



June 2023

### *President's Message*

It's been grand being President of LWVBC for the past two years, and I think it will be grander yet being Co-President for two more—especially since I will be sharing the job with Janet Rechtman, our current Social Policy Director. Janet brings years of experience working with nonprofits as well as an invigorating creative spirit that will be a great benefit to me and all League members. If you've attended the last two member meetings, you will have experienced her influence.

Janet and two other new members were elected to board positions at the **Annual Meeting on May 22**. Becky Cox-White, current member of the Social Policy Committee, will take over as Social Policy Director, and Carol Holzgrafe will be our Secretary. And Caroline Langen graciously agreed to be nominated from the floor to serve once again as Director of the Observer Corps. So, we are starting our new year on July 1 with nine board members, leaving us with lots of room to grow. *We still need Directors of Communications, Voter Registration, Assistant Voter Services, Countywide Liaison, and Government Committee.* If you are interested in learning more about these positions, please email me at [presidentlwvbutte@gmail.com](mailto:presidentlwvbutte@gmail.com).

Also at the Annual Meeting, the members present approved the 2023–2024 Budget and Program and revisions to the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation that will allow us to move forward on the path to becoming a 501(c)(3). Many thanks to everyone who attended and made this Annual Meeting a success, and in particular to our new Butte County Clerk-Recorder, Keaton Denlay, for speaking on short notice on the importance of spreading accurate information about elections. A mission for our League this election season!

**Thoughts on Convention:** Five LWVBC members attended the League of Women Voters of California convention in San Francisco from May 19 to May 21: me, Janet Rechtman, Debra Barger, Nicole Drummond, and Becky Cox-White. Most of this issue is devoted to our reflections about the experience and what we thought our members would like to know.

Sincerely,

*Satsie Veith*, President

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# Convention 2023

## Power and Possibility

Dear League Members,

As you may have heard, the League of Women Voters of California held their 69<sup>th</sup> Biennial Convention in San Francisco from May 19 to May 22. Five LWVBC members attended as voting delegates: Debra Barger, Nicole Drummond, Janet Rechtman, Satsie Veith, and Becky White. In addition to the Plenary Sessions, where the main business of the convention was conducted, they attended a variety of Workshops (outlining useful skills for League outreach) and Caucuses (opportunities to exchange information about an area of League-related interest).

Below are several brief articles by our members reflecting on the experience and what each of them learned and found worth sharing.

### LWVC Issues for Emphasis 2023–2025 Approved by Convention Delegates

- ★ **Making Democracy Work in California:** Voting Rights, Empowering the Electorate, Election Reform, Money in Politics, Redistricting, Civics Education
- ★ **Climate Change and Sustainability,** including an Emphasis on Water Resources
- ★ **Housing / Homelessness**
- ★ **Criminal Justice / Juvenile Justice Reform**

### Convention Afterthoughts 1

When I told my friend Anne from Atlanta about my involvement with the League of Women Voters, she asked, “Is that like the DAR?” I laughed then because that had been my original impression of the League as well: a bunch of older white ladies celebrating the past.

I have learned a whole lot in the couple of years since I joined, and that journey went into hyper drive when I attended the California League Convention last month.

Let’s start with the general session. There was a parliamentarian. Microphones for questions and comments from the audience. Clear and precise explanations of the issues at hand. So formal. So procedural. So slow. So plodding. I laughed. Feels like Congress. I wish!

Instead, I was reminded of how slowly, deliberately, sometimes tediously, democracy works. The drama of

24-hour news with its shaming and name-calling. The instantaneous call-and-response of the internet. Such instant gratification runs counter to the time-consuming, patience-requiring work of building consensus. Instead, the League invites all voices to hear all sides of an issue and make decisions based on information rather than partisan politics and electioneering. Yes, the League’s mission of empowering voters and defending democracy takes time, patience, and a commitment to openness that’s hard to come by these days. While the League’s work may feel funny at times, democracy is no joke.

