



The League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Ka Leo Hana

A Non-Partisan Organization to Encourage Informed Citizen Participation in Government and Politics

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THOUGHTS ON STATE COUNCIL 2006

I was energized by our state Council meeting in May and would like to share a few highlights with those of you unable to attend.

As Hawaii state representative to League's National Convention this summer, I was asked to provide four single words that come to mind when one thinks of our state League. (National is using the words for a Power Point presentation while I take 60 seconds to tout our League in the Roll Call of States.)

State Council attendees started our gathering by giving me input on the most apt words: BRIGHT, SEASONED, RESPECTED, and FUN. I chose these four as I feel one of League's biggest draws for me is in working with a bright group of people who are able to come to consensus and then present our stand effectively to our lawmakers. I'd like it even better if our views always prevailed in passing legislation, but I do think we have earned respect because of the way we operate. The word "seasoned" is not entirely a positive attribute of our membership – it does mean we have experience, but it also means we need to address "challenges such as lowering the average age of our membership." (from the council flyer written by Mary Anne Raywid and Jackie Parnell) I added "fun" to our list of words when our breakout group began brainstorming on the future of the League, and I realized a collective sense of humor makes it gratifying, even fun, to participate in League activities.

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WHY DON'T MORE GOOD CANDIDATES RUN?

I ran unsuccessfully for Kauai County Council in 2002 and for Board of Directors of my electric utility cooperative [KIUC] in March 2006. In 2006 I lost by 159 votes to three candidates who had never been to a single KIUC Board meeting prior to the election process.

What was stacked against me is the old "machine," which was effective in getting the vote out for one candidate whose main platform statement was that he was very young. The other thing that defeated me was local name and name recognition, which all three winners had. Finally, one candidate who does not even live on Kauai but had the organized union vote beat me by 159 votes. I don't think I will ever be able to get the Longshoremen's union to support me, although maybe the Carpenter's union would someday.

On Kauai, my experience running for elected office taught me several things:

1. a non-incumbent challenger running for Council seat .needs to spend a minimum of \$10,000 - 15,000 to get through the primary. Spend it early on making a good first impression. [Incumbents already have name recognition and are going to get many thousands of dollars with little effort on their part. This will be a big advantage for them. Non-incumbents must raise their own funds and even so may not get their name recognized by the voter.]

2. Many "locals" who cared said it would help if I had a local name (it is easier but not required) Also helps to have a "hapa" family through marriage, though fortunately this is not required.

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FLORIDA LEAGUE TACKLES FRIGHTENING LEGISLATION

Joined by several other plaintiffs, the Florida League of Women Voters has filed suit against the State of Florida in federal court, challenging a recent law penalizing voter registration groups.

Specifically, according to a release distributed by those bringing the suit, the law fines the group filing every voter registration form submitted, with fines ranging from \$250 to \$500. And if, for any reason a completed form is not submitted, the fine is \$5000 – irrespective of what the reason might be. Moreover, anyone associated with a sued organization can be held personally responsible for paying the fines.

Commented the President of the Florida League, "What the State has done is [to] radically raise the cost of doing business for voter registrations... In effect, this is a tax on democracy and a tax on democratic participation that makes voter registration work prohibitively expensive for many of the state's leading civic organizations." Ironically, the law exempts political parties from the fines, which are to be assessed only against nonpartisan organizations!

The release concludes that "should plaintiffs succeed in their lawsuit... the legal outcome will help to head off comparable voter-suppression statutes in other states, such as Ohio, New Mexico, and Colorado." – Lucky you live Hawaii!

Mary Anne Raywid

President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

Our semi-annual state Council is generally a time for self-assessment and this year was no exception. I was impressed by several intriguing suggestions for addressing the continuing aging of our League membership. John Higgins, new League member with Voter Owned Elections, suggested that, rather than just talking to young people, we invite them to co-participate in action. John may have some insight on attracting diverse, young members as he is not only male, but has Samoan blood, and is young. One of our guest speakers, Dan Boylan, historian and political commentator, suggested we might bluntly and loudly tell young folks, "I vote – you don't. I'll vote to take care of me." The implication was that we seniors would take care of our needs, but young families might be left without funding for theirs unless they become politically active. Arlene Ellis was enthused about the idea of using Education Fund money to send birthday letters to every 18 year old in the state. I hope we can keep these ideas in mind as we move forward.

