



## General Meeting — 7p.m. Wednesday, August 14, 2019 Veterans Memorial Building, 4117 Overland Avenue Meeting Program: Vote 16 Culver City; Supervisorial Candidate Sharis Rhodes; LA Alliance for a New Economy

President's Message by Pete Rockwell

### We elect a new 2nd VP at next meeting

Ronnie Jayne Solomon sent me an email today to let me know she is stepping down from the office of 2nd Vice President of the Club. As the Club by-laws require, we will elect a new 2nd VP at our general meeting August 14.

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Our meeting program for August has three separate topics. Two Culver City high school students will tell our members their argument in favor of extending the vote in Culver City to 16 year olds. They are Rebecca and Sarah. They are members of the group *Vote 16 Culver City*. (see story on page 2).

Sharis Rhodes will address the Club and take questions on her campaign to be elected Los Angeles County Supervisor for District 2.

Also, a spokesperson for the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy will bring us up to speed on a labor dispute their organization has been involved in.

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2020 is a Presidential election year, and California just moved its Presidential primary election up from June to March. It's probably a safe bet that by the time of the March 3 primary there will be a smaller number of Democrats running for President, but there are more than twenty candidates now, so it's likely to still be a crowded field when the Club takes an endorsement vote later this year.

The Club bylaws require a vote by sixty percent of the members present and voting to endorse a candidate for public office. At our last Executive Board meeting a motion was passed to use ranked choice voting to endorse

candidates this year. Here are three websites you can check out to find out more about ranked choice voting:

[https://ballotpedia.org/Ranked-choice\\_voting\\_\(RCV\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Ranked-choice_voting_(RCV))

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01QT3e3sXiY>

<https://my.lwv.org/vermont/article/pros-and-cons-instant-runoff-ranked-choice-voting>

On a typical ranked choice voting ballot, voters are asked to put a number "one" opposite their first choice, a number "two" opposite their second choice, and a number "three" opposite their third choice.

When the ballots are counted, the candidates that received no votes at all are eliminated. Then the candidates that received the least number of votes are eliminated and the ballots that were cast for them are re-assigned using that voter's second choice. Ranked choice voting is sometimes called "instant runoff." By making a second and third choice a voter can make their ballot count after their first-choice candidate is eliminated.

This process of eliminating the least-chosen candidates and reassigning the second or third choices on their ballots to the remaining candidates goes on until one candidate finally gets sixty percent. If none of the candidates has sixty percent, our bylaws require a second ballot. The two candidates with the most votes would be on the second ballot. If neither of the two gets sixty percent on the second ballot (no ranking necessary on this ballot) then the

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**August 11, 2019**

California Clean Money  
Democracy Rally  
2:30pm to 4:30pm  
Immanuel Presbyterian  
Church  
663 S. Berendo St., LA

**August 12, 2019**

Culver City Council Meeting  
(wear red if you support the  
rent freeze)

**August 13, 2019**

Runoff election for  
LA City Council District 12  
Loraine Lundquist  
is the only Democrat running

**August 14, 2019**

CCDC General Meeting 7pm  
Program:  
Vote16 Culver City  
Candidate Sharis Rhodes  
Alliance for a New Economy

**August 23–25, 2019**  
Fiesta La Ballona

Club will not endorse a candidate for that office.

Since the bylaws state "a procedure for endorsement shall be established by the Executive Board prior to the endorsing meeting" the Board will work out exact details of the endorsement procedure over the coming weeks.

## Why we should be allowed to vote at 16 *by Rebecca and the Vote16 Team*

Contrary to popular belief, the “perfect” voting age has always been up for debate. It wasn’t until the ratification of the 26th Amendment in 1971 that the franchise was expanded to eighteen-year-olds on the federal level.

Passed unanimously 94-0 by the Senate, proponents argued that, in a time where America was embroiled in foreign and domestic conflict, the electorate should reflect those who were being affected by the government’s decisions. If an eighteen-year-old could be shipped off to Vietnam, why shouldn’t he be able to vote for or against the politicians that sent him there?

Today grassroots initiatives have been applying this logic to local politics. In 2013, Tacoma Park, Maryland, became the first city in the United States to lower its municipal voting age to 16, and Hyattsville, Maryland, quickly followed suit in 2015. Since then, what began as localized pressure has blossomed into a national campaign, with recognized *Vote16* initiatives across the country. The more traction the idea has gained, the more a policy which once was considered highly radical has become a serious point of debate.

In fact, expanding the local electorate to a younger age group could be crucial in encouraging informed youth, increasing voter turnout, and assuring

that politicians address the concerns of teenagers. Since 16- and 17-year-olds are usually still in high school, allowing them to vote can revitalize high school civics education programs. Students learn best when the information that they are presented with is relevant to their lives, and allowing youth to have a stake in the game of their local political system could be the cure to the chronic apathy many young people feel towards politics. Not only would allowing youth to vote energize disinterested teens, it would reward those who are already politically active in their communities.

