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www.lwvfresno.org



Monday, April 8
Regular Board Meeting
Stone Soup, 4 p.m.

Saturday April 20
Annual Meeting
See page 1

Monday, May 13
Regular Board Meeting
Stone Soup, 4 p.m.



March 31



April 22-30

THE FRESNO VOTER

and Call

TO THE 84TH ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, April 20

10 a.m. Business Meeting

11 a.m. Featured Speaker

Dr. Lisa Bryant

Political Science Chair, Fresno State

11:45 a.m. Luncheon



- ◆ Dr. Bryant's research in election administration and voter behavior includes studies on voter confidence, voter ID, and how election reforms influence turnout. She also studies how voter mobilization efforts impact registration and turnout.
- ◆ Her most recent projects include a national survey of local election officials, a study on how to increase transparency and public understanding of audits, a multi-state survey on how ballot tracking impacts voter confidence, and numerous studies on voting center implementation and turnout.



LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS REQUIRED BY APRIL 12

Please send your check for \$25 per, made out to LWVF, to Treasurer, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710.

If you prefer you may pay through Paypal or by credit card on our website at lwvfresno.org. Scroll to the information about the annual meeting and click the "Read more" link. There you will get more information about the event and a yellow "add to cart" button (not the big red "Donate button") to get to the order and payment form.

AGENDA FOR ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

- ◆ Welcome; Call to Order (quorum equals 10% or 16)
- ◆ Rules of the Day
- ◆ Appointment of Reading Committee
- ◆ Membership Report
- ◆ Approval of Budget
- ◆ Approval of By-law Amendments
- ◆ Portfolio Remarks
- ◆ Election of Officers, Directors, Nominating Committee
- ◆ Ratification of State and Local Priorities
- ◆ Instructions to State LWV Convention

Honoring our Past Presidents

Linda Mack, Lynne Rodriguez, Nancy Richardson,
Mary Savala, Joan Lipton, Jacquie Canfield, Ann
Kaufher, Francine Farber, Nyla Zender
Marianne Kast

Honoring our Life Members (1974 and earlier)

Hanna Krebs, Joan Lipton, Linda Mack, Lynn Rodriguez,
Mary Savala, Bernice Stone, Margaret Sharp



Parliamentarian: Amy Schmidt

- ◆ Debate shall be limited to two minutes for each speaker.
- ◆ No speaker shall speak twice until all who wish to speak have had the opportunity to do so.
- ◆ The speakers should address remarks to the Chair and should limit remarks to the question.
- ◆ The Chair may delegate another member to answer.
- ◆ Only members in good standing (dues paid to date) may vote.
- ◆ Motions to consider non-recommended program items may be entertained only if they have fulfilled the bylaw requiring Board approval two months prior to the Annual Meeting.



March 2024

Meetings: The March 28 membership meeting will feature speakers from the Youth Leadership Institute. The April 8 meeting was scheduled tentatively and we will decide whether that is needed prior to our Annual Meeting. The latter is set regarding place and caterer.

Membership: Members have been sent email renewal notices with a QR code and a number have already responded. Letters are also being mailed to membership for renewals.

Voter: Renewal notices for Voter ads have been sent to current advertisers. Directors and members are asked to solicit advertising from personal and professional sources. The cost is \$100 per year, including both print and electronic versions.

Mural update: we looked at one possible sketch from muralist Portis. His fee is high and is not covered by the money remaining in our Centennial Fund. However, it was suggested that we might apply for a Measure P arts grant to cover the difference.

By-laws: The board approved a number of simple by-law changes before sending them to the membership at our Annual Meeting, where the members will vote on the changes. More complicated changes will be coming in the near future.

General Plan: We voted to approve participating in a lawsuit against the County regarding the inadequacies of the General Plan. Our attorneys are still investigating the possibilities so we don't know whether there will actually be litigation.

Earth Day: The board voted to donate \$250 toward the Earth Day celebration at Fresno City College on April 13. This will entitle us to a booth/table and publicity. We will need volunteers to staff the event.