Valere McFarland asked "Why does Hawaii have the lowest voter turnout in the nation?" This is certainly one statistic League would like to change. To that end, Susan Miller, Honolulu Vice President, volunteered to chair a committee and to report to state board with any information on the causes and possible League action to change this situation.

Our luncheon program consisted of a panel of two experts on political affairs in Hawaii, Professors Dan Boylan of the University of Hawaii at West Oahu, and Randy Roth at UH - Manoa. Moderator Mary Anne Raywid put to them questions extremely difficult to answer and we all stretched our minds listening to them wrestle with issues like "Just how essential is a two-party system to a democracy, and to what extent does Hawaii have one? What would it take to get a healthy two-party system operating here?" and "Hawaii is known for having one of the most powerful interest group systems in American politics. Interest groups are known to function as veto groups when it comes to reform. Given

the power of interest groups within the political parties here, and their control over the political process, how can reform ever take place in Hawaii?"

Responses of the two were fascinating, and both ranged broadly in replying to such questions. It was an opportunity to watch two sophisticated thinkers with a great deal of knowledge about Hawaii's politics tackle some weighty issues. The questions proved provocative for our guests and tapped into a great deal of recent experience for both. In the course of the discussion, Boylan suggested that the Republicans need to do some grassroots organizing, since what we have now is the Democratic Party and the Lingle Party. Roth is hesitant about campaign finance reform on the grounds that it will give undue influence to commentators, shifting the power from the candidates to the commentators. A question about corruption in public life evoked an interesting discussion about *Broken Trust*. All in all, it was a stimulating session

Sue Irvine

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VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE TO MEET

The first meeting of the recently reconvened Violence Prevention committee will take place in the League office on Tuesday, June, 27 at 12:00 noon.

Discussion will be about the future.

What will be our legislative agenda on women's rights, children's issues and reproductive health for next year? This year HB1242, clarifying the definition of abortion, passed with the governor's signature. HB2059 and SB2136, requiring hospitals to provide information on emergency contraception, and HB2060 and SB2139, regarding medically accurate sex information, failed. They will be back next year.

If we had an online voter's guide, what questions would we like to ask the candidates? How can this committee facilitate getting out the vote and increasing League membership?

In 1996 the Violence Prevention committee issued the Report Domestic Violence Family Court Monitoring followed in 1998, by the Report Domestic Violence Victim Safety in Hawaii (online at <http://www.trussel.com/lwv/domvi98.htm>).

How should we follow up on these?

After our initial meeting on June 27 we will host two brown bag lunches. At our first one, on Tuesday July 11, our guests will be Cindy Iannce Spencer, Director of Client & Community Services and Joanne Roberts, Advocate, both with the Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Legal Hotline.

Guests at our second lunch on Tuesday, July 25, will be President Pamela Lichty, and Executive Director Jeanne Ohta of the Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii. They have asked League to consider a study on Hawaii's drug policies. The Texas League has recently completed such a study, and other Leagues, including Albuquerque and Seattle, are working on them.

Do join us for any or all of these meetings. Please call or e-mail me with any questions or comments.

The phone number is 735-5998, or email Meisenzahl001@hawaii.rr.com

Suzanne Meisenzahl

The following article is reprinted, with permission of its author, David Shapiro, from the May 17, 2006 edition of *The Honolulu Advertiser*. We wanted to reprint it because Helene is a veteran Leaguer who served in the 1990's on the State Board, as President of the Hawaii County League. We are sorry that she has decided not to run to retain her seat in the Legislature, but she certainly has earned a rest. *Editor*



HELENE HALE'S LEGACY: A GOOD PAIN IN THE 'OKOLE

Retiring legislator left her mark on Hawai'i politics

When I spoke to church leaders last year on religion and politics, I was flattered that the venerable Rep. Helene Hale, D-Puna, found it worth her while to get up early on a Saturday morning to hear what I had to say.

Talking to her afterward, I found that she'd lost none of her passion for equality and tolerance that has marked a political career spanning more than half a century.