After tragedies like Columbine and the Parkland shooting, more students than ever wish to be involved in deciding the policies that directly affect them. For example, in a *FairVote* analysis of the 2013 election in Takoma Park, 16- and 17-year-old eligible voters outperformed all other age groups in voter turnout. When given the option, teens have overwhelmingly shown that they

will exercise their voting rights, and will do it in even higher rates than older age groups. Allowing teens to vote in municipal elections would help educate them about the effects of casting a ballot.

A lower voting age would improve the likelihood that a young person would vote in subsequent local or presidential elections by making voting a habit earlier in life. With voter turnout as low as 58 percent in the 2016 presidential election, and even more dismal rates in local elections, even a minor increase in turnout would mean millions more people actively engaging in their political systems. And the more people that engage in politics, the more it pressures elected officials to exercise the will of their constituency. Democracy functions best when all voices in a community are represented, and teens, who are affected by local issues such as taxation, employment, parks and recreation and emergency services, have been for too long woefully silenced.

## Di’s Corner: by Diane Rosenberg

On Thursday, July 4, the Club held its annual Fourth of July picnic over at Blanco Park, 5687 Sawtelle Blvd. in Culver City. It was well attended. Our own Tom Camarella was the Grill Master.

Many Club members and the Executive Board attended, and member Scott Houston, Director and Board President of Division IV West Basin Municipal Water District. Also Ed Johnson from Los Angeles City Council President Herb Wesson’s office. And we had a surprise visit from Los Angeles City Council President Herb Wesson and his lovely wife Fabian, who came and stayed awhile.

### Culver City Democratic Club Application/Renewal Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I declare that all the individuals listed for membership are registered Democrats

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Dues: Dues may be waived for financial hardship

☐ Member \$30

☐ Student \$20

☐ Supporting Member \$75

☐ Sustaining Member \$125

☐ Lifetime Member \$500

Additional Contribution: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to:

**Culver City Democratic Club**

P.O. Box 4254, Culver City, CA 90231-4254

**OR** Click “Join/Renew” on our web site: [CulverCityDemocraticClub.com](http://CulverCityDemocraticClub.com)

For questions please call Membership Secretary Diane Rosenberg at (310) 398-5328.

Please check here to receive the **paper** newsletter in the mail ☐

**Please renew for 2019 if you haven’t already done so.**

The dues period runs concurrent to the calendar year.

Renewals are due by January 1st of each year. **NO REFUNDS.**

# California criminal justice reform: potential lessons for the nation

by Leah Pressman

On July 13, 2019, at the FAME Renaissance Center in West Adams, Representative Karen Bass (CA 37) gavelted in the first congressional hearing in her district in ten years. Members of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security and members of the Congressional Black Caucus heard testimony by scholars and activists on the success of criminal justice reform in California. They are trying to learn how the lessons of that success can be applied nationally.

Despite the early start time on a Saturday morning, the crowd filled all 335 seats of the hall and people were standing in the aisles. At least half of the elected state Democratic delegates from the 54th district attended. At the hearing were Culver City Democratic Club members Tom Camarella, Jeanna Harris, Greg Bartlett, Leah Pressman, and Jeff Schwartz, as well as Elina Antoniou and Isaac Bryan.

Bass spoke about how California is moving away from the “tough on crime” approach, which has created mass incarceration without improving public safety. She emphasized that the solution now should not only reduce the prison population but must also help former prisoners find a place in society.

The first panelist was Michael Romano, a law professor at Stanford who co-authored and fought for the Three Strikes Reform Act of 2012 (Proposition 36) and the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act of 2014 (Proposition 47).

Proposition 36 reformed the three strikes law so that the third strike had to be a felony conviction that was “serious or violent” and allowed those previously convicted of a third strike that was not serious or violent to request re-sentencing. Proposition 47 reduced certain non-serious, non-violent crimes to misdemeanors and also permitted re-sentencing of those previously convicted.

Charis Kubrin, Ph.D, a professor of Criminology, Law, and Society at University of California, Irvine, also spoke on the first panel. Kubrin’s research examines the effects of criminal justice reform on public safety. She



Congresswoman Karen Bass

co-authored a study which found Proposition 47 did not lead to an increase in crime, as opponents had warned.

The third speaker was Taina Vargas-Edmond, the co-founder and executive director of Initiate Justice in Los Angeles, an activist group for people impacted by mass incarceration. Her husband served seven years in a California state prison.

Vargas-Edmond discussed three major criminal justice reforms she thought were particularly effective: Youth Offender Parole for those under ages 18, 22, and 26 years old; ending the Felony Murder Rule; and Proposition 57 (The Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act of 2016).

Youth Offender Parole was a series of three bills that require the parole board to take into account an offender’s cognitive and developmental level and allowed younger prisoners to be eligible for early parole. The Felony Murder Rule had allowed those convicted of a felony during which a murder was committed to be sentenced for that murder, even if they were uninvolved or unaware of that murder. Proposition 57 expanded good behavior and parole opportunities for felons convicted of nonviolent crimes. It afforded judges rather than prosecutors discretion as to whether to try juveniles as adults.