The Voter is a monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Fresno

Mailing address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710

Volume 65 No. 4 Editor: Francine M. Farber

LWVF IS A 501 C3 non-profit organization and all donations, including dues, are tax deductible. Donations are always accepted for the RBG Scholarship Fund at San Joaquin College of Law, the League's general fund, and any other purpose. Your estate planning is encouraged to consider LWVF. Please make out checks to LWVF and send to Treasurer, LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno

Housing

by Marianne Kast



The daily news is filled with stories of unaffordable housing, both for homebuyers and renters. That is true across the country, not just in traditionally high price areas like San Francisco and New York. This lack of affordability directly impacts where people choose to live and work, and exacerbates nagging social problems like homelessness and worsening child wellbeing.

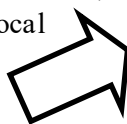
Recognizing that there is no singular solution to housing affordability, the David Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah annually solicits nominations for the “Ivory Prize” in three focus areas: Finance, construction, and policy. The award recognizes scalable solutions to housing affordability and the prize includes \$300,000 to allow innovators to advance their projects.

More than 200 nominations for this year’s prize were suggested; 25 are finalists, with the winner to be announced next month. Here are a few of the nominees:

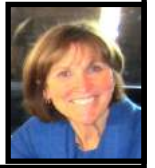
Roam is a home-buying platform which allows buyers to purchase homes with a low-interest rate, assumable mortgage loan included. *Roam* specifically deals with FHA and VA loans, all below 5%, somewhat lower than current-rate market mortgages. When a buyer signs up, *Roam* provides listings with assumable loans, coordinates with the seller’s current mortgage company and assists the buyer with securing a new mortgage (if needed) to cover the homeowner’s equity in the home. *Roam* charges 1% for its services.

Capsule provides custom design, consulting, equipment specification, cabinet makers, plumbers, electricians, and finish carpenters. By consolidating skilled trades within the manufacturing process, *Capsule* eliminates the need for builders to hire individual vendors to complete their projects, simplifying the construction process, assuring uniformity, quality, on-time completion, and lower costs.

Placemate helps local employees find housing in tourism-based communities. Using cash incentives for property owners who convert their properties into long-term rentals, *Placemate* programs are overseen and funded by local



Co-President’s Message



This message must begin with a celebration of our League’s longest serving president, Francine Farber. She is stepping down from the presidency as of our annual meeting this month, but certainly not from the board or as the very long-term editor of our Voter. Francine is this League’s longest serving president by far. She set that record when she served from 2007-2013; and, with only a little arm-twisting, thankfully served again with me for these last two years.

Her presence will be all the more important as we continue to be engaged in challenging projects: the pursuit of a renewed effort to pass an improved Measure C transportation sales tax; a continuing effort to improve our County’s approach to planning through its General Plan; attention to the micro-transit activities of the Fresno County Rural Transit Authority (we have donated funds to defer some of the costs borne by riders); the potential of a revisited Friant Ranch development (we assumed this was old business when we stymied that residential development at the California Supreme Court); the funding and implementation of a mural celebrating voting rights; and, of course, a momentous election coming in November.

This list is necessarily incomplete. Partnerships with other organizations are increasingly important, as is the active participation of our board and members. We encourage you to join us at our Annual Meeting on April 20, our monthly member meetings, and to consider volunteering to assist with any of our committees.

Kay

governments or non-profits. The newly-available units go only to local employees and their families.

The Ivory Prize website offers 150 of the most promising solutions to housing affordability, ideas that have been suggested since the prize was developed in 2018. Check it out at www.ivoryinnovations.org

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Education

by Kay Bertken



The district has held meetings that collected public input on what should be the qualifications of a new superintendent. Results from those meetings and an online survey will be reported in a board meeting early this month.

The next phase of the process will be interviews of internal candidates. There has been some concern around whether the process will be limited to internal candidates or will involve a state-wide or nation-wide search. Misty Her will serve as interim superintendent until a new person is hired.

