



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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Calendar

Friday, December 9, 2016

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Transportation Consensus Meeting

International House of Pancakes

1549 41st Avenue Capitola

RSVP to league@lwvsc.org or call (831)

325-4140

Tuesday, December 13, 2016

10 a.m.-noon

LWVSCC Board Meeting

Santa Cruz County Bank

720 Front Street, Santa Cruz

Voter Service Report

We had 17 state ballot propositions to present to the voters in October. The presenters were Sue Becker, Dottie Fry, and Sandy Warren. There was one general public forum on October 5th at the Live Oak Senior Center and co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women. It was a successful night with an overflow crowd of 125, including many Cabrillo College students. We then made eight presentations to smaller groups throughout the month, educating an additional 155 voters. Our grand total for this voter education outreach on the state ballot propositions was 280 voters.

—Dottie Fry, Voter Service Co-Chair

Transportation Mini-Study Consensus Meeting

Featuring

Karena Pushnik

Senior Transportation Planner

Friday

December 9, 2016

10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.



International House of Pancakes

1549 41st Ave, Capitola, California

Attendees may order brunch individually on arrival

RSVP: League@lwvsc.org or call (831) 325-4140

League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County (LWVSCC) members are cordially invited and encouraged to attend our “mini-study” consensus meeting to consider amending our local League’s Transportation Position.

Last March at our League’s local program planning meeting, we noted that while our existing local Transportation Position (view the entire Transportation Position at lwvsc.org/pos_transportation) specifically supports a local gasoline tax to help fund local transportation improvements, the measure that we anticipated would be placed on the November 2016 ballot would probably call for a ½ cent county-wide retail sales tax, not a gasoline tax. Therefore, our local League would not be able to support such a measure. So, the recommendation coming out of our program planning meeting was to conduct a “mini-study” in the coming year to determine if our League members still wished to continue to support just a local gasoline tax or consider supporting other potential local revenue sources to help fund local transportation improvements.

At our League’s annual meeting last June, upon the recommendation of our board of directors, League members approved a “mini-study” to review our current local Transportation Position as it pertains to support of a local gasoline tax exclusively. In the meantime, our board would consider sponsoring a Pros & Cons voter service forum in the fall on the proposed transportation tax ballot measure. (This meeting took place on September 22; a report on the event can be found in our [October 2016 VOTER](http://October2016VOTER) and the video can be viewed online at lwvsc.org/videos.)

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Our local Transportation Position, initially adopted in 1986, may have reflected the prevailing view at the time that roads existed primarily to serve gasoline powered vehicles and those benefitting from roads and highways should pay the cost of building and maintaining them through gasoline taxes. But priorities have evolved and funding conditions have changed. Today, we recognize that our transportation plans also need to include alternative modes of transportation such as public transportation and provide safe travel for pedestrians and bicyclists. This broader concept of transportation goals may justify a broader funding source.

Over the years, relatively static per-gallon gasoline tax rates have not kept pace with inflation and rising costs. In addition, increased fuel efficiency and the emergence of hybrid and electric-powered vehicles, has meant that revenue from gasoline taxes at the state and federal levels has become inadequate to meet growing transportation needs and has severely reduced the availability of state and federal funds for local transportation improvements. As a result, local governments have increasingly turned to local revenue sources to fund their transportation needs, becoming what is referred to as “self-help counties.” It is believed that self-help counties also may have a better chance for competing for state and federal matching grants. According to the 2014 Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan, 33% of counties in California representing 84% of the population are self-help counties and it is believed that this trend will continue.

Potential local revenue sources may include: gasoline tax, general sales tax increase, retail sales tax to fund specific projects, vehicle registration fees, regional traffic impact/developer fees, property tax, transient occupancy tax, toll roads, transit fares, traffic and parking fines, bicycle license fees, and payroll/income taxes.