Three formerly incarcerated individuals who are now involved in advocacy and services made up the second panel: Susan Burton, “Big John” Harrell and Stanley Bailey. With personal stories, they brought to life the acute challeng-

es inmates face on their release and provided concrete examples of solutions that support a successful transition from prison.

Burton’s organization, *A New Way of Life*, runs “one stop shops” where formerly incarcerated women can connect with multiple support services, including transitional housing, obtaining IDs, aid with family re-unification, referrals to therapy and/or drug treatment, and help applying for benefits.

“Big John” works with trade unions to help the formerly incarcerated acquire skills and good-paying jobs.

Bailey benefited from, and then volunteered for, *A Ride Home*, where newly released prisoners are picked up by peer mentors, instead of being dumped on Skid Row.

Each of these speakers stressed the importance of transitional housing. Speaking from her own experience, Burton stressed that “people will re-offend if they have no place to go.” Bailey gave himself as a prime example of this. He had earned his release under recent reforms, but after 36 years in prison, his entire family had died and he had no one to turn to.

During the hearing, we learned that companies which had been running for-profit prisons are now looking to get into running programs for those transitioning out of prison. The panelists strongly recommended that such private companies not be allowed such an opportunity, given their track record on running prisons.

Members of Congress expressed how impressed and moved they had been by both panels and told the speakers and the very supportive audience that future laws and policies would be based on this material.

Watch the full hearing at: <https://bass.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/rep-bass-hosts-field-hearing-criminal-justice-south-la>

The written transcripts of the testimony of five of the six panelists can be found here: <https://judiciary.house.gov/legislation/hearings/california-criminal-justice-reform-potential-lessons-nation>



## Clean money democracy rally

On Sunday, August 11, from 2:30 to 4:30pm, California Clean Money will hold the kickoff event for its campaign in support of four bills in the California Legislature.

The rally will be held at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Westminster Chapel, 663 South Berendo St. in LA. (located two blocks from the Wilshire/Vermont Metro station)

Among the speakers will be Senator Ben Allen, author of SB 47 (the Petition Disclose Act) and Senator Henry Stern, author of SB 636 (the Ballot Disclose Act).

At its July general meeting the Culver City Democratic Club endorsed both of those bills, as well as AB 1217, the Issue Ad Disclose Act, another bill that will be highlighted at the rally.

The Club also voted to co-sponsor the August 11 event, which means our Club is invited to send a representative to say words of support for the bills as part of the program.

## RENT FREEZE

On June 24, the Culver City Council voted 4 to 1 for a one-year rent freeze. On August 12 the Council will confirm the details. Wear red to the meeting to support renters. If you can't come, email the Council via [culvercity.org](http://culvercity.org)

Join us in calling for:

- 3 percent limit on rent increases.
- Back-dated to April 23.
- Landlords pay relocation assistance (\$1000 + 3 months rent) for "no-fault" evictions.

Right now Culver City renters have fewer rights than in any nearby city. A rent freeze will temporarily protect renters so we can discuss permanent protections.

(Note: Because of California's Costa Hawkins Act, single family homes, condos, and units built after 1995 are exempt from the freeze.)

**Monday, August 12 at 7pm**  
**Culver City Hall, 9770 Culver Blvd.**

## Culver City Democratic Club July 4th Picnic in Blanco Park



**General Meeting — 7p.m. Wednesday, August 14, 2019**  
**Veterans Memorial Building, 4117 Overland Avenue**  
**Meeting Program: Vote 16 Culver City; LA Alliance for a New Economy; Supervisorial Candidate Sharis Rhodes**

## Council commissions study to determine cost of ending oil drilling in Culver City

At its meeting of May 28, the City Council unanimously authorized energy consultant Baker & O'Brien to move forward with the preparation of an amortization study for the Culver City portion of the Inglewood Oil Field (IOF). Once completed, the amortization study, along with other information, will be considered by the City Council in discussions on phasing out oil drilling in Culver City's portion of the oil field.

The Oil Drilling Subcommittee of the Culver City Council, comprised of Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells, City Council member Alex Fisch, City Attorney Carol Schwab, Assistant City Attorney Heather Baker and Contract Project Manager Melanie Doran Traxler, met on July 11 to hear from local residents and to give an update on the plan for the amortization study.

The study will cover ten percent of Culver City's portion of the IOF. The process will be broken down into six

main steps, with the first being data gathering and base case development, followed by a theoretical run of that model. This will be followed by a sensitivity analysis to consider variables that would impact on the model. The study has an estimated timeline of six months, after which the City Council will hold a public hearing to decide whether or not to begin to take steps to end oil production on that land.

This will be a complicated task. It will involve finding out who owns the subsurface property or mineral rights from which the oil operator, Sentinel Peak Resources, has been leasing the right to drill. It also will involve assignment of liabilities for orphaned wells or abandoned wells.

— *By Khin Khin Gyi*  
*[Clyde Tom Williams, Ph.D., Technical Advisor to the Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community (CCSC), and Paul Ferrazzi, Executive Director of CCSC, also contributed to this article.]*