

VOTER

League of Women Voters of Hawaii County

December 2009

PO Box 665

Hilo, Hawaii 96721

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear LWVHC Members,

LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson sends a weekly newsletter for League Leaders designed to help keep leaders informed of what is new on topics such as advocacy (such as “League Files *Amicus* Brief in Indiana Voter ID Case”), education fund (elections, fair and impartial judiciary, and census 2010), membership & leadership (Bill of Rights Days is December 15), and other topics. It's a way of keeping abreast of LWV issues without going to the web site www.lwv.org.

In Hawaii, the website www.lwv-hawaii.org is maintained by LWV member Steve Trussel. It is up to LWV members to help provide the information (through established channels) to keep the site updated. We try to issue our branch newsletter, the “Voter,” quarterly, but its publication too is dependent on having members submit pertinent articles. Our activities as a local branch happen when leaders and members take the time to become involved and keep others informed.

Please join me in thanking the officers and directors who help keep our branch alive and visible in our community for the benefit of our community and the LWVHC, and then when your workload, family commitments (such as eldercare), and travel schedule permit, please to make the time to become involved in the LWVHC.

Your key contacts for our program areas this year are as follows: Voter Access (Marian Wilkins and Marni Herkes), Voter Education (Sue Dursin and Sue Irvine), and Sunshine (Leilani Bronson-Crelly). For gambling issues, contact Abigail Laros. Our 2010 Nominating Committee include George Wilkins, Chair, and Margaret Drake, both elected by the membership, and Patricia Stolfa, appointed by the Board.

We value your support and participation in helping the LWV achieve its mission.

Helen Hemmes, President

DECEMBER UNIT MEETINGS

The Hilo Unit meeting will be held in conjunction with the Public Access Room Workshop in Hilo, starting around 7 p.m. with “Happy Holidays” at Sue Irvine’s home. Please RSVP to Susan at 935-8080. (The invitation was circulated electronically to members; the invitation is included with those members receiving a copy of the newsletter via mail.)

The Kona Unit meeting will be held in conjunction with the Public Access Room Workshop scheduled for Kailua-Kona. For more information, contact Sue Dursin at 328-8514. See the media release below for the meeting site and time.

PUBLIC ACCESS ROOM (PAR) WORKSHOPS

“Honolulu, Hawaii – Between December 11 and December 16, the Public Access Room (the “PAR”) will conduct a series of **free** neighborhood workshops entitled, “We the Powerful!” These workshops are designed to demystify the State lawmaking process and will demonstrate ways that people can speak out at the legislature *without ever having to leave the Big Island*. All are welcome. No registration or prior experience is required.

The PAR, a division of the State of Hawaii’s non-partisan Legislative Reference Bureau, is the public’s office at the State Capitol and has long been devoted to assisting residents as they engage in State legislative government. There is never a fee for services.

PAR’s workshops are designed to be useful to both newcomers and veterans of the legislative process. Covered topics will include delivering effective testimony, making sense of deadlines, and using the latest innovations on the Legislature’s website. Renewed inspiration to be part of the solution will be the overriding theme.

Here is the schedule of PAR workshops for December:

Thursday	December 10	5:30 p.m.	Honokaa Public Library
Monday	December 14	6:00 p.m.	Naalehu School Cafeteria
Tuesday	December 15	5:30 p.m.	Hilo Public Library
Wednesday	December 16	5:30 p.m.	Kailua-Kona Liquor Control Conference Room, 75-5722 Hanama Place, Room 1107

For additional information, or to arrange for individual tutorials or group workshops, residents are invited to contact the Public Access Room **toll free** from Hawaii Island at 974 4000 ext.7-0478 or via email at par@capitol.hawaii.gov. Please contact PAR directly to make arrangements if special assistance or services such as sign language interpreters are needed.”

