

LWV[®] Voter

November 2021

Dear League Members and Friends,

Mark your calendars: Air Quality Program on Zoom

On Wednesday, **November 10, from 7:00 to 8:30pm**, LWVBC will host Jason Mandly of the Butte County Air Quality Management District for a Zoom presentation on **“Air Quality in Butte County: Tracking Pollution and Protecting Yourself.”** A Zoom Link will be provided later.

Also Coming Soon: Membership Survey

Please watch for the [LWVBC Membership Survey 2021](#) to land in your email box in a week or so. The questions invite you to tell us how well the League is doing, what you would like to see improved, how you like to stay in touch, etc. Your answers will be anonymous. We are hoping to use the survey results as a guide as our League moves forward over the next year or so. Please keep your eyes open for the survey and take a few minutes to reply; we truly appreciate your participation and look forward to your input!

On Thursday, October 21, the League presented a Zoom program on the highly controversial Tuscan Water District. If you missed it, the recording of the forum is available online [here](#). Claire Greene brilliantly led the discussion between the spokespersons – two for the “pro” viewpoint, and two for the “con.” Approximately 90 people logged into the event throughout the 90-minute debate. The discussion was informative, spirited, and there was quite a bit of discussion and questions coming in from viewers via the “chat” feature. Great job to everyone who worked on putting this together on short notice!

What’s in this Issue

Exclusive to the [Voter](#), Professor Charley Turner (Chico State) has provided a follow-up to his Fall Coffee talk on the recent recall election. We also have provided an update on what is happening right now related to local redistricting actions, included a review on and a link to a new FPPC report on regulation of on-line political advertising, and much more.

We hope you are well and look forward to seeing you all at a future event—whether it’s in-person or on-line.

Sincerely,

[Satsie Veith](#)

LWVBC President

Inside this issue

- [Another California Recall](#)
- [Reforming California Recall Elections](#)
- [Task Force Report on How Disclosure Laws Can Be Applied to On-Line Political Ads](#)
- [Butte County Redistricting Update](#)
- [Natural Resources Report](#)
- [Social Policy Committee Report](#)
- [Membership Dues Info and Form \(to print\)](#)
- [Donate](#)
- [Board Members](#)

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF BUTTE COUNTY (CA)

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Another California Recall

On September 14, 2021, Californians went to the polls (or, more likely, finished mailing in their ballots) for only the second gubernatorial recall election in the past 18 years. And, to make everything official, the vote was certified by California Secretary of State Shirley Weber on October 22.



The “no” recall vote retained Governor Gavin Newsom in office by a margin of approximately 62% (7,944,092 votes) to about 38% (4,894,473 votes). Californians spent \$276 million on a special election to confirm that they did indeed want the person they had elected governor in 2018 to remain in the job for another year (*or, to finish the term he was elected to serve*).

“But,” some of you may be asking, “why do we even do this? And why does it seem so easy?”

Well, you are right about it being easy. Although 39 states have a recall process, California sets the bar lower than most by requiring a number of signatures equal to just 12% of the total number of votes in the most recent election for a given office.

In this case, that number was 1,495,709. This figure is just under 7% of the 22,154,304 registered voters in California. Collecting this number of signatures is pretty easy pickings for the professional signature gathering operation in our state. This low hurdle has again brought our state into the national spotlight, as it did in 2003 when Gray Davis gained the ignoble honor of becoming only the second Governor to be recalled from office in all of American history.

Believe it or not, despite the recent disillusionment of some, the recall process has a [respectable history and has not often been subject to abuse](#). In fact, in the 110 years California voters have held this power,

we have only qualified 11 recalls for the ballot (out of 179 attempts) and in only six of these cases has the incumbent been successfully recalled.

The recall has its origins in the Progressive Era of American politics that dominated the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many states—mainly those west of the Mississippi—ushered in a slate of reforms to combat the party machines and corruption of the Gilded Age.

These reforms included many we take for granted to day—such as the secret ballot and party primaries—as well as a trio of direct democracy measures: initiative, referendum, and recall.

