



FEMINIST NEWS

A publication of the San Fernando Valley/Northeast Los Angeles and Los Angeles South Chapters of the National Organization for Women

"The Valley's Voice for Choice"

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See us on the web at www.sfvnow.org

AB 1156 Aimed at Lottery Million "Deadbeat Dads"

ASSEMBLYMAN LLOYD LEVINE INTRODUCES LEGISLATION BASED ON EXPERIENCE OF SFV/NELA NOW MEMBER

Assembly Member Lloyd Levine made good on a promise he made to SFV/NELA NOW at last year's annual meeting after hearing the plight of Kris Ento, whose ex-husband wasn't bothering to pay child support even after winning an eight-digit lottery prize from the State of California.

AB 1156, if passed, will tighten California law by requiring satellite wagering earnings be garnished by the state to meet child support obligations to the custodial parent.

Help SFV/NELA NOW pass this important law by writing your legislators and asking them to support it. Also, ask other organizations you are a member of to support it and send letters of support to Assembly Member Levine and to SFV/NELA NOW. Speakers are available from SFV/NELA NOW on these and other family law issues.

UNIVERSITY OF CA TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT VICTIMS: You don't have the right to an investigation

Until April 20, 2007, the official policy of the University of California Board of Regents at UCLA was that employees who complained about sexual harassment had no right to have their complaint investigated. Seriously.

Only as an apparent result of a lawsuit by SFV/NELA NOW member Mahnaz "Nazy" Salem that made this insane policy an issue was the policy changed. This came after years of litigation in which the University was routinely represented by the law firm of Lewis, Brisbois, Bisgaard & Smith against employee charges of discrimination, harassment and retaliation. Apparently, it never occurred to the firm to advise its client that it should change its policy...but of course if the University had insured that every complainant received a prompt, unbiased, and competent investigation, maybe there would have been no lawsuits for LBBS to make money

on at taxpayer expense.

"Money doesn't talk. It swears." — Bob Dylan

LBBS also insured that it had a steady stream of business by contributing \$24,450.00 in campaign contributions over the years to at least one member of the Board of Regents by Lewis, Brisbois, Bisgaard & Smith. A politician with that kind of support from a law firm may very well not question the legal advice the firm has been giving to the University Regents.

UCLA has a "Title IX, Sexual Harassment Officer." What was she doing while all this was going on?

For one, on working time, she was busy serving as a member of the board of directors of the Southern California Employment Round Table (SCERT), a California corporation which was ordered suspended by the California Franchise Tax Board seven (7) years ago. According to documents released by the California Dept of Fair Employment & Housing, (DFEH), she (and the DFEH's own staff) routinely subsidized the operations of this organization, which under law has been conducting business unlawfully for seven full years,

UC Sex Harassment—continued SCERT holds seminars in which union avoidance information has been given out by civil defense attorneys, amongst other things. A member of the SCERT board is a partner in LBBS. A 2006 Court of Appeals decision upholding a multi-million award to a sexual harassment victim described the Regents' "routine manner of handling in-house claims of discrimination and retaliation and handling FEHA cases" as "stonewalling."

ANNUAL ELECTION & HOLIDAY PARTY

December 8, 2007

12:00 noon

12483 Bradley Ave

Sylmar 91342

Potluck, featuring Water Smoked Turkey with regular and vegetarian stuffing.

SFV/NELA NOW will conduct its annual election and holiday party. If you would like to serve on the board, please let us know in advance, but nominations (and volunteers) will be gratefully accepted on election day.

For further info: 818.769.2035 or info@sfvnow.org

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Available from SFV/NELA NOW

- "Girlie Men? No! — Feminists? Yes!" poster with photos of three male NOW members holding NOW signs 11x17
- SFV/NELA NOW PAC brochures with our election recommendations

Call 818.769.2035 or email info@sfvnow.org

To place orders

How you can help NOW:

- **E m a i l u s a t info@sfvnow.org to get on our activist e-list**
- **Order posters and brochures to distribute to friends**
- **Order additional copies of the Feminist News to distribute**
- **Donate office supplies, used computer equipment, or office space**
- **Join us at mailing parties, picket lines, press conferences, and court watches**



NOW Activists Seek Reforms in United For Education

Norma Ramirez and other NOW activists have been seeking a broad range of educational reforms and fighting corruption in both the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Los Angeles Community College District and other districts.

The past procedure for quite some time in the LACCD to fill the position of District Chancellor had been that the interim Chancellor following the departure of the last Chancellor had always been promoted to the Chancellorship. But when the departure of Darroch "Rocky" Young made Dr. Adriana Barrera — the first female and first Latina to potentially take the top spot in the district — the heir-apparent, LACCD's Board of Trustees shifted gears and paid Community College Search Service of Ventura County to do a head-hunting job to fill the top spot.