The board held a special workshop on attendance in March. Drops in student attendance levels have been noted across the country beginning with the pandemic. Average daily attendance in Fresno Unified was 94.5% in 2019. It dropped to a low of 84.5% in 2021-22 and climbed back to 91.3% last year, a level still lower than pre-pandemic levels. Chronic absence (missing 10 or more days of school) accounted for 17% of students. It reached a high of 50.3% in 2021-2022 but has declined to 30.4% since then. The highest absence rate is in kindergarten and first grade. Absence has a big impact on student learning and on district revenues.

Chronic absenteeism is even higher than the district average for African American students, foster youth, homeless students, and students with disabilities. A multidisciplinary team is working to improve attendance. They are working on establishing a coordinated and tiered approach to attendance procedures with the goal of reducing chronic absences overall to pre-pandemic levels. Specific improvement goals have been also set for student subgroups.

At two of its March meetings, the board heard the first of the scheduled 2024-2025 budget presentations. The district is anticipating a revenue cut of about \$37 million dollars for next year. The deficit is a product of lower state revenues that will be passed along to the districts plus the district's own declining enrollments and lower Average Daily Attendance (ADA) reimbursements.

(continued on page 8)

Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



The Behavioral Health Board held a Public Hearing last month on the Mental Health Services Act Annual Update for 2024-2025. The Department of Behavioral Health was cautious in its planning before knowing the impact of Proposition 1. No new programs were proposed and some existing programs were "sunsetting" (ended).

Due to the COVID pandemic some Innovation programs could not be successfully begun, so were dropped; as a result \$1,200,000 was reverted to the state. Budgets for Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs are expected to take the greatest hit from Proposition 1. Full Service Partnership programs are being transitioned to Continuums of Care programs so that clients may be transferred more easily between programs to meet their individual needed level of care. The Board voted to support the Annual Update; it will now go forward to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, and then to the State. Since the passage of Proposition 1, the Department will need to adjust future programs to those new requirements before the implementation date of January 2026.

The Substance Use Disorders Committee heard from WestCare about its residential treatment services. WestCare serves up to 198 men and women and their children under 12 years of age. Throughout the day residents are expected to attend groups, such as substance use, mental health, relapse prevention, anger management, parenting instruction, as well as employment readiness and vocational skills. Residents stay from 30-180 days depending on personal needs. Approximately 75% of clients complete the program. The facility has a Learning Center for preschool children; school-age children are transported to their home schools each day. WestCare operates Recovery Residences where individuals may receive aftercare; however, there are not nearly enough sober living beds for aftercare in Fresno County.

You are invited to attend our monthly Board meetings on the third Wednesday, 3:30-5:30 pm, at the Health and Wellness Center, 1925 E. Dakota, Fresno, and any of the subcommittees that meet at Blue Sky Wellness Center at times that can be found on the Board's web site.

evansalca@comcast.net

Many thanks to our volunteer columnists. Their dedication to keeping you informed throughout the year is a great service to the League.



Radley Reep



Lenore Yousef



Diane Merrill



Carolyn Evans



Faye Nennig



Dr. Richard Bertken



Nancy Richardson



Andrea Farber De Zubiria



Terri Figgs

Recommended National and Local Programs for 2024-25

LWVUS requested that we maintain the following priorities for the national league:

Making Democracy Work, with a focus on voting rights, improving election campaign finance, redistricting, and election of president and vice-president by popular vote-eliminating the Electoral College.

We agreed to add climate change to our national agenda priority as requested by the Palo Alto league.