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- Suzanne Marinelli, Public Access Coordinator, PAR

MEMBERSHIP

Per the listing from National, there are 57 listed, with a breakdown as follows:

39 -- fully paid for 2009, and

18 -- not paid for 2009. (*These members will be kept on the list if membership dues are received in the near future.*)

Of these, 7 are nationally recruited (N1V) members.

We welcome our newest members, Mavis Cook, Margaret Elcock, and Ruth Robinson.

- Donna Oba

QUARTERLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING – JANUARY 23, 2010 HOOKANO TO EXPLAIN CHARTER REVIEW

Hawaii County LWV will learn more about the Charter Commission and its work when Levi Hookano, the commission's assigned attorney, presents an overview of proposed Charter amendments. Mr. Hookano will speak at League's quarterly meeting on January 23rd, 10:30 a.m., at Tex Drive-in, Honoka'a.

A commission, appointed by the mayor, meets every ten years to study and review the charter. The commission consists of eleven members, one each from Puna, Kau, Kona, Kohala, , Hamakua and Hilo plus five at-large.

At this time, thirty-five proposed amendments are being considered. While the deadline for public input has passed, Chair Edmund Haitzuka has recommended further public hearings. In any case, the Commission must be ready to submit their report to the Council by March 13th. After the Council creates possible alternate amendments, the Commission has until May 22nd to submit their final package to the County Clerk. He will send Charter Amendment Questions to the State Office of Elections by September 3rd.

LWVHC has a role to play in educating voters before they vote on proposed charter amendments. Karen Eoff, secretary for the Commission, points out that one of its tasks is educational outreach. The Commission will strive to create objective, clear, concise language for each amendment. This will provide a starting point for league efforts.

The Commission's next meeting is December 18th in Hilo, with video hookup available in Kona and Waimea. All first-reading items that have not been reconsidered (CA-19 - CA35) will be considered at that time. Public testimony on those items can be given in writing (keoff@co.hawaii.hi.us) or in person. Complete information about the Commission is available at the following website address: http://co.hawaii.hi.us/council/2010_charter_commission/meetings.htm.

- Sue Dursin

Act 244 –HAWAII COUNTY COUNCIL COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN FINANCE PILOT PROJECT

On November 5th, Barbara Wong, Executive Director of the Hawaii State Campaign Spending Commission, came to Hilo to present a public workshop on implementation of the pilot project for comprehensive public funding of Hawaii County Council races. Sue Dursin rose at 4 am to join Sue Irvine at the sessions. We attended with about 25 citizens including council members Enriques, Ford, Ikeda, Onishi, and a few staff from the County Clerk's office.

Few potential candidates other than incumbents attended the workshop. A few more may have attended repeats of the session, but there was no publicity for these events locally (other than Sue Dursin's calendar posts) and they were not listed on the County website calendar. Video explanations of Act 244 are now available at the Campaign Spending Commission's website.

The Hawaii Elections Project, with funding from the LWV of Honolulu Education Fund, is presently seeking to hire an independent entity to monitor implementation of Act 244 as the State provided no money to monitor outcomes.

Sue Irvine and Sue Dursin have the following list of concerns as implementation of Act 244 proceeds:

- Will the 200 signatures and \$5 check or money order from voters in a candidate's district required to trigger comprehensive funding prove too high a barrier for participation? Incumbents should be able to reach this amount of support, but lesser known candidates may have difficulty.
- The act has been drastically underfunded (\$300,000 maximum appropriation for 2010 election cycle.) This was unnecessary, as funds are available under the Campaign Spending Commission, without tapping scarce general funds. Underfunding will not be a problem if few candidates meet the rather daunting comprehensive public funding requirements. If many candidates meet the requirements, the money is to be handed out "first come, first served" which would certainly cause negative publicity.

(At our last board meeting, Hawaii County LWV declined to endorse Council member Pete Hoffman's resolution asking the Legislature to raise the funding limit for 2010. The board was reluctant to act at that time, but there will likely be a statewide push for more funding after the 2010 election cycle. Hoffman's resolution failed to pass.)