I learned yet another lesson when I attended the workshop and caucuses, which are breakout groups about important issues. My league mentor Margaret Swick told me from the get-go, the League speaks with one voice on issues after careful deliberation and consensus building. These sessions were proof in point. The sessions I attended on Grass Roots Organizing, Immigration, and Criminal Justice were informative and energizing. I was surprised to learn that the League had statewide working groups on key



issues like these. For more information on these interest groups, visit this website:

<https://my.lwv.org/california/join-online-interest-group>

The third big lesson I learned just reinforced what I already knew: our Butte County delegation (Satsie Veith, Becky Cox-White, Nicole Drummond, and Debra Barger) is a great representation of the terrific people who make up the League of Women Voters here and throughout the state and nation.

No, friend Anne, the League is not the DAR, unless you mean Daringly Active Respecters of Democracy in the USA. Thank you, LWVBC members, for this opportunity to learn more about our work together.

—*Janet Rechtman*

## Convention Afterthoughts 2

I was pleased to attend the 2023 LWVC Convention in San Francisco. Meeting every other year (alternating with the National Convention), the LWVC state convention was totally in person for the first time since 2019.

During the opening credentials report, which confirms whether a sufficient number of Local Leagues are present for a quorum to conduct business, we learned there are 61 Local Leagues in California, a huge number of Local Leagues compared to any other state and a testament to our grassroots organization.

Since we were able to fill all four of our LWVBC voting delegate slots based on our membership numbers—above 100 members means we are considered a “medium-sized” League—I actually represented East Gabriel Valley when voting as a delegate on LWVC business. Since I have been serving as a LWVC Local League Coach for more than a year, I was especially pleased to meet, in person for the first time, the president of one of the Local Leagues I had been communicating with via email and Zoom.

I was wowed by Stephanie Doute, Executive Director for the state league, who spoke movingly about the value of trust and grace in our work.

The first general session panel consisted of a phenomenal group of activists who addressed the power of collaboration. One speaker was a California Assemblyperson who indicated he accepted no campaign funds from any corporations, nor any

correctional or law enforcement unions, since he advocates for voting rights for incarcerated individuals. Giving parolees a voice through their right to vote is an important change for making democracy work.

In another general session, Professor Cheryl Boudreau from UC Davis shared her research on what influences voters’ decision making. She provided an overview of information which citizens must opt to receive, second trust, and finally act, applying it effectively in decision making.

Making information more personally relevant and connected to the individual voter in some way increases its potential impact. Her research showed, while credibility is in the eye of the beholder, there is trust in one’s own party, trust in ethnic interest groups, and trust in the LWV. Uninformed citizens need help identifying groups’ interests and relating them to their own. She recommended that the League provide information that helps voters connect their interests to their choices in real time.

The Open Government workshop highlighted the challenges of League advocacy when good arguments can be made on both sides. With regard to proposed revisions to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (which addresses state level entities), keeping electronic public access to meetings allowed during the pandemic is desirable. However, the requirement to publish the address where members of state boards were participating remotely raised numerous concerns about personal addresses being in the public domain and the potential dampening effect of public members willingness to serve. The ability to “look people in the eye” for public testimony is also seen as an important component of legislative advocacy. Since revisions to the Brown Act are expected next following Bagley-Keene, LWVC’s legislative advocacy will be an essential component to open government discussions.

—*Debra Barger*

## Convention Afterthoughts 3

As the Executive Director of a nonprofit housing organization (Chico Housing Action Team) I joined the League because of its position on homelessness. I have always been on the consumer side of League information, and it was very timely for me to become a more active participant. I was honored to attend the 2023 LWVC Convention in San Francisco. As a relatively new member of the League of Women



Voters it was exciting to join the state convention and learn more about the League.

It is beautiful to watch and listen as the League adapts to include more diverse ages and generations. The workshops and speakers shared dense amounts of information on a variety of subjects, I was inspired and brought to tears on several occasions. Educating and advocating for democracy is beautiful and important work.

I was particularly inspired by the workshop session: Educate, Register, Participate! Engaging Young Voters! Youth Outreach Panel.