After voting in Hiram Johnson as governor in 1910, and a majority of progressives to the state legislature, Californians used a special election in 1911 to make recall and the other direct democracy measures part of the California Constitution. Though all of these tools are abused from time to time, they are ultimately the tools of the people. To wield them is to exercise the power of the people.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention the most significant achievement of progressive politics, and certainly the one dearest to the League of Women Voters: the women’s suffrage movement that ultimately produced the 19th Amendment. So, perhaps an occasional pesky recall is worth it. It might help remind the politicians in charge, and remind the rest of us as well, of the broader struggle we fought to get there.

By Dr. Charley Turner

Political Science and Criminal Justice, CSU Chico

Should LWV Advocate for Recall Reform?

Now that the latest statewide recall election is history, and the idiosyncrasies of California’s recall law have been made apparent to all, the leadership of the League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) is considering whether to advocate for recall reform.






The information on the following page is taken from the LWVC Leaders Update webpage. Note that it contains links to two (non-League) events on recall reform.

Reforming California Recall Elections

Recall reform is a hot topic after this September's gubernatorial recall election. There will be legislative hearings to explore proposals for change, a [Little Hoover Commission hearing took place on October 14](#), and the California Constitution Center at Berkeley Law hosted a [Post-Mortem: Should the Recall be Recalled or Reformed?](#)

The LWVC Board of Directors explored the positions of the State League to determine how, and under which positions, LWVC may act on recall reform. The State League will monitor the ongoing process carefully and be prepared to act through our positions supporting reasonable government systems that promote public trust.

Positions that could be used to support reform of the recall process, excerpted here, are:

-  LWVC Electoral Process "LWVC promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.
-  We encourage electoral methods that provide the broadest voter representation possible...
-  The LWVC believes in representative government.
-  The League supports electoral systems that elect policy-making bodies...that proportionally reflect the people they represent.
-  We support systems that inhibit political manipulation (e.g. gerrymandering) ...

The League supports election methods that:



Promote sincere voting over strategic voting and implement alternatives to plurality voting



"[D]IGITAL POLITICAL ADVERTISING SPENDING EXPLODED IN 2020. IN THE 2015-2016 ELECTION CYCLE, DIGITAL MEDIA ACCOUNTED FOR ROUGHLY 2-3% OF POLITICAL AD SPEND. THAT JUMPED TO 18% IN THIS ONE. THE ROUGHLY \$700-800 MILLION IN DIGITAL AD SPEND IN THE 2017-2018 ELECTION CYCLE BECAME \$1.6 BILLION IN THIS ONE."

FORBES, "2020 POLITICAL AD SPENDING EXPLODED: DID IT WORK?"
DEC. 8, 2020.

Task Force Report on How Disclosure Laws Can Be Applied to On-Line Political Ads

Since the passage of the Political Reform Act in 1974, California law has required disclosure of spending on campaign ads and placement of "on-ad" disclaimers that state who is paying for the ads. But current laws are not keeping up with digital, or on-line, political ads, even though they are an ever-growing segment of ads overall. To address this gap, the Fair Political Practices Commission created the Digital Transparency Task Force (DTTF), which included two members of the State League. The [DTTF's report](#) was issued in July 2021 and makes **three recommendations**:

- 1) **Creation of Public Archive of Digital Ads:** The State of California should create a state-run archive (as opposed to privately operated archives run by Facebook, Google, and the like) to collect and make publicly available copies of specified digital political ads. This will allow better law enforcement by the FPPC and let journalists, watch-dog groups, and members of the public review ads and report problems.
- 2) **What Should Be in the Archive:**
 - ad copy, details on the committee who paid for the ad, amount paid, number of people it was disseminated to, and intended audience;
 - should begin by collecting state-level candidate and ballot measure ads but allow for expansion to include local-level, issue, and non-digital ads;
 - should be accessible to and searchable by voters.
- 3) **Determine Most Effective Digital Disclaimers:** The State Legislature should commission a study with public involvement to determine what types of disclaimers work best for digital ads. Examples cited are a greater use of links, use of uniform icons or insignia, or simplified requirements used across multiple platforms.