I felt like a circle had closed; Hale was the first politician I ever talked to in 1964 when she was Big Island county chairwoman – the equivalent of mayor at the time – and I was a Hilo High student who needed advice on a civics project.

Hale, now 88, is one of seven legislators leaving office this year. While the other six are moving on to new opportunities in politics or the private sector, Hale's retirement signals the end of a remarkable career that deserves appreciation.

She was born in Minneapolis and worked as a teacher before coming to Hawai'i in 1947. Hale was elected to the Big Island Board of Supervisors after the political revolution that swept Democrats to power in 1954 and served 10 years including a term as chairwoman from 1963 to 1965.

She was the first African-American elected to office in Hawai'i and the first woman to hold

an executive position in local government since Queen Liliu'okalani.

Hale helped lead the Big Island through the transition to statehood and was one of the founders of Hilo's Merrie Monarch Festival.

Hale took a hiatus from politics to attend to business interests, including a real estate agency, a bookstore and a Kona coffee farm, then returned to public life with her election to the 1978 Constitutional Convention.

She served 10 years on the Hawai'i County Council between 1980 and 1994, then took another break before winning election to the state House of Representatives in 2000 at the age of 82.

Displaying her trademark sense of humor, her campaign slogan in the green-conscious Puna District was "Recycle Helene Hale."

As chairwoman of the House Committee on International Affairs, she championed a more global role for Hawai'i and proposed a state agency to identify opportunities stemming from our unique place in the world.

She's been vocal on senior issues, backing a death-with-dignity law and opposing measures to exclude those over 70 from jury duty and increase driver testing for seniors over 75.

Hale was a key advocate of 2003 House resolutions that expressed

reservations about going to war in Iraq without U.N. backing and invoked Hawai'i's aloha spirit in urging negotiations over force.

Hale was ridiculed by Republicans and others for offering "aloha to Saddam," but three years later - after nearly 2,500 U.S. deaths with no end in sight her fears don't seem so ridiculous.

In 2004, Hale experienced the devastating loss of her son Jasper, who suffered from schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Typically, she made it mean something by campaigning for improved mental-health care - especially for those left on the streets because treatment and medication are not available, or they won't accept it.

Hale was slowed by a stroke last year, but wasn't ready to retire until she found a successor she believed could keep her seat in Democratic hands.

In 2001, it was revealed that a political operative for the ousted former trustees of Kamehameha Schools/Bishop Estate had described Hale as "a pain in the 'okole" and "maybe even *pupule*." I hope she took it as a badge of honor. Helene Hale's enduring legacy is that she's always been a pain in the right 'okole.

David Shapiro,
Honolulu Advertiser

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

This will be a very busy election season for Hawaii voters. Besides the exciting U.S. Senate race, the challenging race for Representative Ed Case's seat, and the race for governor, there will be five constitution amendment proposals to ponder over – plus Honolulu's Charter Review Commission's final recommendations to be placed on the ballot in November.

We will be doing a pro-and-con on the constitutional amendments to be placed on our web-site at the least. At that time, we'll try to discuss each one fully, plus present as many viewpoints on the proposals as we can gather. The five that survived are:

1) HB 1917 HD2, SD2, CD1, which would establish a salary commission to review and recommend salaries for the justices and judges of all state courts, members of the legislature, the governor and lieutenant governor, the administrative director of the state, department heads or executive officers of the executive departments and the deputies or assistants to department heads of the executive departments, excluding the University of Hawaii and the Department of Education.

(League did not testify on this nor the accompanying bill, HB 1918 which is designed to implement the provisions of the constitutional amendment, having no position on this. However, in hindsight, we could have commented on the fact that all members of the salary commission will be appointed by people who will be directly affected by changes to the salary schedule – the Speaker of the House, the Senate President, the Governor, and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Why not make sure that there will be someone representing the public on the commission to make sure it does

not forget its responsibility to taxpayers?)

2) SB 0995 SD1, HD1, CD1, Proposes an amendment to the Hawaii Constitution to Remove the Mandatory Retirement Age for Justices and Judges. [The mandatory retirement age is currently 70. There was earlier talk about changing it to 80 years, but I guess they decided against any mandatory retirement age.]