Our members voted to prioritize these local issues:

- ◆ Climate change, led by Nancy Richardson
- ◆ Voter registration and education, led by Sue Goldman and Robin Chiero
- ◆ Housing, led by Marianne Kast
- ◆ Transportation, led by Kay Bertken

Members are encouraged to contact the priority leaders to support these efforts.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 2024-2025

Committee: Andrea Farber De Zubiria, Janice Maroot, Diane Merrill, Marie Slater, Chair

Co-Presidents: Kay Bertken, Robin Chiero **

Treasurer: Maureen Hayes **

Secretary: Pat Campbell *

Voter Services: Vice President, Sue Goldman **

Director, Robin Chiero **

Program Planning: Marianne Kast. **Marie Slater *

Membership: Diana Durham *

Education : Kay Bertken **

Voter Editor Francine Farber **

At Large: Cathy Caples *

At Large: Dolores O'Neal *

At Large: Faye Nennig **

Student Unit: Naomi Bick *

- ◆ Nominating Committee for 2024-2025
To be announced

At Large members are available

for assignments as needed

* one year left on current term

**beginning two year term



Please join us at a Board meeting and find out more about what the League does for you

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PROPOSED LEAGUE OF VOTERS OF FRESNO BY-LAW AMENDMENTS FOR APRIL 2024

Proposal #1 - Article II and III - Modify bylaws to conform with LWVUS and LWVC. Article II Section 2 – Add the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy

Section 2. Policies.

(a) **Political Policy.** The LWVF shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

(b) **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy.** The League is fully committed to ensure compliance—in

principal and in practice—with the LWVUS' Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy.

Article III Section 2 – Defining Membership types

Section 2. Types of Membership. **The membership of the League shall be composed of voting members and associate members.**

a. Voting Members. Persons at least 16 years of age who join the League shall be voting members of local League; *s, state Leagues, and of the LWVUS; (1) those who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other local League; (2) those who reside outside of any local League may join a local League or shall be state members-at-large; (13) Those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be life members excused from the payment of dues. (2) Those who are students are individuals enrolled either as full or part time with an accredited institution.*

b. Associate Members. All other persons who join the League shall be associate members.

Proposal #2 –Article IV Section I - Correct reference in Article IV – should be Article V.

Section 1. Number of Officers and Directors. The authorized number of directors shall not be more than 15 including the officers named in Article IV, Section 1.

Proposal #3 –Article IV Section 4. Remove qualifications that have been defined in the membership section and/or violate League membership requirements.

Section 4. Qualifications. All directors must be voting members of the LWVF, *citizens of the United States, and over the age of 16.*

Proposal #4 – Article V Section 5. Add language noting the Treasurer's responsibilities to comply with federal, state and local filings.

Section 5. Treasurer. The Treasurer is the chief financial officer of the corporation and shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the corporation. The books of account shall at all times be open to inspection by any director. The Treasurer shall deposit all moneys and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the corporation with such depositaries as may be designated by the Board. The Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the Corporation as may be ordered by the Board, shall render to the President and the directors, whenever they request it, an account of all transactions as Treasurer and of the financial condition of the corporation, and shall have other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board. The Treasurer shall present statements to the Board at their regular meetings and an annual report to the Annual Meeting. **The treasurer shall be responsible for filing federal, state and local forms and payment of taxes and fees; as required by law.**

Proposal #5 – Article XIII. Add language allowing the local Board to approve any amendments to the by-laws that are required by law.

Section 1. These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at the Annual Meeting, provided that amendments were submitted to the membership in writing at least one month in advance of the meeting. The failure of any member to receive such notice shall not invalidate the amendments to the Bylaws.

Section 2. When required by law or by amendment of the LWVUS or the LWVC bylaws, these bylaws may be amended by the board of directors.

The Fresno County General Plan:

A Story of Hopefulness and Heartache

by Radley Reep

In October of 2000, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors adopted a General Plan with a new flagship Economic Development Element designed to eliminate chronic poverty throughout the county and generate County funding sufficient to protect the environment and provide adequate facilities and services for all county residents. In addition, the plan was purposefully structured to protect ag land and end urban sprawl.

