

February 2025 VOTER



During this busy League month, we will observe the birthdays of two of our greatest presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, as well as the [105th birthday of the League of Women Voters](#).

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The PDF of this issue is available on the [website](#).

President's Letter

League Leaders and Members:

2025 is already eventful!

Our annual Program Planning meeting will take place on February 8, 2025, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm as a hybrid meeting. 12:30 to 1:00 will be a chance to connect and socialize for the in-person attendees. A light lunch will be served.



Please plan to attend! More information and registration are at: 2025 Program Planning meeting: [Make your Voice Heard](#).

This is your chance to hear about the work League members are doing and discuss our priorities for July 2025 to June 2026. Since this is not an election year, we will be able to focus on Advocacy. [Our current priorities are here](#). [Our current committees are here](#).

Recently, several LWVDV members took a tour of the new Federal Immigration Court in Concord after United Latino Voices, one of our community partners, asked that we sign on to a [letter](#) to our representative in Congress requesting adequate signage in the building. I participated in the tour ([see the report here](#)) and hope to continue to advocate for immigrant rights.



LWVUS is busy with a new administration in Washington. A press release was issued on January 24, 2025. Read more here: [LWV Statement: The Democracy Impact of President Trump's First Week Actions.](#)

As a local League, our role is to do what we can at the local level to promote good government. We can all do something!

In League,

Mary Schreiber, President

[Sign up for Program Planning, Saturday, February 8!](#)

LWVUS National Town Hall on the Federal Judiciary

February 4, 2025 | 4:00 PM Pacific



Hear from leading experts on this work, pose questions, and get information about the federal judiciary.

The Town Hall will be hosted by Microsoft Teams.

Please [download this guide](#) to familiarize yourself with the platform before the event. You may need to download the platform before the event begins, but you will also have the option to launch Teams on your internet browser.

[Join the town hall](#)

Please note that this is a direct link to the event. You may want to create a calendar invitation with this link for future use.

Join our LWVDV group working on the Federal Judiciary Study! This is a short-term commitment (we need to hold our local meeting by mid-April). Email shawn@lwvdv.org

Lunch with the League!

No winter blahs here! Join us for our monthly no-host lunch on **Wednesday, February 12th**, at **11:30 am** at Bar Camino, 1470 North Broadway, Walnut Creek. There's easy, affordable parking across the street at the library parking lot.



Please let Janet Hoy know you're coming -- you can email her at janet@lwvdv.org. We're looking forward to seeing everyone!



Bridging the Gap through Respectful Conversations
Thursday, February 20, 2025
4:00PM – 5:30PM
Online event

The image is a promotional graphic for an online event. It features a stylized illustration of a diverse group of seven people (men and women of various ethnicities) sitting around a table, engaged in conversation. The background is light blue with abstract shapes. Below the illustration is a dark grey box containing the event title, date, time, and format.

Bridging the Gap through Respectful Conversations: A Community Conversation Thursday, February 20, 4:00 – 5:30 pm via Zoom

Americans are concerned about the growing partisanship in our country and the difficulty this has created in communicating with one another. Whether it is with our families, neighbors, friends, or with community members, people are looking for tools to help them have civil and respectful conversations with one another.

The speakers will offer resources, skills, and opportunities for individuals to help build bridges across divides in our families, communities, and country.

Panelists include:

- Ellie Sears and Dick Patterson from Braver Angels.
- Kristin Connelly, Clerk-Recorder-Registrar Contra Costa County.
- Cheryl Graeves from the National Institute for Civil Discourse.

Register for the Zoom webinar [here!](#) Information on how to access the Zoom webinar will be sent to your email.

The webinar will have simultaneous Spanish interpretation.

Community Conversations are co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley, the League of Women Voters of West Contra Costa County, CCTV, and the Contra Costa County Library.

This program will be recorded and uploaded to the [Library](#) and [LWVDV YouTube](#) channels after the event.

Contact programs@lwvdv.org for more information.

Happy Birthday to the League of Women Voters!

The League is 105 years strong this February. The League was born out of women's long, arduous fight to win the right to vote. It took 72 years and multiple generations of women refusing to give up on their right to be a part of our democracy -- an effort that ultimately convinced enough men to realize that women should have a voice in government, and to vote for this right.



February 14th is a time to celebrate the founding of the League of Women Voters and to remember all of the women and men who dedicated themselves to winning the fight for women's right to vote. The ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is the culmination of the largest movement in our nation's history in addition to the greatest expansion of our democracy. **This important part of American history is finally going to be recognized with its own monument on the Washington D.C. Mall** where currently no commemoration to the history of women exists. To bring the monument to fruition, funds for the project have to be raised. Please take a moment to view the following link and learn about the monument effort.

[Women's Suffrage National Monument Foundation](#)

Shawn Gilbert, Voter Services Co-Chair

Voter Services News



Bubbles and chocolate and Voter Services, oh my!

The election is over and things have slowed down for Voter Services, for now. However, the League is still out making a presence. Los Medanos College held its “Welcome Back” fun day on January 28th. There was lots of food, music, and games to play (*see me blowing bubbles with Joel Toscano from the County Elections office in photo*). It was a beautiful sunny day to be out talking with new and familiar friends.

