



# Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

January 2017

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## State Program Planning Meeting

*Tuesday*  
*January 31, 2017*  
*1-3 p.m.*

*Home of Sandy Warren | 150 Scenic Street | Santa Cruz*

## Calendar

Tuesday

January 10, 2017

10 a.m.-Noon

LWVSCC Board Meeting

Santa Cruz County Bank

720 Front Street, Santa Cruz 95060

Thursday

January 19, 2017

7-8:30 p.m. (Doors open at 6 p.m.)

Perils in Paradise

Garry Griggs

\$10 to \$30

(See article on page 5 for details)

Saturday

January 21, 2017

10 a.m.-Noon

Pro-choice Brunch

United Methodist Church

250 California Street, Santa Cruz

Sliding scale donations; see article on page

4 for RSVP info

Tuesday

January 31, 2017

1-3 p.m.

State Program Planning

Home of Sandy Warren

150 Scenic Street, Santa Cruz

Thursday

March 2, 2017

1-3 p.m.

Local Program Planning

Home of Sandy Warren

150 Scenic Street, Santa Cruz

On Tuesday, January 31, LWVSCC members will meet to discuss what policy and positions the League should work on at the state level for 2017-19. In the League, state program planning is the process by which we jointly decide where and how we will focus our resources—member time, money, reputation—over the next two years. Where will the League have the most impact? What will help build the League, and how can we engage our community? We invite your participation as we address these crucial questions.

The League is a truly grassroots organization that sets its agenda through the program planning process, starting with input from its members. As members, this is our chance to help choose what we want California's and the League's future to be. What state-level issues, legislative activity, and advocacy topics concern us here in Santa Cruz County? Was there an issue on the ballot this year on which you wished the League had been able to take a stand—so that we should have a new or updated study?

The program planning process culminates in the delegates' adoption of the statewide program at our 2017 convention, June 2-4, in Sacramento (find out more on the Convention blog at <https://lwvc.wordpress.com/>).

If you would like to propose an issue or update, we recommend coming prepared; read more about the planning process at [lwvc.org](http://lwvc.org). This is your opportunity to make your voice heard. Join us!

## LWV President Speaks Out About Voter Suppression

Chris Carson, president of The League of Women Voters of the United States, made some striking observations on voter suppression and how it can impact elections in a LWVUS press release written by Sarah Courtney in November, 2016. The following is a summary of her key points. (Read the full article at [lwv.org](http://lwv.org).)

This year, and for several years, there has been a concerted effort in many states to stop some voters from voting, or to make it harder for them to participate. Since the Supreme Court rolled back key provisions of the Voting Rights Act in 2013, elected officials have purged existing voters from the rolls, made cuts to early voting, reduced polling places, put in place strict voter photo ID laws and levied onerous voter registration restrictions.

It is clear that this kind of voter suppression could impact the outcome of elections. Tight margins in some key elections shows that suppression may play a role. In Wisconsin, President-elect Trump beat Secretary Clinton by roughly 27,000 votes, however according to a federal court, 300,000 registered voters lacked the proper photo ID. We are not talking about vigilante voter intimidation, but official, legal voter suppression by state legislatures and election officials.

There were 13 states with new voting restrictions in effect in the 2016 election. The League worked to make sure voters impacted by new laws were aware of these restrictions. In Ohio, the League made thousands of phone calls to inform voters about the state's purge. In Virginia, the League conducted outreach so voters knew about the new ID law. In Kansas, the League worked to register voters and provide them information after the Secretary of State of Kansas, Kris Kobach, pushed laws to keep eligible citizens from voting. Across the country, League members volunteered as non-partisan poll observers.

Every eligible citizen should vote and the election system should help them participate rather than standing in the way. The League of Women Voters will continue to expand participation in the election process and work to give a choice to all Americans. The League is gearing up to take a stand in statehouses and courtrooms nationwide to ensure no voters are left behind.