To ensure achievement of the plan's lofty goals, the County incorporated into the plan dozens of planning tasks and over 300 measures to protect the environment. Plan adoption initiated an enormous work program requiring the hiring of a cadre of planners and the allocation of millions of dollars over the 20-year life of the plan. Plan adoption also established a suite of time frames to keep the County on task and created a set of safeguards to ensure that things would get done as planned.

2000 Plan transformative

The 2000 General Plan was, by anyone's measure, a forward thinking document with the potential to transform for the better the lives of county residents and the environment they work and play in.

But sadly, things did not go well. Within two or three years, interest in the plan began to wane, and by 2020 the plan was largely abandoned and on life support.

Adding to the problem was the County decision early on — in 2003 — to ignore state planning law by discontinuing the preparation of annual progress reports on plan implementation

League files complaint

A decade later, in 2013, the League pressed the County to comply with the reporting requirement by filing a complaint with the Fresno Grand Jury. As a consequence, the County resumed annual reporting, but subsequent reports were a resounding disappointment, being on the whole incomplete and misleading, this despite public demands for full disclosure concerning plan implementation and the degree to which the plan complied with state guidelines.

Little plan implementation

So how crippled did the plan become? In the summer of 2018, based on information provided by the County through its 2017 annual progress report, the League determined that the County could only demonstrate successful implementation of 33% of the plan's 121 programs — a failing grade by anyone's standards.

Importantly, the 2000 General Plan included a mandate that the County review the plan every five years, and so in 2005, with plan abandonment already well underway, the County initiated a relatively modest review of the plan for the purpose of bringing the General Plan into compliance with state law. That effort was entirely expected. What was not expected was that the review would take eighteen years to complete. During that

time, the County published and the public reviewed no less than nine draft revisions of the plan. Finally, on February 20, 2024, the Board of Supervisors came to a decision and adopted the ninth draft.

To the dismay of many people, what began in 2005 as a straightforward review of the 2000 General Plan slowly morphed into a complex plan update intended to guide planning and development through the year 2042. League members tried their best to understand what was happening, but around the time of the release of the first draft revision of the plan in 2010, the County put the brakes on public engagement.

No public hearings

In 2017, the League petitioned the County for a hearing before the Board of Supervisors to explain to a confused and weary public the scope and purpose of the pending revision. That request was rebuffed. Importantly, not once after 2010 did the Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors convene a public hearing for the specific purpose of providing county residents an opportunity to voice their concerns about changing conditions within the county and the need to modify General Plan goals, policies and programs accordingly.

In short, the form and content of the plan adopted February 20, 2024 was not the public's doing. Plan changes were made by County personnel and/or County electeds, and despite requests from the public for a written

(continued on page 9)

JANE WORSLEY

Jane Worsley, past president of our League from 1979-81, passed away on March 5 from the complications of Type I diabetes. A member since 1975, she would have qualified to be a Life member next year. She was a book lover and was active in library affairs as well as having many other interests. She had a vast collection of "Peanuts" memorabilia that she enjoyed sharing with family and friends.

RUDY SAVALA

Rudy Savala, husband of our past president and Life Member Mary Savala, passed away on March 1. Rudy had been a member since 1977. A retired attorney and supporter of the underdog, Rudy loved to engage in heated discussions about important social issues.

Voter Services

by Sue Goldman



As those of you who have volunteered know, Voter Services spent much of February and part of March staffing the phone bank at the Election's Office and opening ballots at the warehouse. The phonebank was staffed from February 7 through March 5 with 25 volunteers. The warehouse volunteers (30 of them) worked from February 12 through March 15 covering both the primary election and the special election.

The state League had opposed Proposition 1 (Bonds for Mental Health Treatment Facilities). However, it did pass by .2% of the vote. Our local league came out publicly against Fresno County Measures A and B. Measure A is

8

an amendment to the county's charter.

Education *(continued from page 4)*

Enrollments are down across the state. In Fresno Unified, 70,800 students were enrolled in in 2019-20, but are projected to be down to 66,500 in 2025-2026. A drop of 1,100 is anticipated from this year to next with an additional drop of 900 per year for the next few years.