3) SB 1256 HD1 would modify the appointment process for the Board of Regents. [Currently, the Governor appoints members to the Board with the advice and consent of the Senate. Article X, section 6 of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii would be amended to establish that the Governor would appoint members to the Board of Regents from pools of qualified candidates presented to the governor by the candidate advisory council as provided by law.]

(In previous years, I have always supported the screening of applicants to appointed boards by "independent" councils. This year, I missed the opportunity to weigh in on this. While the governor makes the final appointment, the council can help make the Board of Regents a more independent body, while acknowledging the reality that you cannot completely eliminate political influence from the process.)

4) SB 2246 SD1, HD1, CD1, which proposes to allow the Legislature to define what behavior constitutes a continuing course of conduct and what constitutes the jury unanimity that is required for conviction in continuous sexual assault crimes against minors younger than 14 years of age.

(A similar proposal was on the ballot in 2004, and voters approved

it. However, it was invalidated by the Hawaii State Supreme Court, and this is an attempt to amend the constitution in such a way as to make it easier to prosecute those who repeatedly sexually assault a child over a period of time. Presently, there must be unanimity on the part of the jury in agreeing not only that there has been at least the minimum number of assaults, but in identifying the particular assaults that constitute the minimum number. This measure gives the Legislature the authority to define a) what behavior constitutes a continuing course of conduct, and, b) what constitutes the jury unanimity that is required for a conviction.)

5) SB 2479 HD1, CD1 proposes to amend the constitution to authorize the issuance of special purpose revenue bonds to finance facilities of or for, or to loan the proceeds of such bonds to assist agricultural enterprises serving important agricultural lands.

(I believe it was in 2002 when there was an amendment to the constitution to allow the issuance of special purpose revenue bonds or SPRBs to help private schools with their capital improvements. SPRBs are revenue bonds that can be issued by the State to assist designated corporations, industries, government programs etc. raise needed capital. Because the dividends from these bonds are tax exempt (both state and federal), they can be sold for less interest which helps the enterprises borrowing the money. They're called revenue bonds because the revenues from the capital improvements are used to repay the bonds and interests. What this amendment would do is to add agricultural enterprises serving important agricultural lands to the list of those enterprises whose facilities may be financed by SPRBs.)

Jean Aoki

Jackie Parnell did such a good job of compiling the ideas produced at the morning session of Council, on May 13, that we decided to run them just as she circulated them to the Board:

LEAGUE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I. Increase public participation in government

- A. Increase voter registration and turnout
 - 1. Distribute voter registration forms with drivers' licenses
 - 2. Expand "get-out-the-vote" campaigns using PSA Announcement and Poster contests for high school students, with prizes
- B. Investigate methods to increase voter awareness and knowledge of important issues
- C. Support and undertake studies of government behavior and process
- D. Use technology to bring government to the public
 - 1. Eliminate need for password on web site
 - 2. Put community calendar on web site
 - 3. Put testimony on web site
 - 4. Increase number of hyperlinks on web site
- E. Support initiative and referendum at the state level
- F. Increase cooperation with other organizations with similar goals (Media Council, Sierra Club, etc.)
- G. Increase use of national and local education funds and other grants

II. Increase League Membership

- A. Recruit newly retired - work with company counseling
- B. Contact new arrivals - LWV welcome wagon
- C. Be visible!
 - 1. Work on magnet issues
 - 2. Be known as relevant and effective
 - 3. Present testimony
 - 4. Write letters to the editor, op-ed pieces
- D. Create junior arm of League
- E. Reach students through speakers on issues
- F. Have active Membership Chairs in each League
- G. Increase diversity, e.g. recruit men, different age groups

III. Plan for Future Leadership

- A. Develop succession plans for each League
- B. Make sure each committee has at least three members
- C. Make sure there is a dedicated chair for a new study.

* * *

NATIONAL CONVENTION

All of Hawaii's local Leagues have concurred with a LWV of Illinois position: to the effect that "The League of Women Voters of the United States supports the abolition of the death penalty." The LWVUS Board is recommending adoption of this concurrence so that it can be included in our national program.