The League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) positions on [Transportation](#) and [State and Local Finances](#) include criteria that can be used to evaluate local revenues sources. LWVC “vertical positions” can be used at the local League level. For example, the state League position on transportation includes this paragraph:

Transportation funding should come from all levels of government, but regional and local levels should have maximum flexibility to select the modes and projects on which to spend allocated funds. User fees and other revenues derived from transportation-related sources should be designated for transportation uses, including use of highway users’ taxes for transportation-related services such as smog control and transit. A variety of other funding methods are appropriate, including general funds, sales tax revenues and private sources such as developer fees. All funding should be evaluated in terms of equitable sharing of transportation costs, effect on travel behavior and indirect economic impacts.

The state League position on State and Local Finances includes this statement:

To ensure adequacy of revenue by a variety of revenue sources available to local governments including a wide range of local taxes that meet tests of equity and adequacy and that take into account flexibility, economic effects, simplicity, efficiency and accountability.

At our December meeting, we’ll hear from Karena Pushnik, League member and Senior Planner with the Regional Transportation Commission, about the pros and cons of various local funding sources. Then LWVSCC members will have an opportunity to discuss the issue and come to consensus on one of the following options for our transportation position:

1. Continue to restrict our support to only a local gasoline tax as a local source of revenue to fund local transportation needs, or
2. Eliminate reference to a specific funding source and use the criteria in our state League’s vertical positions on transportation as well as state and local finances to evaluate local transportation funding proposals.

Join us for this Transportation Mini-Study Consensus Meeting on Friday, December 9 at 10:30 a.m. at the International House of Pancakes, 1549 41st Avenue in Capitola. League members may order their own brunch (to be paid for individually) when they arrive. Please RSVP by email at league@lwvsc.org or by calling (831)325-4140.

—Jan Karwin, *Transportation Study Chair*

Membership Report

New member Lydia Nogales Parker joined the League of Women Voters to become more involved in the election process: registering voters, protecting voting rights from suppression, and preventing gerrymandering of local districts. In 2020, she looks forward to being a League member as we celebrate the centennial of the 19th Amendment guaranteeing American women the right to vote. (Find out more about the Women's Vote Centennial Initiative at nationalwomansparty.org) Just as our board has expressed on numerous occasions, Lydia would also like to see "...a greater connection between the communities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville." Perhaps we can work together on increasing our League membership in Watsonville?

Lydia has retired from teaching 3rd and 4th grades at Gateway School, but still maintains a caring contact with this community by substitute teaching. In the 1970's, she owned Courtyard Fabrics behind Bookshop Santa Cruz, where it was located before the 1989 earthquake. I remember buying many lovely fabrics from this store.

Lydia has lived in the Pleasure Point area on the same street for over 40 years where her son, now 36, grew up. She walks Glace, her "sweet and gentle yellow Lab", along East Cliff Drive and Jade Street. Lydia says, "I am a person who is never bored," and her many interests attest to that: reading, hiking, sketching, embroidering, knitting, spending time in the eastern Sierras, and swimming at Capitola Fitness 2-3 times a week. She plans to add art lessons and Pilates classes to the list.

Her community concerns are maintaining safe neighborhoods where multi-age facilities bring people together. "I love seeing elders and young children interact and learn from each other" Lydia says, "I would like to be sure our young students, especially middle and high school age, understand the importance of being involved in our democratic process and feel they have a way to be heard. I believe in sustainable living and the power of farmers' markets."

We are very happy to welcome Lydia to our League, and I hope her energy is contagious. Hopefully, some of her ideas and concerns can advance in our county.

—Peggy Marketello, Membership Chair



President's Message



Now is the time for continuing your support for the League of Women Voters, if possible coming to our programs, and encouraging friends to join us in the efforts for reform. In these dangerous times, we need to meditate and enjoy life, but also continue working on our goal of fighting voter suppression, being done with such measures as voter

I.D.s. and intimidation. I recommend supporting such reforms as shortening the endless and wearing primary for President and disclosure of funding sources and other campaign finance reform. The antidote to depression and anger is working for constructive change, with the League of Women Voters being a leader in this fight. All of our positions for action are based on grassroots member involvement in studies, at which our members serve as resource people, discussion leaders, and recorders. You can check out our national positions at lwv.org.

