

**BAY AREA**

# VOTER

---

League of Women Voters of the Bay Area

January 2011

---

## President's Message

Barbara Murray

Happy New Year! I hope all of you had a joyous and blessed holiday season.

Even though the weather outside may be cold and dreary, the Bay Area League's focus in January is the summer time phenomenon of hurricanes and flooding. Our **January 29<sup>th</sup> discussion meeting** will feature an update to the various **hurricane surge suppression proposals, including the "Ike Dike,"** that we learned about last year. We dodged a bullet last summer with no major storms hitting our area of the Texas coast. However, we all know that it is just a matter of time before one takes aim at us like Ike did. I hope you will be able to attend the meeting to learn the status of what is being proposed to protect our homes and businesses.

As you know, the Texas Legislature, which begins meeting later this month, must address a significant budget deficit. **A balanced approach to a balanced budget is a major priority for the League of Women Voters of Texas** in this upcoming legislative session. The LWV-TX and its partners in Texas Forward ([www.txforward.org](http://www.txforward.org)) are working together believing that Texas

deserves nothing less than a balanced approach to a balanced budget and an open, transparent legislative budget process. As part of this lobbying effort, state and local Leagues are submitting **op-ed articles to newspapers** across the state. See page 3 for a copy of the op-ed article that I have submitted to the *Bay Area Citizen* and *Friendswood Journal* that details the League position on this very important topic.

I hope to see you on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Best wishes for 2011 and stay warm!

---

**Join us January 29 for  
Galveston Bay Foundation  
Presentation on "Ike Dike" and  
Hurricane Surge Suppression**

League members and their guests will gather for a discussion meeting on Saturday, January 29, 2011 to learn the status of hurricane surge suppression proposals, including the "Ike Dike." Bob Stokes, President of the Galveston Bay Foundation, will also describe the

environmental organization's concerns and its suggestions for addressing surge issues. The meeting is a followup to the January 2010 presentation by Dan Seal of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, which coordinates the work of "Ike Dike" proponents.

From 9:30 – 10:00, we enjoy each other's company and refreshments. The program begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 11:30 a.m. The meeting will be held at the home of Diane Sheridan, 1107 Live Oak in Taylor Lake Village.

## LWV-Texas WE SUPPORT

State League action in the 82<sup>nd</sup> session of the Texas Legislation is based on LWV-Texas positions and applicable national League positions. Positions are derived from member study and agreement. The attached *We Support* brochure is a brief summary of the state League positions advocating governmental change. For details, check [www.lwvtexas.org/](http://www.lwvtexas.org/) The state League website will also explain how you can get involved in League advocacy!



As part of celebrating the League's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, the VOTER will be showcasing the League's accomplishments through the decades... a different decade for each month. The information about the 1970s is taken directly from the LWVUS website. You can click on the decade to go directly to the LWVUS website.

### [The 1970s:](#)

#### **Issues:**

In the early 1970s, the League addressed the issue of income assistance and also began its efforts to achieve a national Equal Rights Amendment, an effort that ultimately failed. The League also adopted a position on direct popular election of the President, on Congress, on the UN and on Campaign Finance. And, in 1976, the League sponsored the first televised presidential debates since 1960, resulting in receiving an Emmy award.



The League's deep interest in the environment was dramatically evident in the 1970s and it has since built a sequence of broad national positions on water, as well as air, waste management, land use and energy.

## **THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE MUST TAKE A BALANCED APPROACH TO A BALANCED BUDGET IN AN OPEN, TRANSPARENT PROCESS**

As the Texas Legislature begins its 82<sup>nd</sup> session on January 11, the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area joins with Texas Forward in calling for a balanced approach to a balanced budget. Because each of us will be affected by the way the Legislature addresses the budget deficit, it is essential that the budget process be open and transparent.

To provide for current needs and make the investments necessary for Texas' future, both short-term and long-term elements of the current budget deficit must be considered. In the global economic recession state revenues have been reduced, and one-time measures are appropriate. Structural deficits in the Texas revenue system must be addressed over the longer term.

For Texas to flourish now and in the future, it is not enough to simply shift funds among already under-funded programs or move the cost of public services off the state budget. Drastic cuts in spending on education, health care, juvenile justice, and other public services essential for our state to prosper are no solution to either short-term or long-term budget deficits.

The Legislature must meet the challenge of funding current needs and positioning Texas for the future. Before reducing any state services in fiscal year 2011 or in the 2012-13 state budget, the Legislature must:

1. Use all of the Rainy Day Fund, estimated to have \$9.2 billion available for spending in the 2012-13 budget. The constitutional purpose of the fund is to maintain vital state services during economic downturns.
2. Maximize use of all available federal funding, including any additional stimulus aid or any new matching funds made available by health care reform.
3. Generate new sources of revenue that are equitable and can grow along with Texas and our needs and eliminate unproductive tax breaks.
4. Carefully look at departments and services that can be cut or eliminated without serious harm.

The League of Women Voters of the Bay Area and Texas Forward encourage you to let your legislators know that the interests of Texas are best served by a balanced approach to balanced budget achieved in an open, transparent budget process. For more information or to join Texas Forward, see <http://www.txforward.org/>.

*Op-Ed submitted to Bay Area Citizen and Friendswood Journal*

## League Calendar

January 2011

- 11 82<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature convenes
- 22 LWV-BA Board of Directors meets at 9:00 a.m. at home of Verva Densmore. Members welcome to attend.
- 29 LWV-BA discussion meeting on hurricane surge suppression, including "Ike Dike." From 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. at home of Diane Sheridan



### **LWV-TX LOBBY DAYS MARCH 7 & 8 HELP THE LEAGUE MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT THE CAPITOL!**

As Texas faces tough budget choices, members can help LWV-Texas make a positive difference while crucial issues are under consideration. LWV-Texas Lobby Days are planned for Monday and Tuesday, March 7 and 8, with informative sessions planned for Monday afternoon, a fundraiser celebrating advocacy for Monday evening, and lobbying our legislators for Tuesday morning. Members will learn about legislative issues in the 2011 session and LWV-Texas advocacy efforts. Your voice and the voices of all members are important to the impact the state League will have. Details available soon!

### ***If you can spare an hour to help educate voters...***

LWV-BA will be updating the *Guide to Elected Officials* in January. Elizabeth Glenn is compiling the names, addresses, telephone numbers, etc. and needs a few people to proofread one or more sections. If you have 1-2 hours to give, Elizabeth will provide details about what is needed.  
281/482-1067 jjackcdy@aol.com



The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan 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.

[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)  
[www.lwvtexas.org](http://www.lwvtexas.org)  
[www.lwvtexas.org/local/bayarea](http://www.lwvtexas.org/local/bayarea)