- At this point, there has been little publicity on the Island concerning Act 244. This may be appropriate for now (see paragraph on underfunding – fewer candidates aware means less chance of funds being depleted.) We hope this lack of publicity is not because our Council Chair and County Clerk are on public record opposing Act 244.
- An unopposed, publicly funded candidate will receive only 30% of funds allocated until an opponent files to run in that race. A privately funded candidate who waits to file until the last

Act 244, cont.

moment may leave the publicly funded candidate without the other 70% of funds promised, as all funding for the program may have been depleted by that time.

Aside from the above concerns, we were pleased to hear Barbara Wong, who also went on public record opposing Act 244, promise good support for candidates trying to qualify for comprehensive public funding. She stressed that candidates should continue checking the Campaign Spending Commission website for updates, where it appears good software should help file all campaign spending reports.

We look forward to the independent analysis of Act 244, although we have been somewhat concerned that, with the planning all based in Honolulu, knowledgeable people in Hawaii County need to be consulted – people such as lawyer Chris Yuen, and political scientists at UHH.

- Sue Irvine & Sue Dursin

HAWAII ED FUND

League would like to thank Susan Dursin for a generous check written to the tax deductible League of Women Voters Education Fund – tax deductible money for the use of our League to pursue our educational, rather than lobbying goals. Thanks to the urging of Donna Oba, we set up our Ed Fund with the national League this year. All are welcome, even encouraged, to donate and take the donation off on their taxes as the Ed Fund is a 501C3 entity. Checks can be made out to the LWVEF and sent to our treasurer, Sue Irvine, for deposit to our account.

- Sue Irvine

CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

Bill of Rights Day

Public Access Room Workshop, 5:30 p.m., Hilo

Hilo Unit Meeting around 7 p.m. at Sue Irvine's home

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

Public Access Room Workshop, 5:30 p.m. Kailua-Kona

Kona Unit Meeting – in conjunction with the above session

To be scheduled – Meeting of the Nominating Committee

Vacancy in position of Secretary ***Please volunteer!***

Saturday, January 23, 2010

10:30 a.m. General Membership Meeting

Around 12 noon No-host luncheon

12:30 p.m. Board of Directors meeting – open to all!

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 LWV Treasurers Report 10/17/2009

	Actual	09-10 Budget
CARRYOVER	7,817.91	7,817.91
INCOME		
Dues	1,294.50	1,400.00
Fundraising - Ed Fund	450.00	0.00
Interest Earned	6.08	10.00
Member Donation	295.00	100.00
Vote Counts	1,590.00	3,100.00
TOTAL INCOME	3,635.58	4,610.00
EXPENSES		
Co-presidents, Board	41.66	200.00
Delegate Expense	355.20	2,000.00
Membership	0.00	125.00
P.O. Box	190.00	178.00
Program		
Elections-Forums	0.00	0.00
Environment	0.00	200.00
Government	139.20	200.00
International Relations	0.00	500.00
Social Policy	0.00	220.00
Public Relations	0.00	500.00
Publications	0.00	100.00
Support		
National PMP @ 29.20	1,435.40	1,120.00
State PMP 11.50	0.00	460.00
Unit Expense		
Hilo	10.00	200.00
Joint Meetings	58.48	200.00
Kona	0.00	200.00
Voter	24.18	100.00
Voter Service	0.00	500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	2,254.12	7,003.00
CARRYOVER	9,199.37	5,424.91
Net Worth - As of 10/16/2009		
LWV Checking County	1,409.68	
LWV Savings County	7,439.69	
LWV Ed Fund	350.00	
TOTAL ASSETS	9,199.37	

Voter is the newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Hawai'i County, a non-partisan organization established to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. Contributors: Susan Dursin, Susan Irvine, Donna Oba, and Helen Hemmes
Editor: Maiden Temple (assisted by Helen Hemmes for this issue)

Submit information for publication to:
Maiden Temple, tcmet@hawaii.rr.com
73-4595 Old Mamalahoa Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740