

Helping California Voters Prepare for the Nov. 2, 2010 Election

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October 15, 2010 Webinar for California Libraries

Today's Agenda

- Introductions
- The California Electorate Today
- Voting Myths and Misperceptions
- Tour of www.easyvoterguide.org
- The Easy Voter Guide for Nov. 2, 2010
- What libraries can do
- Remaining questions


The Easy Voter Guide Project

- Began in mid-1990's with library-based adult learners; became so popular that it spread to entire state
- Collaboration of the LWVCEF and CSL, with support from Irvine Foundation
- Mission = make voting information accessible to new voters and busy voters via plain language, peer presenters; multi-lingual, multi-media
- Every issue of the EVG and every tool is designed with community input/research

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Presenters



Elizabeth Leslie
LWVC Communications
Manager



Your Vote, Your Voice.
Your guide to the
November 2, 2010
California State Election






Susan Stuart Clark
Common Knowledge/
EVG Founder



What the EVGP offers




- Free 16-page guide to every state election, in 5 languages. Copies still available for Nov. 2.
- Libraries are #1 distribution channel for the EVG!
- For 2010, the EVGP has increased its commitment to in-person outreach – via new website, workshops and ambassadors
- A key focus of today’s webinar will be the new site at www.easyvoterguide.org with new videos, new workshops and updated handouts (links should be switched from current www.easyvoter.org to the new site)



Increased Burden on Voters

- Increased use of initiatives to address complex reform issues
- Dramatic increase in “Decline to State” especially among new voters
- Proliferation of partisan ads and websites
- Urgent need for accessible nonpartisan info

= Opportunity for Libraries



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California Voter Update

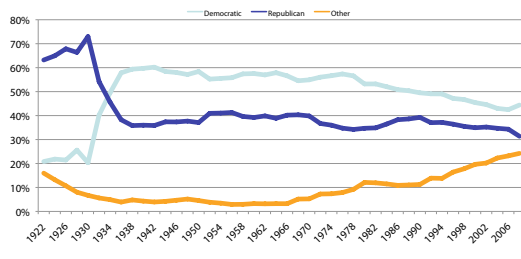
- **Monday Oct 18 = registration deadline for Nov. 2 election**
- Currently 24 million Californians eligible to vote
- Voters are becoming more diverse - but the active electorate is still older, better educated and more anglo than those who are eligible
- Record low turnout for June 2010 Primary
- Many new voters in 2008 Pres. election are not connected to the state races

Easy Voter Guide



Fastest growing party = no party

California Historical Voter Registration 1922-2008



Easy Voter Guide



Civic Participation by Education

	High School or less	Some College	College Degree
Vote regularly	41%	53%	62%
Attend local meetings	29%	38%	45%
Volunteer	19%	29%	36%
Write elected officials	12%	29%	43%

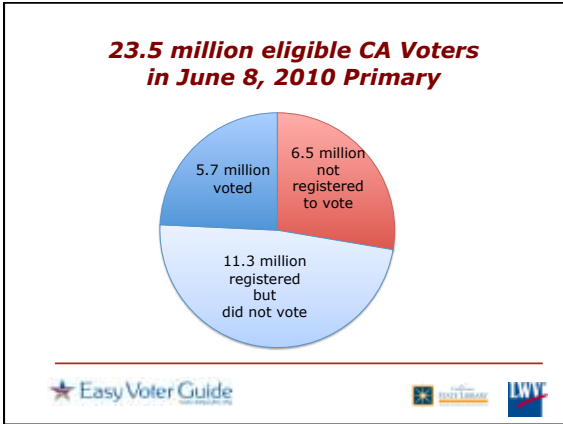
Source: The Ties That Bind: Changing Demographics and Civic Engagement in California; PPIC 2004

Easy Voter Guide



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Genesis of the EVGP for new voters

- Excuses from non-voters more about "performance anxiety" than disliking politics
- Prospective voters' image of voting = a visit to the DMV!
- Need to reduce fear for new voters and emphasize personal control they have over where/when to vote and how much of the ballot they need to vote on

Logos: Easy Voter Guide, State Library, LWV

Genesis of the EVGP for busy voters

- More experienced voters often wait until night before to "cram for the test"
- Many get overwhelmed by the length of the ballot and partisan ads
- Confused about "yes" vs "no" votes on props
- Broad-based need for basic information about responsibilities of different elected offices, levels of government, state budget

Logos: Easy Voter Guide, State Library, LWV

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The EVGP clears away myths...