Sue Irvine, Hawaii's State President, and Marianna Scheffer, President of Hawaii County LWV, will be attending national convention June 9-13 in Minneapolis, MN.

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WHY DON'T MORE GOOD CANDIDATES RUN?

3. Research has shown the apparent reluctance of some Americans to vote for women. Such gender bias has been repeatedly found in surveys using hypothetical questions about potential candidates (*Psych. Journal of Social Psychology*, 6/2002). I really don't know whether this is a problem in Hawaii.

4. Run a "clean" campaign. However, if a PAC does some mud-slinging, hope it lands on your opponents only.

5. All candidates need a realistic time line to implement marketing/campaign strategy

6. A successful candidate needs a campaign manager and as many volunteers as one can find. and/or extended "family" and/or a large support structure. This means a lot of volunteers who will do more than write a check but who will actually show up to stuff envelopes, etc.

7. The candidate really must want to do this – it is a public service to run as well as to become an elected office holder.

It is not impossible to take back our local government... just a lot of hard work. It's actually going to take getting new voters to come out and vote. This is very difficult because many have given up on the system and deliberately avoid caring. This brings me to the real problem: It is much easier not to care. It takes emotional energy to care. Because the one you want to win may lose. This really bothers people and it seems to reinforce their negative attitude.

Somehow, we have to get people to care enough to register, and then care enough to vote.

There is a psychological issue with voting. Why is it some people get addicted to gambling even though they lose, but the same does not occur with voting?

Carol Bain

THE FATE OF FULL PUBLIC FUNDING OF CAMPAIGNS

Voter Owned Hawaii and its coalition partners entered the 2006 legislative session hopeful of passing a Clean Elections bill that would update and streamline the existing publicly funded elections campaign program. This program was originally approved by voters in 1978 as a constitutional amendment. Despite considerable support from the public, media, and many members of the Senate and House, the majority faction effectively killed any consideration of a bill that would alter the present special-interest-based donor system.

In response, coalition volunteers began a widespread public education effort across the islands to make it loud and clear to Legislators that they wanted the Clean Elections bill to pass. Walking in neighborhoods on Oahu, Maui, and the Big Island, volunteers distributed literature detailing which special-interests gave donations to their legislators, they gathered petitions, held sign-waving events, and attended community meetings. Signs included "Pass Clean Elections Now!", "Put island interests over mainland money", and "Level the playing field so average people have a voice."

Although these messages were heard, majority House members opposed significant campaign spending reform, and so killed a Clean Elections bill for the seventh year in a row.

There were some grounds for celebration in the end, however, when a wide-ranging grassroots coalition was able to defeat a bill which would have allowed corporations and unions to give unlimited amounts of money to political action committees. Currently, Act 203 limits special-interest contributions to PACs at \$1,000 in total. It was only because of a last-minute flurry of emails and phone calls that the coalition was able to stop the undermining of Act

203 by stopping SB 2922.

The staff of Voter Owned Elections extends its Mahalo to everyone who participated in hosting house parties, making phone calls, canvassing, sign-waving, and meeting with legislators.

The momentum the coalition has gathered is now stronger than ever: Resolutions in support of Clean Elections were just passed at the Oahu County and State Democratic Conventions. The Coalition for Clean Elections will be taking part in days of action to get Clean Elections passed at the federal level, where there is passionate debate heating up about the issue of publicly funded elections. Over 120 organizations will be invited to the Grassroots Groups Roundtable to occur at the end of June. And house parties, regional action meetings, canvassing, and sign waving will be coming to a neighborhood near you as VOE launches its summer public education campaign.

**Please contact us to
get involved!
at 599-1600**

**on the web:
www.voterownedhawaii.org
e-mail:
kory@voterownedhawaii.org**

Kory Payne

* * *

***Democracy is an
action sport!***

Randall W. Roth



THE LAST FEW BUTTONS ARE ALWAYS THE HARDEST.
Chapin, in the *Saint Louis Star*, 1920

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

In celebration of the League's 75th birthday, the December, 1995 issue of *The Massachusetts Voter* quoted a Women's Anti-Suffrage Association of Massachusetts ad attempting to defeat ratification of the 19th amendment. Wrote Mrs. John Balch, President and Mrs. Charles P. Strong, Secretary of the Massachusetts group, "There are 53,000 more women than men of voting age in Massachusetts. DO NOT place the government of this State under the control of an inexperienced feminine majority. VOTE NO ON WOMAN SUFFERAGE [sic] November 2, 1915."