Additional background: [Article on difficulty of policing on-line political ads](#)

Butte County Redistricting Update

Part One: Board of Supervisors

At the October 12 BOS meeting, redistricting consultant Paul Mitchell presented three draft maps of new district boundaries. Each draft map was based on a map submitted by a member of the public using the [DistrictR](#) program, but with adjustments to comply with population requirements.

To view the draft maps, go to the County's [Redistricting-Maps page](#). Click on the "Detailed Version" of a map to zoom to street-level.

How many people per district?

By law, each of the five districts must have roughly the same population, with a deviation of no more than 10% between the most- and least-populated districts. Based on the adjusted 2020 Census total of 212,549 Butte County residents, the "ideal" district would be home to 42,509.6 people.

Mitchell explained that due to the loss of population in the burned areas of the county, and the growth of population in Chico, many features of the current map will have to change. A quick glance at the draft maps shows that in each one, the district containing Paradise has expanded well beyond current boundaries in order to increase its population to meet legal requirements. And, in each draft map, the southeast corner of Chico, roughly from Bidwell Park south, is in the same district as Paradise, in order to give that district more people.

What's next? According to Brian Ring, the County's Assistant CAO, the next time the BOS will discuss new maps will be November 9, when the consultant will present new draft maps and receive more guidance from the supervisors, but no vote will be taken. Of course, any vote must be posted on the [agenda](#) in advance, and any maps subject to a vote must be posted on the county's website (see maps link above) a week before the meeting. We plan to send out an email notice to members when that meeting is scheduled. After the supervisors do choose a map, it must be posted for public

comment for at least a week before a final vote, now scheduled for December 14.

Some comments made at the Oct. 12 meeting by supervisors and the public:

- All of Lake Oroville should be kept with Oroville.
- All of Bidwell Park should be kept in Chico District 3 (Draft Map District C), not divided between 2 districts (as in Draft Maps B and C).
- No part of Chico should be placed into a rural district.
- Chair Bill Connelly insisted that Berry Creek, Clipper Mills, and Forbestown should be kept with Oroville and not joined with Paradise and Stirling City, because the time required to travel from one area to the other (by a supervisor) is impractical.
- An opposing point was made that, despite the travel issue, wild-fire prone areas should be in the same district because of their common issues.
- Supervisor Kimmelshue expressed an opinion that agricultural areas in the south and west should have at least two supervisors because agriculture is so important to the county. (All the draft maps place this area in one district (D).)

What Criteria are the Supervisors Legally Required to Use When Creating New Districts?

Equal Population of each district required Voting Rights Act & California Voting Rights Act must be followed. Population is adjusted to count incarcerated people at their home address not their prison address.

Then the following in order of priority:

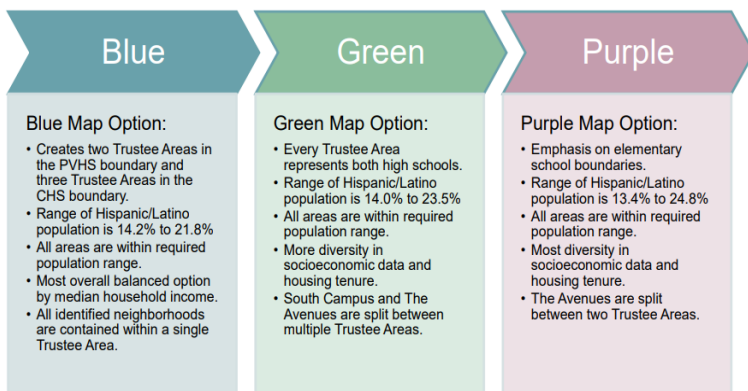
1. **Geographic Contiguity**, to the extent practicable. Areas that meet only at the points of adjoining corners are not contiguous. Areas that are separated by water and not connected by a bridge, tunnel, or regular ferry service are not contiguous.