What can you do to support voting rights? Check out the LWVUS blog post titled 10 Ways You Can Help Defend Our Democracy at [lwv.org/blog](http://lwv.org/blog). Click on the link there to sign the [LWV petition to stop voter suppression](#).

As Chris Carson has said, "The challenges are many, but that has never stopped us before. Let's get to work!"

—Dottie Fry, Voter Service Co-Chair

## President's Message



Happy New Year to you as we look forward to another challenging year for our League of Women Voters. If at all possible, I encourage you to come to this month's State Program Planning meeting on Tuesday January 31 from 1-3 p.m. at the home of Sandy and John Warren in Santa Cruz. More detail on this program appears on page

one in this issue of the VOTER. Since this is a grassroots organization, we will be helping decide what direction our state League will take this coming year before the state convention in Sacramento June 2-4. I will be submitting the results from our January planning meeting online, pending board approval in February, on behalf of our Santa Cruz County League of Women Voters.

Thank you to Jan Karwin and Karena Pushnik for all their efforts in making the December 9 transportation mini-study meeting so successful. I also want to thank Jan Beautz for suggesting and securing the room at the International House of Pancakes, which worked very well for this brunch program. Best wishes to Jan B. as she recovers from surgery.

Thank you to Pam and Ken Newbury for their generous donation via a charitable trust to our LWV Education Fund. We are also grateful to the late Carol and Jim Toney for their generous donation, also made through a charitable trust to the Education Fund, and to their son, Mark, who helped direct these funds to the Santa Cruz County League for future use, in accordance with his parent's wishes. Carol and Jim were longtime members of our local League, and Carol also served as president of the LWV of Oakland, as well as on the LWV of California board of directors.

Planning is underway for some important and stimulating programs for winter and spring of 2017 to be sponsored by our League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County. Look for details to appear in the future in the VOTER and on our website, [lwvsc.org](http://lwvsc.org).

—Barbara Lewis, President LWVSCC

## Consensus Meeting on Mini-Study to Amend Local League Transportation Position

At our local League’s annual meeting last June, members adopted a mini-study to consider amending our local Transportation Position, initially adopted in 1986. Item six of our local Transportation Position specifically stated that our League would “support a local tax on gasoline for road improvements.” League members felt that limiting our support to a gasoline tax was too restrictive and precluded our ability to consider other funding sources. For example, county Measure D on the November 2016 ballot proposed a 30-year bond measure funded by a county-wide half-cent retail sales tax, and although it is unknown whether our local League would have supported Measure D, our existing position precluded our even considering taking a position on the ballot measure. Instead, our League remained neutral on the measure; instead, we sponsored an educational voter service forum on Measure D with community representatives from both sides of the issue. A [video of this forum](#) is posted on our website at [lwvsc.org/videos](http://lwvsc.org/videos).

A consensus meeting to consider amending our local Transportation Position was held on December 9, 2016. All League members were encouraged to attend. The consensus question presented to members was as follows:

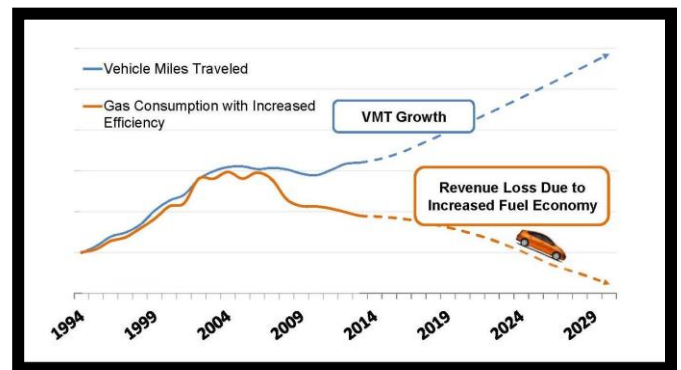
Should our local League continue to restrict our support to only a local gasoline tax as a local source of revenue to fund local transportation needs, or should we eliminate reference [in our local position] to a specific funding source and use the criteria in our state League’s vertical positions on transportation as well as state and local finances to evaluate local transportation funding proposals?