On Friday December 9, we will be doing a mini-study of transportation funding sources and making a decision on updating our local transportation position. League member, Karena Pushnik, will serve as a resource person, and Jan Karwin will hand out some background material and serve as discussion leader for our consensus. (For details on this program, see page 1). Jan Karwin has taken up chairing this mini-study while the original chair, Jan Beautz, is recovering from surgery.

I want to thank Voter Service Co-Chairs Dottie Fry and Sue Becker, as well as Sandy Warren, for an extraordinary effort in doing numerous presentations on the 17 state ballot propositions. We are all grateful this election is over!

—Barbara Lewis, President LWVSCC

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.

League of Women Voters
of Santa Cruz County
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Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Send your check payable to League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County or LWVSCC with this form to LWVSCC, Box 1745, Capitola, CA 95010-1745.

____ \$65 Individual annual membership
____ \$100.00 Two members in a household
____ \$30.00 Student membership
____ Contribution \$ _____

Checks made out to LWVSCC are not tax deductible.

To make a tax-deductible donation, write a separate check to LWV Education Fund.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone: _____

Email _____

Sea Level Rise Study Committee

Global sea level has been rising at an unprecedented rate and will continue to rise for decades to come; the only uncertainty is how much and how fast. How will our community respond to the resulting flooding, shoreline erosion, storm hazards, infrastructure damage, and property loss? Will we gracefully retreat, or will it be an unruly rout?

LWVSCC will consider the effects of climate change and adapting to sea level rise and determine which of our positions may need to be updated or revised to reflect this changing reality.

The committee to prepare consensus materials will be meeting in December. To participate, contact committee chair Pam Newbury at pknewbury@earthlink.net or 831-423-6904.

LWVC-Supported Laws Enacted

Things have been moving along in Sacramento this fall. Several bills supported by the League have been passed into law. Here's an overview of what we've accomplished.

Money in Politics

SB (Senate Bill) 1107 removes the ban on public financing of campaigns and helps level the playing field for candidates.

SB 1349 modernizes the state's online database of campaign finance and lobbying information.

Climate Change

SB 32 and AB (Assembly Bill) 197 reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect disadvantaged communities and those most affected by this pollution.

Voting Rights and Redistricting

AB 2466 makes it less likely for Californians to be unfairly denied their voting rights after a criminal conviction.

SB 450 makes voting more accessible with vote-by-mail ballots, early voting, and vote centers, starting in 14 counties in 2018.

AB 958 establishes a Citizens Redistricting Commission for Los Angeles County, and SB 1108 allows all other California cities and counties to have these commissions too.

AB 350, AB 2220, and AB 2389 promote better representation and protect voting rights when local governments change to district-based elections.

AB 2010 helps local candidates reach voters with more affordable, online options for displaying their statements in official election materials.

PreK-12 Education and Juvenile Justice

AB 1014 and SB 527 reduce truancy and serve students at risk of dropping out of school, as required by Proposition 47.

Immigration

AB 2792 protects the rights of immigrants in local custody.

Natural Resources and the Environment

SB 122 supports the public's voice in land-use decisions by streamlining the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process.

SB 7 promotes conservation by requiring individual water meters in new multifamily housing.

SB 1262 protects our long-term water supply by preventing the overuse of groundwater in new developments.

AB 2480 puts funding of watershed restoration projects on an equal basis with other water infrastructure.

These wins aren't possible without your support! Thank you to everyone who responded to LWVC action alerts and made your voices heard in Sacramento. For more information about all the bills we've been working on, check out our Bill Status Report at lwvc.org/take-action/legislation.