Televised broadcasts of this event will be provided later. Exact dates for these broadcasts will be distributed at the forum.

Any questions regarding this Candidates Forum can be sent to Pat Parr at [patgparr@aol.com](mailto:patgparr@aol.com) or to Matilda Saenz at [rsaenz87@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rsaenz87@sbcglobal.net)

## Public education needs

**This op-ed piece was submitted to the C by LWV-Texas President Karen Nicholson, w President Judy Telge.**

Our public schools in Texas are in the midst of decreased funding and increased high-stakes testing with more with less in the wake of a \$5.4 billion budget session. Thousands of teachers and support staff are in overcrowded classrooms.

Just as schools had begun to grapple with the new task of preparing students for a new, more rigorous State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness.

Controversy arose over a requirement to count end-of-course exams, required for high-school graduation, as a student's final grade in a course. This affects a student's grade point average and college choice.

Outcry from parents, teachers, principals, and a coalition of state elected officials and Education Commissioner noting the value of testing, he called the overemphasis a perversion of its original intent.”

With support from state senators, legislator Scott allowed public school districts and the implementation of the requirement to count end-of-course student's final grade—but only for the 2011-2012 school year.

A coalition of local school boards has called for a reexamine the public school accountability system that encompasses multiple assessments, “which more accurately reflects what students know.” A lawsuit filed against the state by more than half of the school districts demand attention.

The flap over the 15-percent rule demonstrates a difference. Now is the time to ask your elected officials for education reforms for the 2013 legislative session. A committee has been appointed to study the state's education. Senator Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa (District 20) is a member of the committee.

What education changes should you ask for?

- Provide adequate funding for the current population. Restore the cuts made by the 2011 Legislature, rapidly growing Rainy Day Fund, and revise the rules on deductions and loopholes and to boost revenues.

- Overhaul the school finance laws. The courts have ordered districts thousands of dollars more per pupil than the lowest per-pupil funding also already have the highest.

# s your support

Corpus Christi Caller-Times  
with co-signature by LWV-CC

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## The New Congressional District 27

Explosive growth in the State of Texas has given our state four new Congressional seats in the 2010 redistricting cycle. No longer is District 27 anchored in Corpus Christi and Brownsville. It is now anchored in Victoria with arms that swing up to suburban Austin (Bastrop and Caldwell counties) and suburban Houston (Wharton & Matagorda counties).



tel 361-236-7673 • fax 888-510-8299 • roseforcongress@gmail.com  
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- Limit high-stakes testing and test preparation. Accountability systems should not be used to punish or stigmatize. Rather, they should be used as a diagnostic tool to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of students, teachers, schools, and school districts.

Looking ahead to the 2012 elections, it is important to ascertain and consider candidates' views on public education issues, especially concerning the changes discussed above, in deciding for whom to vote.

# DOJ does not preclear photo ID requirement

By Linda Krefting, Elections Issue Chair  
From LWV-Texas Update

On March 12 DOJ notified Texas that it would not preclear the Texas photo ID requirement. DOJ noted that data provided by Texas shows that hundreds of thousands of Texas voters lack one of the limited photo IDs that would be required to vote under the law and the cost of documentation to obtain the election identification certificate to be available at no charge from DPS.

Following the DOJ decision, Texas amended the suit for preclearance in the DC District Court to challenge the provision of the Voting Rights Act that requires preclearance of election changes in Texas and several other states.

LWV-TX along with ACLU and several other organizations filed a motion to intervene in the DC Court case on March 22. We believe there is a good chance that the motion to intervene will be granted. If allowed by the court, intervention would support DOJ's decision not to preclear photo ID and the preclearance requirements of VRA.

It is even more important now with LWV-TX seeking intervention in the DC Court case that all Texas Leagues speak with one voice and do nothing to undermine the legal case. Important points are:

Photo ID will not be in effect for the May elections. A court decision on whether photo ID will be in effect for the November elections is expected in mid-August.

Texas has no evidence of voting irregularities that could be remedied by requiring all voters to show one of a very restricted set of photo IDs at the polls. For additional information see the San Antonio Express-

## LWV Corpus Christi Renewal / New Membership Application

*Join now and help in the effort to promote political responsibility through informed, active participation in government.*

Type of membership: New  Renewal

Individual \$60  Student \$30  Household \$90

Name

Household Member's Name

Address

Work Address (optional)

I prefer to receive my mail at: home or work.  
(Please circle your preference above.)