The League offered numerous students the opportunity to test their civic knowledge by playing the game [VerifyIt!](#). Give it a try! It is fun, informative, and an engaging way to refresh one’s civic knowledge.

Summer Fun Opportunities! League members joined the Contra Costa Library’s summer Exploration Stations with kids last June. The outreach librarian has invited the League to join the summer program again.

There are four library locations and all dates are in June. If you are interested in being a part of this adventure, email shawn@lwdv.org

Shawn Gilbert, Voter Services Co-Chair

Want to Make Local Government Work Better? Apply to the Civil Grand Jury!

The Civil Grand Jury is **not** a courtroom jury. Instead of listening to a trial and deliberating, the nineteen members of the Civil Grand Jury (CGJ) spend a year actively investigating and reporting on the work of local government with the goal of improving governmental accountability and transparency. **The CGJ performs a watchdog function** by examining city and county governments and special districts to ensure their duties are lawfully and efficiently conducted. The CGJ then reports to the community and press.



Four things make Civil Grand Jury service unique:

- Civil Grand Juries are supervised by the Superior Court, but **jurors make all their own rules** within the Penal Code. Nobody tells them what to do or how to do it.
- **Their work is strictly confidential by law.** Grand Jurors speak only through their official reports, and nobody knows what the jury is investigating until the reports are published.
- **Agencies that receive recommendations are required to respond** to them in writing. If they aren't going to follow jury recommendations, they have to explain why not.
- **Jurors spend their time looking into virtually every aspect of local government**, including the county departments, local city councils, and special districts responsible for delivering a variety of public services ranging from schools to fire protection, hospitals, water districts and transportation agencies.

Civil Grand Jury service is interesting and rewarding work. **Contra Costa County is now accepting applications until March 7, 2025** for the fiscal year 2025-26 term. Go to <https://www.cc-courts.org/civil/grand-jury.aspx> for more information.

Anne Granlund, past President, LWVDV, and past Civil Grand Juror



Regional Government: How Does It Affect You?

Saturday, March 8, 2025

From: 10:00 am -1:00 pm, via Zoom

League Day 2025, LWVBA's annual issue education forum, will focus on the inner workings of regional governance.

For more information, see the [LWVBA webpage](#).

[Register here.](#)

Board Briefs for January 2025

At its meeting on January 9, the Board took the following actions:



- Approved giving a LWV membership to former intern McKenna Ingram.
- Approved a letter to federal elected officials regarding inadequate signage at the Concord Immigration Court.

The Board also

- Discussed arrangements for the February 8th Program Planning meeting.
- Received a draft Investment Policy for the Lee Lawrence bequest to review for the February Board meeting.
- Named Shawn Gilbert to lead the committee for the LWVUS study of the Federal Judiciary. Ana Pan will also be on the committee.
- Learned that members have been volunteering for Legislative Interviews and spots are still available.
- Agreed to continue partnering with St. Mary's College, and discussed a future joint LWVDV/SMC event with our December speaker, Dr. Amar.
- Heard that Paul Derksen would be meeting with Mike Miller, advisor to the County Elections Department, as part of our Mis/Disinformation work.

Membership Updates and Information

Welcome new members Langston Akin, Debora Allen, Judy Hammon, and Marjorie Moore!

Membership: Join Us or Renew!

We have a new process for membership. Sign up online by going to our [website](#) and using the new Join page, or send a check made out to LWVUS to the address at the end of this Voter. **If you have an upcoming membership anniversary, please check the Join page on the website for instructions on how to renew with the new system. We need you, so please renew!**

Membership is not based on the ability to pay. You select the dues amount when you join or renew. ***If you have been a League member for 50 years or more, you are a **Life Member**.*** Life Members do not pay dues.

Contact membership@lwvdv.org to upgrade your status!

Suggested dues:

\$75 Individual Membership (\$20 minimum)

(LWVDV is a 501(c)3 organization. Dues and donations to LWVDV are tax-deductible. Tax ID number supplied on request -- call the LWVDV office at 925-283-2235.)

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CALENDAR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Board meetings are hybrid meetings at the LWVDV office or via Zoom*. Luncheons are at Bar Camino in Walnut Creek.

Wednesday, Feb. 12, 11:30 am	Luncheon
Thursday, Feb. 13, 10:00 am	Board Meeting
Monday, Feb. 17, 3 pm	Action-Advocacy
Wednesday, March 12, 11:30 am	Luncheon
Thursday, March 13, 10:00 am	Board Meeting
Monday, March 17, 3 pm	Action-Advocacy

*To participate in a Zoom meeting, leave a message with your email address on our [email](#) or on the office phone (925-283-2235) and the meeting link will be sent to you.

LWVDV Board Members (through June 2025):

[Mary Schreiber](#), *President*

[Kathy Gallagher](#), *Vice President/Observer Corps*

[Karen Dolder](#), *Secretary, Office Manager*

[Paul Derksen](#), *Treasurer*

[Diane Bianchi](#), *Community Conversations Co-Chair*
vacant, Membership Chair

[Shawn Gilbert](#), *Voter Services Co-Chair*

[Ana Pan](#), *Voter Services Co-Chair*

[Melanie Speir](#), *Civic Engagement Chair*

[Anne Granlund](#), *At-Large Board Member*

[Anna Honda](#), *At-Large Board Member*

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of Diablo Valley**

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