The consensus question along with copies of our state and local transportation positions were distributed to League members through the internet as well as at the consensus meeting. League member Karena Pushnik, who has been on staff with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC) for over 26 years, served as our resource person on this topic at the meeting. She presented the facts and figures of transportation funding, emphasizing the complexity and challenges of meeting local transportation needs.

Pushnik explained that the SCCRTC identifies transportation needs and tries to anticipate future funding based on past experience. The agency then makes first- and second-priority lists based on a sustainability evaluation and anticipated funding. With the passage of Measure D, the SCCRTC can implement priority

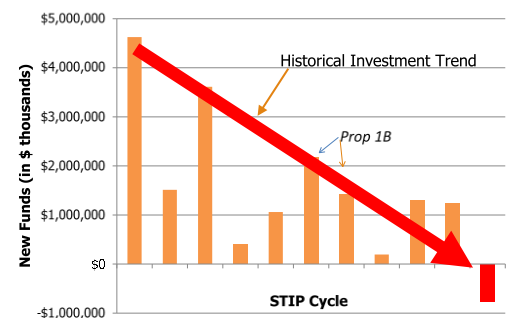
transportation projects with anticipated new revenues of about \$17 million dollars per year over the next 30 years.

Historically, about 90% of transportation funding has come from gasoline and diesel excise taxes. Other sources of funding include fares and fees, such as parking, DMV, and toll roads. Seventy-five percent of most existing transportation funds are dedicated for specific purposes. Only 25% of funding is available for flexible, discretionary uses. The SCCRTC estimates that from 2014-2035, we will need \$5.7 billion to cover all of our county transportation issues; only \$2.8 billion will be available. The current backlog of road maintenance in Santa Cruz County is over \$250 million.



*Fuel taxes have not kept up with miles driven.\**

State and federal funding is increasingly unreliable. The government is getting less in fuel taxes due to increased fuel efficiency of cars and trucks. Fuel tax rates have not kept pace with inflation. And the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) fell behind in funding as a result of the state diverting fuel tax revenues to its general fund to cover short falls during the “Great Recession”. Local governments have increasingly turned to local revenue sources to fund their transportation needs; such “self-help counties” may have a better chance when competing for state and federal matching grants.



*New State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) funds (per cycle statewide) from 1998 to August 2016.\**

Pushnik described potential local transportation funding sources, such as:

- Vehicle registration fee—takes 2/3 vote to pass. A \$10 annual fee would raise about \$2 million/year. This might work better at the state level.
- Gasoline tax—a quarter-cent sales tax would equal an increase of five cents per gallon, half-cent sales tax would equal an increase of ten cents per gallon. Polls show that people would not support this fee.
- Parcel tax on real property—usually reserved for education funding.
- Transient occupancy tax (TOT)—usually utilized by the geographic regions that absorb the extra visitors.
- Increased fines and fees (parking tickets)—used by the locality, not for regional uses.
- Regional traffic impact/developer fees—usually used for crosswalks, stoplights, stop signs necessitated by the development. There is little undeveloped land in the county.
- Increase transit fares—regressive tax. One-third of population doesn't drive due to age, disability, or cost.
- City-by-city sales tax—local jurisdiction. To pass, needs 2/3 vote for specified uses, 50% +1 for unspecified uses. City of Santa Cruz passed Measure H for local uses.
- Toll roads—require legislation to construct.
- Payroll taxes—not popular due to lack of connection to transportation.
- Public-private partnerships, such as, toll roads that benefit private investors or car pools that benefit specific companies or cities.

Potential state or federal revenue sources:

- Statewide bonds—such as Proposition 1B in 2006 that funded the Soquel/Morrissey project. Projects must be shovel-ready to access funds.
- Road user charges based on miles driven instead of a gas tax ([www.californiaroadchargepilot.com](http://www.californiaroadchargepilot.com)).
- Truck weight fees—stop diverting current fees to the state general fund.
- Other state sources—cap and trade, vehicle license and registration fees, increased gas tax, public-private partnerships.