Adds Jean Aoki, who found this item in some papers she was going through, "When I think of the time and effort invested in achieving suffrage for all women in America by a group of women who convened formally in Seneca Falls in New York in June of 1848 to hammer out a resolution that was to culminate 72 years later in the 19th amendment to the Constitution of the United States, I despair that so many women are not taking advantage of this right to vote. The 19th amendment simply states, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of Sex.

Jean Aoki

Chapter Reports

KAUAI

This spring, League's Kauai County chapter held two public events: on March 18, "Applying Sunshine," a public forum featuring Les Kondo, director of the Office of Information Practices and Adam Harju, editor of the Garden Island newspaper; and on April 22, The 39th Annual Kauai County League meeting/luncheon with keynote speaker, Tom Dinell, who also moderated a panel of local planners to discuss "Are we Planning or Are we Permitting?"

The 2006-7 Elected Kauai Board:

President - Carol Bain
 Vice-President - Althea McCleery
 Treasurer - Susan Wilson
 Secretary - Charee Watters

Elected Members:

Mary Stone, Linda Harmon,
 Marie Fifield

The chapter awarded a \$200 scholarship to Jessica Zappey, a student enrolled in political science courses at Kauai Community College. We are reviewing two local positions: one on transportation and another on our parks department. ACLU is organizing a Kauai "chapter" with which we will be networking in the future. The fact that we have lacked a Membership Chairperson for the past several years has resulted in a current membership list of only 23 members.

Linda Harmon, our Voter Education Chair, has announced several Kauai Voter Education projects for 2006. First, several candidates have announced that they will be running for mayor; so the League is planning to coordinate a mayoral candidates public forum. Second, an LVW Kauai County Voter Guide is

planned for the General Election. We have invited the County Charter Review Commission to include the list of drafted amendments with pros and cons as they will appear on the ballot.

Carol Bain,
 President

HONOLULU

Honolulu held its annual meeting at the Hale Koa Hotel in Waikiki on April 8. The program was dedicated to two outstanding League members who passed away earlier this year, Astrid Monson and Martha Black. Astrid was a retired professional city planner and was well-known throughout the community as a fierce champion of good planning and land use. Martha was the founder of the People's Water Conferences and was just as fiercely protective of Hawaii's water resources. Both women lived to be 93 years young.

The meeting's featured speaker was University of Hawaii professor Panos Prevadouros who presented the "Case Against Rapid Transit" to League members and guests.

Newly-elected officers include Piilani Kaopuiki, President, and Sue Miller, Vice-President. Robin Loomis was re-elected as Secretary and Malia Schwartz continues as Treasurer.

Honolulu continues following its areas of interest: Planning and transportation, Honolulu charter amend-

ment proposals, 2006 election voter service, and affordable shelter initiatives. We welcome back Suzanne Meisenzahl to active League participation. She leads in the area of violence prevention, especially to women and children. In May the National American Indian Housing Council sought the services of League to conduct an election at its annual convention in Honolulu. In June we will complete an election process for Ho'oponopono.

Piilani Kaopuiki,
 President

HAWAII

Our March 15 2006 Sunshine Week Forum was a success. The audience was small but interested, and the Forum was re-broadcast by Na Leo in East Hawaii and West Hawaii, which gave it a wider distribution.

On April 27, we gave a luncheon to honor Helene Hale, long time resident of the Big Island and Representative of State House District 4, who is retiring after a distinguished career in service to the citizens of the big Island and the State of Hawaii.

We are getting in gear for the didates' debates. On the Hilo side, this event will take place at the Palace Theater on Sept. 14. It will be broadcast and televised. The Kona group will sponsor a similar event.

Marianna Scheffer,
 President

* * *

"One-party systems... have been notoriously useful instruments for the limitation of conflict and depression of political participation."

E.E. Schattschneider
The Semisovereign People