While this was taking place, UFE made a California Public Records Act request seeking documentation of how the firm had been selected and what criteria was in place for the vetting the new Chancellor. Very conveniently, the District failed to respond to the request within the legal deadline. By the time of the hearing, which had not been publicized in the usual manner to the public, LACCD still hadn't responded.

At the hearing NOW and UFE activists told the board that it was unfair to go ahead with choosing the new Chancellor when community activists monitoring the process had not been given the documents they needed to even engage in intelligent public comment. The board abruptly went into executive session for hours while the activists waited in the District lobby. Eventually, they were told that the process of picking the new chancellor had been deferred.

At no time did the board or the District General Counsel bother to disclose at the meeting or any time since then, that Silvia Scott-Hayes, a member of the board, was also an employee of Community College Search Service.

Instead of following the tradition of promoting the interim Chancellor to give the district its first female and first Latina head, the board apparently scuttled the list of candidates vetted by CCSS and brought back a former Chancellor instead.

WOMEN FRIENDLY WORKPLACE ACTIONS: United States Postal Service

For Kathleen Argandar, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in *Beck v United Food & Commercial Workers Local 99* could not have come at a better time. On November 1, 2007, the Ninth Circuit upheld the decision of a District Court Judge in Arizona that found Cheryl Beck's union, UFCW Local 99, liable for breach of the Duty of Fair Representation in the way it handled her grievances. The court found that because there was evidence that the local routinely handled grievances for men more aggressively than they handled them for women, the union had breached its duties under the National Labor Relations Act.

Kathleen Argandar's circumstances seem very similar. She says that all of the union shop stewards for Branch 1340 of the National Association of Letter Carriers are white males. She perceives the local as failing to take seriously grievances filed by either women or non-whites (Argandar is a Chicana). When she filed a grievance over a purported failure to report when she had a perfectly good medical excuse, the union failed to exercise its right to enforce the shop steward's demand for information to back up management's disciplinary action. In the case of **United States Postal Service** (1992) the National Labor Relations Board held that refusing to timely respond to a union information request for a grievance proceeding was an unfair labor practice. After refusing to enforce its right to get the records, the branch president then proceeded to settle the grievance in exchange for accepting disciplinary action against Argandar.

Subsequently, Argandar filed a grievance over same-sex sexual harassment over a supervisor touching her leg. When she initially complained to a male shop steward about it, he wanted to know if he could touch her leg too!

The League of United Latin American Citizens California Civil Rights Commission has stepped up to the plate for Argandar with letters to the National President of NALC, William H. Young. But with no response forthcoming, it looks like Argandar will be forced to file an Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge against her union with the NLRB. She is already charging both the union and the postal service with discrimination in a complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Board (EEOC).

THE "N" WORD IS NOT ACCEPTABLE

Civil rights groups are demanding answers from the Department of Fair Employment & Housing (DFEH) over its sloth in failing to investigate or issue a right to sue letter to Larry Cooper, an African-American employee of Illinois based ADS Logistics in the City of Commerce, CA. Cooper, a friend of Los Angeles South NOW ("NOW Playing in the Hood") President Malinda Rosell, is the only African American where he works, but that didn't stop the company management from trying to convince him that when the word "Nigger" was painted on the bathroom wall that it wasn't directed at him. In the meantime, DFEH compounded its refusal to do anything about the incident by dragging its feet, for literally months, on Cooper's request that they issue him a proper right to sue letter. The DFEH Los Angeles office has been known to go through three or more tries before getting the language right in right to sue letters. Omissions from a right to sue letter can haunt a victim of discrimination or harassment later on in court if it looks like they didn't complain about a specific issue that they later sue on.

Following his complaint to DFEH, Cooper was ordered to work 12 hours a day for literally months. Finally, worn out and constantly cold shouldered and harassed at work Larry wound up in the hospital in serious condition. Still, the DFEH has failed to respond to complaints by civil rights organizations demanding an explanation for its foot dragging. ADS Logistics' human resources representative, who conducted an obviously biased investigation, told Cooper that the company didn't care what civil rights groups or DFEH would do. To teach the company a lesson, civil rights groups are planning a demonstration at the company's facilities in Richmond and Commerce, California.

Domestic violence awareness speaker, Art Therapy for abuse victims and Exhibits

What are the signs of domestic violence?

How does it begin? What does it develop into?

Are you in an abusive relationship? What to look for.

Tina: 310.924.5709 www.soulsupportfoundation.org



WHERE CHILD MOLESTERS ARE WELCOME: AS MANAGERS OF THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH!