After a question-and-answer period and discussion of the consensus question, members agreed that it was best to eliminate reference to a specific funding source in our local transportation position and use the criteria in our state League's vertical positions to evaluate local transportation funding proposals. This member consensus will be presented to our local League board to prepare an amended Transportation position.

—Jan Karwin, *Transportation Study Chair*

—Nancy Litvak, *Consensus Meeting Recorder*

—Karena Pushnik, *Senior Transportation Planner, SCCRTC*

*\*Images courtesy of Santa Cruz Regional Transportation Commission*

## Affirming Reproductive Rights

This January marks the 44th anniversary of the landmark Roe v. Wade decision. Almost half a century has passed since then, yet the struggle to ensure reproductive choice takes on greater urgency now than at any time in recent memory. More than ever: time to learn, engage and act!

The Reproductive Rights Network will hold its annual Pro-Choice Brunch on Saturday, January 21, featuring two dynamic leaders of grassroots activism for reproductive justice: Yamani Hernandez of the National Network of Abortion Funds, and Samara Azam-Yu of ACCESS Women's Health Justice. They'll describe their organizations' work to promote practical support for access to abortion services, the importance of reproductive justice values in public policy, and potentially far-reaching threats to essential health care from the incoming administration.

The event will be held at the United Methodist Church, 250 California Street, Santa Cruz, starting at 10 a.m.; a donation is requested (sliding scale from \$10 to \$25; free for students). Register in advance at [rnnannual2017brunch.eventbrite.com](http://rnnannual2017brunch.eventbrite.com). More info at (831) 423-2356 or [rrnsc@gmail.com](mailto:rrnsc@gmail.com). Find them on Facebook: Reproductive-Rights-Network-of-Santa-Cruz-County

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## Welcome, New Members!

LWVSCC welcomes several new members who joined this fall. Look for information about them in future issues of the VOTER. We look forward to the new energy and enthusiasm they will bring to our League!

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

## Perils in Paradise

On January 19, UCSC professor Gary Griggs will speak about how geology and natural disasters have shaped our county and the role climate change plays in shaping the land we live on. For League members, attending this event will be excellent preparation for our climate change/sea level study (see below).

The geological processes and climate that produced the landscape that has drawn people to Santa Cruz for decades has also wreaked havoc on a regular basis, whether floods, earthquakes, landslides or coastal storms. Paradise here comes with a price, and climate change may be raising the ante a bit more. What does our past tell us about the future, and is there any safe place to live in paradise?

Presented by the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History on Thursday, January 19 at the Rio Theatre, 1205 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz, the talk, titled *Perils in Paradise*, will be from 7 to 8:30 p.m. (doors open at 6 p.m.). Tickets can be purchased online at <http://www.santacruzmuseum.org/public-programs/special-events/>. Museum members: \$10; general admission: \$15; Gold Circle: \$30.

## Sea Level Rise Study

In 1978, Philip K. Dick said, "Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away." In spite of those who don't believe in it, climate change and the accompanying rise in sea level don't seem to be going away any time soon, and, in fact, seem to be accelerating faster than predicted. Sea level rise is our reality, and preparation is key to how well our community will cope with the ensuing problems.

LWVSCC will consider the effects of climate change and adapting to sea level rise to determine which of our positions may need to be updated or revised to reflect our new reality. To participate in this study, contact committee chair Pam Newbury at [pknewbury@earthlink.net](mailto:pknewbury@earthlink.net) or 831-423-6904.

## Engage with LWVSCC

League members can learn more about how our League operates on our members-only web page. You'll find minutes from our monthly board meetings and annual meetings, treasurer's reports, policies, and more. The confidential URL for the members-only web page can be found at the bottom of your roster of local League members. To receive a copy of the roster, members may send a request to [league@lwvsc.org](mailto:league@lwvsc.org).