As the mother of two children, I have always felt a huge responsibility to educate them about democracy and voting. Even though I have used mail-in ballots for years, I typically take one or both children to drop it off at a polling station and discuss what voting means. I also have the opportunity to mentor many college students and always try to instill the importance of participating in our democracy. I wish the three Local Leagues had more time to discuss their various projects as they each had so much to offer. Educating our next generation about civics is imperative to a functioning democracy. The first group from Alameda created a computer game with civics lessons and shared a demonstration with the group. They also shared a flyer for educators who would like to implement this in their schools. I shared this flyer with my son's school (<https://playverifyit.org>).

The group from Marin County created a student Elections Ambassador Program which preregistered youth to vote and created youth meet-the-candidate events in order to interact with local government officials.

Solano County created a democracy matters group that participated in observer corps training and created a mock city council demonstration.

There was so much in each presentation—I encourage those who have access to look through the slides online. Hearing all the different versions of engaging youth in our democracy from online computer questions to hands on experiences gives me hope for our future.

—Nicole Drummond

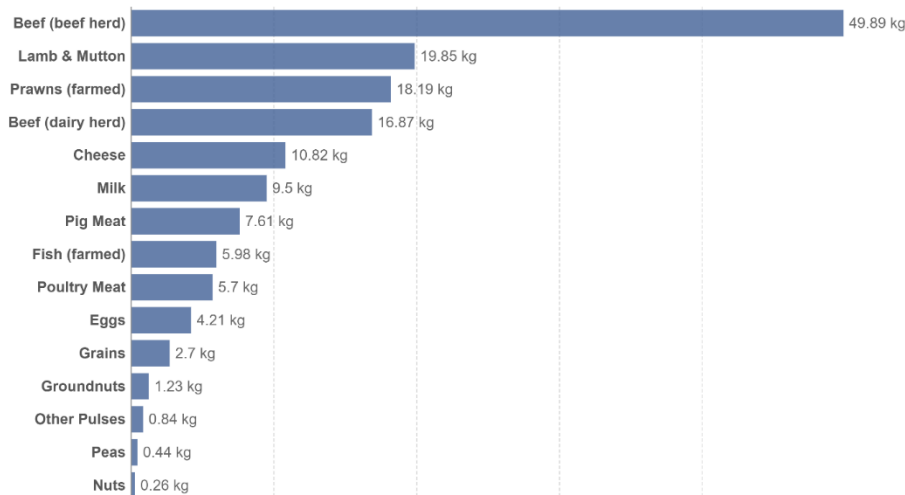
## Caucus: Climate Smart Agriculture

LWVC's recently adopted [Climate Smart Agriculture and Food Action Policy](#) lists seven action items Local Leagues can pursue, including these two:

- Promote education about the climate benefits of eating a healthy plant-forward diet.

### Greenhouse gas emissions per 100 grams of protein

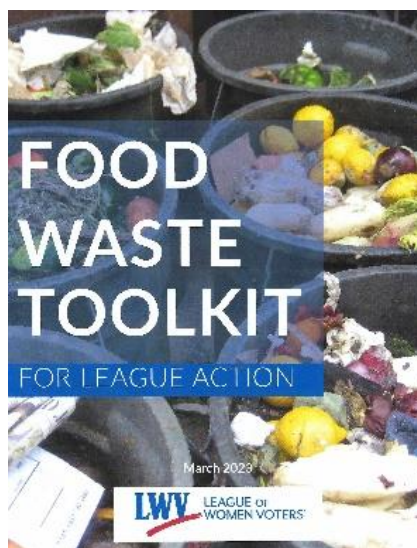
Emissions are measured in carbon dioxide-equivalents<sup>1</sup>.