2. **Communities of Interest:** Preservation to the extent practicable. A “community of Interest” is a population that shares common social or economic interests that should be included within a single supervisorial district for purposes of its effective and fair representation.
3. **Geographic Integrity** of a city or census designated place shall be respected to the extent practicable.
4. **Geographic Compactness** should be encouraged to the extent practicable, where it doesn’t conflict with previous criteria, and in a manner to ensure that nearby areas of population are not bypassed in favor of more distant populations.
5. **Easily Identifiable by Residents:** To the extent practicable, districts shall be bounded by natural and artificial barriers, including streets.
6. **Prohibit Favoritism:** No partisan favoritism or discrimination.

CA Election Code, sections 21500, 21601, and 21621

Part 2: Chico Unified School District

CUSD is in the process of transitioning from at-large to trustee-area-based (district) elections. At the October 20 CUSD School Board meeting, three draft maps of trustee-area (TAs) were presented: Blue, Green, and Purple (summary below).



See the full slide presentation including draft maps [here](#).

According to the presentation, the draft maps were drawn with the following criteria in mind:

- Total population: since the 2020 Census puts the CUSD population at 120,119 (up from 107,182), each TA must contain between 22,823 and 25,225 people.
- The Hispanic/Latino community has grown from 14.7% to 19.3% of the district and is not particularly concentrated in any one area.

Also, community input supported the following (sometimes contradictory) criteria:

- Each TA should be entirely within one of the two high school attendance boundaries.
- Each TA should include parts of both high school attendance boundaries.
- TAs should be based on elementary school boundaries, not high school boundaries.
- Five neighborhoods were identified as “communities of interest” which should be kept together: Barber, Chapman, Downtown, South Campus, the Avenues.
- TA’s should be balanced from a socio-economic standpoint.
- There was interest in seeing the proportion of owners/renters in each TA.

What’s next? According to the published schedule, there will be public hearings on the draft maps at CUSD Board Meetings on November 3 and November 17, and the Board will make the final decision on December 15.

Part 3: Chico City Council

By state law, the City of Chico must draw new council district boundaries based on 2020 Census results by the beginning of March 2022.

As of the October 19 Council meeting, no public announcements regarding the [required legal process](#) had been made.

*By Satsie Veith
LWVBC President*

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Our Committee is busy now gathering information on Butte County water districts for the program we plan to present early in 2022. Our goal is to present a two-part series on Butte County Water.

The first program will provide information on the largest districts that supply water to the majority of residents in Butte County. That information would include sources of water, areas of service, distribution methods, etc.

Our second program would discuss future plans, needs and challenges to the districts and residents as all of us in the west face drier conditions and increased populations. We welcome any League member that would like to join us.

Contact me by email treid100@gmail.com

Toni Reid, Natural Resources Director

SOCIAL POLICY COMMITTEE PLANS FOR PROGRAM ON HOMELESSNESS

Wikipedia defines a wicked problem as "a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize. It refers to an idea or problem that cannot be fixed, where there is no single solution to the problem; and "wicked" denotes resistance to resolution, rather than evil." Moreover, because of complex interdependencies, the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems.

For Butte County, homelessness – since the Camp Fire, local authorities report that approximately 7,000 people (nearly a third of which are children) who have no homes – is a classic example of a wicked problem. Many questions arise: What causes people to become homeless? What kinds of people suffer from homelessness? How do the problems of homeless people relate to the lives and

livelihoods of people who are not homeless? What can communities do to help people who are homeless? What can communities do to support the interests of business and residents while responding to the needs of people who are homeless? What moral, ethical and religious obligations come into play when communities respond to the needs of homeless people? What does it take to move from being homeless to being sheltered to being sustainably housed? Who are the people and organizations who are working to address this problem? Each of these questions may have multiple answers, which makes homelessness a classic example of a wicked problem.

At last year's winter meeting, in response to a presentation by Charles Withuhn and Mary Kay Benson regarding homelessness in Butte County, the LWVBC agreed to make this issue a priority for the coming year, consistent with the state of California League's position on the issue. Your League's Social Policy Committee has begun planning a series of educational programs designed to educate our members and the community at large about 1) the scope of the challenges experienced by and presented by persons who are homeless; 2) how different communities are responding to these challenges; c) financial, social, faith-based and community resources; and 4) an exploration of what all this means in the real world.