Home phone

Work or Cell phone

Fax number

E-mail Address

**Please return this form to: League of Women Voters  
P. O. Box 8276, Corpus Christi, Texas 78468.  
Membership is from June 1 through May 31.**

News, "Cheating Rarely Seen at the Polls" at <http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/politics/article/Cheating-rarely-seen-at-polls-3432801.php#page-2>

The only photo IDs that would be accepted at the polls if the Texas requirement goes into effect are:

Texas DPS-issued driver's license, personal ID card, concealed carry license, or election identification certificate (not yet available), or U.S. passport, military ID, or citizenship certificate containing a photo.

Texas' own data shows that hundreds of thousands of registered Texas voters lack one of the  
(Please see DOJ on page 7)

### Hunter&Handel P.C.

Todd A. Hunter, Attorney at Law

555 N. Carancahua, Suite 1600, Tower H  
Corpus Christi, Texas, 78478  
[todd@hunterhandel.com](mailto:todd@hunterhandel.com)

Phone (361) 884-8777 Fax (361) 884-1628

### JOSE MIGUEL DURAN, M.D. Gastroenterology

Doctors Square  
2222 Morgan Ave., Suite 111  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78405

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# Program topics selected for presentation at the Annual Meeting

LWV Bylaws require that members be surveyed prior to the Annual Meeting to determine their opinions and suggestion on local government issues that should be considered for Program study and/or action in the coming year.

At the February membership meeting, the following five topics were suggested by those attending:

- Environmental concerns (clean air and water)
- Local street repairs/financing/taxes
- Continuing increase of prison/jail population in the county

## Plans

In keeping with LWV-CC's local 2012 priority issue of improving educational attainment, the Legislators Conversation centers on "Making the Case for Education: A Bipartisan Approach to an Essential Nonpartisan Issue."

The LWV-CC Board, the planning committee for the event, has announced the following program: 6

## DOJ

### From page 6

limited photo IDs that would be accepted at the polls under the Texas law. Those are disproportionately minorities. The minimum cost for the documentation necessary for one of the photo IDs, even the "no charge" election identification certificate, is \$22 for a certified birth certificate.

LWV'S opposition to needless barriers to voting is nonpartisan—just as we opposed the poll tax when Democrats dominated in Texas, we oppose the photo ID requirement now.

If there are questions about what can be said or how to handle an issue, please contact Linda Krefting, lkrefting@att.net.

• Need for resources and services to serve the homeless

• Low educational attainment level of residents.

At the March Board of Directors meeting, the five topics were reviewed, and two were determined to be the ones presented at the Annual Meeting in May:

1. Environmental sustainability including clean air and water and land use planning; and
2. Improving educational attainment in the Corpus Christi area.

### From page 1

p.m. cash bar, dinner served at 7, Legislators Conversation at 7:45, meeting at 8:30, and conclusion at 9 p.m. Tickets are priced at \$50 per person.

Space is limited and RSVPs to LWV answering service are required by May 14. More detail will be provided in the May Voter and on the LWV-CC website and Facebook.

**Welcome New Member:**  
Morgan Cano Montiel.

### Volunteer to Teach an Adult to Read!

*Corpus Christi Literacy Council*

**Mary V. Gleason**  
Executive Director

4044 Greenwood Dr.  
Corpus Christi, Texas  
Phone: 361-857-5896  
Fax: 361-857-5898  
E-mail: gleason@ccliteracy.org  
www.ccliteracy.org



## Bay Area Smart Growth Initiative : BASGI

*Promoting quality growth & community livability through policy reforms. Diverse community-based group meets 1st and 3rd Fridays each month.*

*Join the basgi yahoo group at [www.groups.yahoo.com](http://www.groups.yahoo.com)*

*or contact Jeff Pollack at [intranslation321@gmail.com](mailto:intranslation321@gmail.com).*

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 PO Box 8276  
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## Local League planning to send nine to State Convention

As this publication went to press, nine LWV-CC members were preparing to travel to San Antonio as delegates or observers at the State Convention.

They include Judy Telge, president; Sandra Heatherley, VP Membership Services; Matilda Saenz, Secretary, and her husband, Rene; Maria Jimenez, VP Community Relations and her husband, Nick; Chris Davis Garcia, past president of LWV-CC and State Board member; and Elia and Albert Gutierrez, members.

In addition, former member and past president Nan Pillinger will sit as a delegate with the Corpus Christi League.

Important business before the state League is a vote to approve a statewide study on Human Trafficking; election of state officers for 2012-2014; vote to keep Per Member Payment the same; and remarks by LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara.

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**Nelda Martinez**  
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**G. Randle Services**  
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 P.O. Box 9174  
 Corpus Christi, Texas 78469

361-994-7318  
 FAX-994-7318 / CELL 361-510-7626  
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