The district will try to keep the cuts away from the classroom and will honor its contract with the FTA to reduce class sizes. Unspecified numbers of certificated jobs will be cut, and up to 75 teachers on special assignment will be sent back to classroom duties. Many currently unfilled positions will likely remain unfilled. Many proposed cuts were problematic for the trustees, especially those impacting programs that have targeted disadvantaged students.

Public comment at the most recent meeting reflected concerns about the budget cuts, particularly with respect to supports for ethnic studies implementation. Many teachers and students spoke of their concerns about a lack of support and training of teachers, site administrators, and counselors.

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LWVUS PRESIDENT

It is with profound sadness that the League of Women Voters US announced the passing of its esteemed president, Dr. Deborah Ann Turner, who passed away on January 28, from complications from a pulmonary embolism.

A fearless advocate for voting rights and women's rights, Dr. Turner devoted her life's work to impacting meaningful changes in the lives of voters across the nation. As the 20th president of the 103-year-old voting rights organization, Dr. Turner played a pivotal role in fighting for a more fair and representative union, while uplifting racial equity in the League's mission

Dr. Turner practiced gynecologic oncology for 35 years, working directly with patients and teaching students, and trained residents in university programs across the Midwest.

It states "elections for the District Attorney and Sheriff will take place during the gubernatorial election cycle instead of moving them to the presidential election cycle." This measure passed with 54.97% of the vote. Measure B was also an amendment to the county's charter. This would have given the county the "Authority to Change Geographic Feature and Place Names". This failed with opposition at 64.05%. The local League board also voted to oppose Measure E although we didn't make any public statements about it. This was the "Fresno State Improvement Zone Measure. The measure failed with opposition at 57.36%.

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General Plan *(continued from page 7)*

explanation of proposed changes, that information was not provided. Neither did the County provide a workable redlined copy of the draft plan so that residents could see the extent of the changes.

What were the changes?

So how profound were these changes? The plan approved by the County weakened ag land protection and the General Plan theme of urban-centered development, thereby opening the door to renewed urban sprawl. The County eliminated regional planning for the Friant-Millerton area and embraced the study of 10,000 acres of ag land for possible residential, commercial and industrial development. The County gutted sections of the plan calculated to improve employment opportunities, eliminated internal controls designed to ensure plan implementation, and without explanation removed from the plan over 300 mitigation measures designed to protect the environment.

What to do? Displeased with the planning process and the newly adopted General Plan, on March 21, 2024, the League and the Central Valley Partnership jointly filed suit against the County of Fresno and Board of Supervisors.

Adverse effects of climate change

The suit alleges County violation of several provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, including County failure to (1) provide an adequate project description, (2) identify and evaluate all significant adverse impacts, (3) adopt all feasi-

ble mitigation measures and (4) evaluate a reasonable array of feasible

project alternatives. The suit centers on the adverse effects of climate change, poor air quality and the pollution burden in disadvantaged unincorporated communities.

Mitigations not included

The suit also claims the County failed to adequately incorporate into the General Plan requirements by statute, namely, climate resiliency strategies (SB 379), policies and implementation strategies to improve air quality (AB 170), remediation of infrastructure deficiencies in unincorporated communities (SB 244), and reduction of disproportionate and unjust pollution burdens and unique health risks in low-income communities (SB 1000).

Should the League and the Central Valley Partnership prevail, the court will issue a peremptory writ of mandate ordering the County to invalidate and set aside the revised General Plan.

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CLIMATE RESOLUTION

(Reproduced from LWVUS web site)

Climate change and its effects threaten the physical, psychological, and economic well-being of our nation. It disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities, including youth, that have contributed the least to climate change-causing emissions.

The League of Women Voters believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and planet. LWV supports climate goals and policies consistent with the best available climate science to ensure a stable climate system for future generations.