While these programs will be available in Spring 2022, League members can also learn more about the League's approach to homelessness through the Homeless Action Policy Local League Kit, available on line at <https://my.lwv.org/california/homelessness/homeless-action-policy-local-league-toolkit>.


League members interested in helping the LWVBC address this wicked problem are welcome to join the Social Policy Committee by contacting Janet Rechtman, drjr@uga.edu.


Janet Rechtman, Social Policy Director
LWV Butte County Board


LWVBC Membership

Our Butte County League of Women Voters is excited to welcome several new members who have joined the League this fall. At your first opportunity, please greet Carol Krok, Leilani McManus, Kristy Mullen, Theresa O'Connor, and Leslie Radlen. These members are already actively working with several of our standing committees.

As of early October, we have 57 members who have renewed their membership. Please remember that membership renewals are due by December 31, 2021 and will cover your membership for 2022. League dues have not changed since last year:

 Individual member: \$75


 Household: \$125


 Student: \$15

LWVBC is assessed \$32 per member to the LWVUS and \$28 to the LWV of California. This leaves \$15 per individual members and \$5 for household for local LWV efforts.

If you renew online, please consider making a donation towards covering the processing costs for the Square (online system).

RENEWAL OPTIONS:

 Paying on our website: [HERE](#).

 Mailing a check payable to LWV OF BUTTE COUNTY to:

LWVBC
P.O. BOX 965
CHICO, CA 95927-0941

You may use the dues form below to renew or share with a potential new member. Encourage your friends and family to join the League of Women Voters of Butte County as we have many activities scheduled and will of course be involved in Voters Forums the spring.

*By Roxanne Ferry
VP of Membership*



Thank you for supporting the League of Women Voters of Butte County. Membership is open to all individuals who are at least 16 years of age. Please make your *Membership Dues* check payable to: **LWV of Butte County** and enclose this form with your remittance to P.O. Box 965, Chico, CA 95927.

Individual. \$75.00 _____

Household (2 individuals). \$125.00 _____

Student \$15.00 _____

Donation. _____

Total Remittance \$ _____

Tax deductible donations to our Education Fund may be made through our North Valley Community Foundation fund, and payable to LWVBC Education Fund of NVCF.

Dues and Donations may also be paid online at:
www.lwvbuttecounty.org

Name(s) _____ Address _____

City, Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

I am interested in working with the League on the following:

Observing gov't agency meetings _____; Voter Registration drives _____; Civics and Voter Education _____

Social Policy Programs: Education _____; Health Care _____; Housing/homelessness _____; Other _____

Natural Resource programs: Water _____; Transportation/air quality _____; Climate change _____; Other _____

Fundraising _____; Membership/Communication outreach _____; Office Management _____; Tech support _____





League of Women Voters of Butte County
P.O. Box 965
Chico, CA 95927



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

- [Renew Your Membership](#)
- [Donate](#)
- [Recruit New Members](#)
- [Volunteer for Board Positions](#)

2021-22 LWVBC Board Members

Satsie Veith	President
Claire Greene	1st VP - Voter Service
Roxanne Ferry	2nd VP - Membership
Sandra Flake	Treasurer
Mahalley Allen	Secretary
Lori Fuentes	Director Communications
Toni Reid	Director Natural Resources
Patty Haley	Director Voter Registration
Janet Rechtman	Director Social Policy
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Countywide Liaison
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Assistant Voter Service
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Government
<i>Vacant</i>	Director Observer Corps

League of Women Voter of Butte County's Mission

Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages citizens to play 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 16 years or older, male or female, may become a League member.

LWVBC Board meetings are the 2nd Tuesdays each month at 5:30 pm. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these meetings will be held via Zoom. All League members are welcome to attend and participate. Please reach out to President Veith for meeting Zoom credentials if you wish to join our meetings.

To contact a Board member, you may email them at their email (linked to their name on the left) or you may call 530-895-VOTE (8683) to leave a message. Please be sure to provide your name, contact information, and a brief description of what you need.