Elizabeth Pezoa and her family fled the brutal military dictatorship of Chile when she was a young girl. She didn't come to America to have to put up with a tyrannical boss who segregated the employees on the basis of ethnicity or national origin, but as a licensed clinical social worker in the Santa Clara County Dept of Mental Health (DMH), that's exactly what she had to put up with. Hung M. Nguyen actually posted signs designating separating work areas for a so-called "Vietnamese Group" and a "Latino Group" of employees, reminiscent of the old "White" and "Colored" segregation signs of the South. When the EEOC told the County to take them down, the County refused. When Pezoa protested, the EEOC ruled that she suffered retaliation. Latino workers were subjected to case loads 20-30% higher than those of Vietnamese workers and were required to handle all English speaking as well as Spanish speaking clients even though there were twice as many Vietnamese social workers on staff. Nguyen failed to even return the call of at least one Spanish—English bilingual worker seeking to fill an open job.

What was all the more astonishing is that **Nguyen was a registered sex offender having been convicted of "annoying of molesting a child."** Later, he was convicted of lying to a police officer and failing to register as a sex offender. Somebody was asleep at the wheel, just letting Nguyen become manager of such a DMH facility because he only had a B.A. degree and no professional license while the staff he was supervising all had Masters degrees and professional licenses. Despite the fact that California law allowed the County to ask Nguyen and all other employees of health care facilities who would have regular access to patients whether they had been "arrested" (as opposed to convicted) of a sex offense, Santa Clara didn't even ask that question on its employment application and when it conducted an in-house "investigation," of Pezoa's complaints, no one bothered to check to see if he had a criminal record or check any other background on him.

His background was not a theoretical problem: although the County has claimed under oath in court discovery proceedings that the Narvaez facility in San Jose that he managed was an "adult facility," Pezoa insists that not only were children treated there by another social worker, but adult patients coming in for help there brought their children with them....without any warning that there was a registered sex offender on the premises.

Attorneys representing Nguyen refused to divulge his current home address in a manner that was so suspicious, it drew attention to a new problem. If they hadn't made such a fuss about where he was living, nobody would have even checked during the current litigation since there was no need to at that point. But the investigation into his whereabouts that this caused revealed an address that is less than 2,000 feet from a park. "Jessica's law," passed by the voters a few years ago, makes it unlawful under Section 3003.5(b) of the Penal Code for a registered sex offender to live within 2,000 feet of a school or a park where children regularly congregate. Investigation is now under way to determine whether the County of Santa Clara is conveniently not taking any action about this because it needs his testimony at the trial of Pezoa's lawsuit.



LLOYD LEVINE GETS EARLY ENDORSEMENT FOR 2008 SENATE RACE

Assembly Member Lloyd Levine (D-40th District) was voted an early endorsement for the 2008 State Senate race to succeed termed-out Senator Sheila Kuehl in the 23rd Senate District. Levine's legislation in the past year alone includes AB 394 which established the rights to GLBT students to safety schools, AB 589 to help prevent teen violence and teen sexual violence, and AB 1156 (SFV/NELA NOW sponsored legislation) on child support.

POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE PROCEDURES—Candidates seeking the support of SFV/NELA NOW can obtain our PAC questionnaire at www.sfvnow.org. The questionnaire is in the process of being updated, but you can submit the current version to be updated later. SFV/NELA NOW PAC will begin considering 2008 endorsements after the candidate filing period for the June 2008 election is closed.

SFV/NELA NOW activists Tina Black and Lisa Vannoy are battling attempts by Tina's former husband and his real estate firm (Pinnacle Estate Properties) to stifle their free speech rights over accusations of spousal abuse. Following a default judgment against them that resulted after an attorney they'd contacted failed to file an answer on time, a Superior Court Judge found for Jeffrey Black and Pinnacle Estate Properties on allegations that the two had falsely claimed that Black had engaged in spousal abuse. When the pair tried to discharge the judgments in Bankruptcy Court, Black and Pinnacle filed an adversary complaint in an attempt to thwart the discharge and then proceeded to seek "summary judgment" by claiming that the bankruptcy judge did not have the authority to rule on the merits of a Superior Court default judgment.

Unfortunately for the lawyers representing Black and Pinnacle, they apparently hadn't noticed that the most recent case they'd cited (a March 2007 Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision) was exactly on point: for Tina. In that case, the very judge they were before had been overruled by the Ninth Circuit when it held that a bankruptcy judge has wide discretion to try default judgment cases on their merits, and Judge Kathleen Thompson was obviously very well aware of that ruling. Thompson denied the summary judgment motion in no uncertain terms.

January 8, 2008 is set as a court status conference. SFV/NELA NOW members should contact us for details at info@sfvnow.org if they would like to attend the hearing to show support for the right of women to exercise their First Amendment rights to expose spousal abuse.