Source: Joseph Poore and Thomas Nemecek (2018). Additional calculations by Our World in Data. [OurWorldInData.org/environmental-impacts-of-food](https://OurWorldInData.org/environmental-impacts-of-food) • CC BY

1. Carbon dioxide-equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>eq): Carbon dioxide is the most important greenhouse gas, but not the only one. To capture all greenhouse gas emissions, researchers express them in 'carbon dioxide-equivalents' (CO<sub>2</sub>eq). This takes all greenhouse gases into account, not just CO<sub>2</sub>. To express all greenhouse gases in carbon dioxide-equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>eq), each one is weighted by its global warming potential (GWP) value. GWP measures the amount of warming a gas creates compared to CO<sub>2</sub>. CO<sub>2</sub> is given a GWP value of one. If a gas had a GWP of 10 then one kilogram of that gas would generate ten times the warming effect as one kilogram of CO<sub>2</sub>. Carbon dioxide-equivalents are calculated for each gas by multiplying the mass of emissions of a specific greenhouse gas by its GWP factor. This warming can be stated over different timescales. To calculate CO<sub>2</sub>eq over 100 years, we'd multiply each gas by its GWP over a 100-year timescale (GWP100). Total greenhouse gas emissions – measured in CO<sub>2</sub>eq – are then calculated by summing each gas' CO<sub>2</sub>eq value.

- Promote and support policies and actions that reduce both food loss and waste and recover it for distribution or repurpose.



There is also a new LWVUS [Food Waste Toolkit](#) Local Leagues can use to implement this action goal. **Note:** Chico City Council recently considered this issue.

Here's an [example of a Local League presentation](#) on this issue.

—Satsie Veith



## Caucus: Why Is Everyone Talking about Ranked Choice Voting?

You might reply, well, not *everyone* is—but the point is that Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) appears to be spreading. The presentation by Lorelei Moosbrugger, PhD, Lecturer at UC Santa Barbara, stated that in 2021, twenty-one states were considering legislation to adopt RCV as an alternative to plurality elections. Several California municipalities have adopted it, including San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland, Eureka, and Ojai. Alaska and Maine have adopted it for statewide and federal elections. Not everyone is a fan: last year the Florida state government [banned RCV](#) in the state and Tennessee [barred its use](#) in state or local elections.

Here's a [short video](#) on how RCV works.

The argument in favor of RCV, stated very briefly, is that a single-choice vote plurality election (candidate with most votes wins) can result in election of a representative who has the support of less than half the voters. If this happens repeatedly, voters can be left feeling unheard and alienated from the democratic process. RCV is designed to prevent this: if people list their preferences, the ultimate winner will have received the vote (even if not first choice) of the majority of the voters. Also, proponents say, RCV promotes sincere voting, reduces wasted votes, increases voter participation, reduces negative campaigning, and promotes discussion of the issues.

While LWVUS and LWVC do not have a position on RCV, the [Electoral Process positions](#) list many of the above features.

More sources on RCV:

[Ballotpedia: Ranked Choice Voting](#)

[Congressional Research Service](#): RCV: Legal Challenges and Considerations for Congress

[League of Women Voters of Vermont](#): Pro's and Con's of RCV

—*Satsie Veith*

## Workshop: Seizing the Narrative Around Housing Insecurity

Talk, talk, talk—formally and informally—to people in your community! Counter myths about widespread housing insecurity with facts.

### Key Information:

1. A safe home is the *basic foundation* for strong lives *and* strong communities.
2. Lack of housing makes finding/keeping a job, going to school, or caring for family incredibly difficult.
3. Tons of data show that **providing housing is key to rebuilding one's life**.
4. *The main, actual cause of homelessness* is decades of failure to invest in *affordable* housing, driving up rents which, coupled with job loss during COVID shutdown, has pushed many more people into homelessness.
5. **Causes of on-going housing insecurity:**
  - a. Lack of emergency housing
  - b. Onerous restrictions of emergency housing (e.g., community sleeping, no way to secure belongings)
  - c. Lack of *affordable, permanent* housing
  - d. Job loss leading to housing loss because one cannot pay mortgage/rent.
  - e. Exorbitant medical bills leading to inability to pay mortgage/rent
6. **The actual causes of people being unhoused are NOT (usually)**
  - a. Laziness
  - b. Belief society owes one a living
  - c. Drug use (~30 percent in Butte County)
  - d. Mental illness
  - e. Personal failings or irresponsibility

### Key concepts to bring front and center in conversations:

1. Challenge stereotypes about nature and causes of housing insecurity.
2. Emphasize that *anyone* can experience housing insecurity—families, working adults, seniors, veterans, students, those fleeing domestic violence.
3. *Anyone* can lose a home due to job loss, unexpected medical bills, etc.
4. Focus on the impacts of housing insecurity on a person's life to enhance empathy and establish the commonality of humanity.