- "If I register to vote I'll get called for jury duty..."
- "I'm afraid of making a mistake..."
- "I can't leave my kids/my job..."
- "My vote won't count if I can't fill out the whole ballot."
- "I don't like all of the candidates in my party."

★ Easy Voter Guide



...and replaces them with facts

- In California, the pool for jury duty comes from DMV files as well as voter files.
- If you make a mistake, you can ask for a new ballot or ask a poll worker to help you.
- You can take your kids to vote with you and your boss is required to give you time off to vote. Or you can choose to vote at home by mail.
- Voting's not a test where you need to answer all of the questions. You can vote on just a few things or even just one – and that will be counted.
- In the November General Election, voters can chose candidates from any party for any office; "mix-n-match."

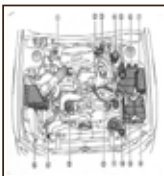
★ Easy Voter Guide



Common Pitfall of Nonpartisan Civic Education

What people feel they get:

What people want:

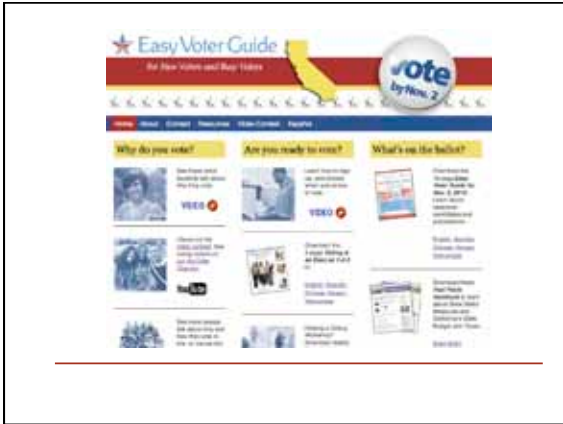


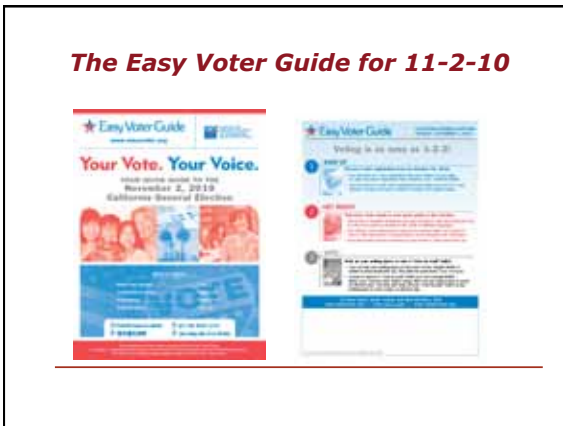
★ Easy Voter Guide



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Steps for each Easy Voter Guide

- Determine context required by the audience and what is "just enough" information to create appetite to learn more
- Distill/edit language, including community review in all five languages
- Cross-check by Legislative Analysts Office, LWVC leadership, Library and key partners
- **Highlights of the Nov. 2, 2010 edition:** election overview, job descriptions for state offices, information about voting on judges, proposition summaries and state budget overview






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How can libraries help voters?

- Online:
 - Change link to www.easyvoterguide.org and feature it on your library homepage and in any social media
 - Let your patrons know about the Oct 18-19 video contest voting
- Display:
 - Order/reorder printed Easy Voter Guides
 - Print out "Voting Choices" handout to accompany Easy Voter Guides on display



...more ways libraries can help

- Presentation:
 - Ask for an Easy Voter Guide ambassador
 - Connect with your local League of Women Voters
 - Hold a new voter workshop with adult ed partners or a LWV "pros and cons" event
- Community Visibility:
 - Issue a media release about the EVG at your library's "safe haven" during the election
 - Distribute extra EVG's at community events – put library contact info on the back




Remaining Questions?

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www.easyvoterguide.org

Thank you for participating!!



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