In July of this year, Congress reintroduced vital legislation known as the *Children's Fundamental Rights and Climate Recovery Resolution*. This resolution recognizes the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on the health, economic opportunities, and fundamental rights of children in the US.

It also acknowledges the need for a national, just, comprehensive, and science-based climate recovery plan to meet necessary emissions reduction targets and stabilize the climate system. The League has endorsed this resolution, but we need your help in telling Congress that this crisis requires bold action now.

Do not let future generations inherit the climate crisis. Urge your Members of Congress to cosponsor the *Children's Fundamental Rights and Recovery Resolution* to address climate change and protect our youth's rights and future.

Climate Change

by Nancy Richardson



Last month members of the League's Climate Action Committee met with officials from the City of Fresno to learn about the City's implementation plan for SB 1383, a California law which requires that organic waste be separated from other trash and instead be placed in the cart with yard waste.

This waste will be turned into mulch for above-ground uses. It would no longer be buried in a landfill where it would emit large amounts of highly harmful methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

If you live in the City and have not already received written information from your trash hauling provider, you will soon. Certain other jurisdictions in the county have commenced making this change in their services.

To provide sustainable user fees and charges for services to support traditional services, as well as to support the environmentally advantageous processing of organic waste, a rate increase for City of Fresno residential users is necessary. There has been no rate increase since 2009. An independent study shows that the current rate structure is unsustainable and will be depleted in July of this year.

The Committee discussed the importance of City Councils routinely making *timely* adjustments to garbage rates to accommodate changes in costs and services. The League will communicate this to the City Council. The City of Fresno anticipates establishing a separate affordability program to help those in need.

In the green cart, you can place food, green material, landscaping and pruning waste, clean untreated wood, and food-soiled paper/cardboard. In the summer, placing the organic waste in your freezer until collection day seems like a good idea!

Residential customers will receive stickers for carts to display allowable items in each. For detailed information, go to fresno.gov/FOR-the-future, or call 559 621-1111.

Businesses and apartment buildings and residents who live in homes up to the size of a four-plex receive services from private waste haulers, not the City of Fresno. They, too, are required to separate organic waste and put it in the green cart with yard waste.

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Water News

by Diane Merrill




The League of Women Voters of California was one of 100 organizations that signed onto a letter last month that supports and highlights the many benefits of water conservation for California water users and the environment. The letter follows:

Investing in conservation is the most equitable, affordable, and reliable option for meeting California's water needs in this era of climate change. We support prioritizing conservation for the many benefits it provides.

- ◆ Conservation is less expensive than new water supply infrastructure, making water more affordable for Californians.
- ◆ Water efficiency projects support local jobs. To help reduce local costs, we can tap into federal funding available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Many water suppliers have already received funding to support efficiency, and strong regulations can spur more water suppliers to pursue that opportunity.
- ◆ Investments in conservation can be deployed much faster than new infrastructure.
- ◆ Conservation provides long-term benefits in dry and wet times alike.
- ◆ Outdoor investments in native landscaping provide crucial habitat for wildlife and make cities more resilient to climate extremes.
- ◆ Investments in conservation provide multiple benefits that help California build resilience, protection from flooding during extreme rain, reducing the heat island effect during extreme heat, and storm water capture to shore up local water supplies.
- ◆ Saving water saves energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

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Men and Women age 16 and above Making Democracy Work

MISSION: The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of interested individuals and influences public policy through voter education and advocacy on issues. The League does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.

DIVERSITY POLICY: There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWVF on the basis of race, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or socio-economic level.

What do you get when you join the League? All for one fee, you become a member of the Fresno, California and National Leagues and receive their newsletters. You may participate in League studies of issues; receive leadership training; hone your public speaking skills; become knowledgeable about local and state issues; learn more about government, natural resources and social policies as your time and interests dictate. You will also meet some interesting and friendly women and men who represent diverse backgrounds but find common ground in keeping abreast of current issues.

Yearly Dues Individual - \$70 ~ Family - \$100 (2 members, same address) ~ Student - Subsidized

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