5. Connect your audience to shared values—especially *compassion*.
6. Connect your audience to *everyone's* shared interests: strong communities, good schools, good jobs, good education, safe neighborhoods, clean streets or parks, etc.

**Give your audience something to do to be part of the solution. Work for:**

1. Better interim housing (i.e., non-congregate living space with security and support services)
2. Providing emergency financial assistance and services to *keep people in their homes*—prevention is the easiest way to solve homelessness. (This also keeps shelters from becoming overwhelmed.)
3. Petition state and local government for assistance. Send the message that we expect our leaders to invest big money to solve big problems.

—Becky White

## Workshop: Social Justice Success—Innovative Approaches

Addressing the challenges of the unhoused depends on involving unhoused persons in identifying both causes and solutions to housing insecurity.

### Key Information:

1. Unhoused persons need to be involved in identifying causes of and solutions to homelessness.
2. This involvement is best achieved by getting unhoused people to tell their own stories.
3. Unhoused people are unlikely to tell their stories to people who are “not like us.”
4. Therefore, unhoused people need to be involved in recruiting others in that situation to explain the lives they live—both currently and in the past.

### Examples:

1. Ela Banerjee @ voiceofwitness.org. See [https://issuu.com/voiceofwitness1/docs/voiceofwitness\\_magazine\\_vol.1](https://issuu.com/voiceofwitness1/docs/voiceofwitness_magazine_vol.1)
2. Chris Johnson @ <https://www.successtoriesprogram.org/>

—Becky White

## Caucus: Update on Health Care—The New LWV Position

This was a discussion of the revised National LWV position on health care and of how to implement the position. Slides and handouts are available at <https://lwvc.files.wordpress.com/2023/05/hcig-caucus-2023.pdf> and <https://lwvc.files.wordpress.com/2023/05/healthcare-caucus-handout-2023-convention.pdf>.

### Key Information:

1. The National LWV has had an evolving position on health care since 1993. (See [https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LWV\\_ImpactOnIssues2022-2024.pdf](https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LWV_ImpactOnIssues2022-2024.pdf))
2. The updated (2022) LWV Position on Health Care supports the single-payer concept as a viable, desirable approach to implement League positions on equitable access, affordability, and financial feasibility. (See [https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LWV\\_ImpactOnIssues2022-2024.pdf](https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LWV_ImpactOnIssues2022-2024.pdf))
3. Healthy California for All Commission: Established in 2019 to develop “a plan that includes options for advancing progress toward a health care delivery system in California that provides coverage and access through a unified financing system ... to all Californians.”
4. Report of Commission (2022): unified financing system would
  - a. Save 4,000 lives per year
  - b. Save Californians \$500 billion in first decade
  - c. Include coverage for dental, hearing, vision, Rx, etc.
  - d. Help remedy inequity (racial, economic, rural, etc.)
5. U.S. Congress currently considering Medicare for All (House-Jayapal; Senate-Sanders)
6. **Interested League members are invited to join monthly ZOOM meetings of LWVC Healthcare Interest Group @ [lwvc-healthcare@googlegroups.com](mailto:lwvc-healthcare@googlegroups.com).**

—Becky White



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<https://my.lwv.org/california/butte-county/donate>

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- **Volunteer for Board Positions**

#### 2022–2023 LWVBC Board Members

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Janet Rechtman	Director Social Policy
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<i>Vacant</i>	Director Assistant Voter Service
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Government
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Voter Registration

#### League of Women Voter of Butte County's Mission

Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to take an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any person, regardless of gender, age, or citizenship status, may become a League member, you must be at least 16 to vote on League issues

**LWVBC Board meetings are typically on the second Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm on Zoom.** All League members are welcome to attend. The Zoom link is posted on the [Calendar](#) page of the LWVBC website prior to the meeting.

To contact a Board member, please send an email to [lwvbutte@gmail.com](mailto:lwvbutte@gmail.com). Your message will be forwarded to the appropriate board member as needed.