



September 2025 VOTER



**Our September Community Conversation with LWVUS President
Dianna Wynn and SUFFS producer Rachel Sussman!**
[\(more information below\)](#)

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

President's Letter

League Leaders and Members:

We are in a Constitutional Crisis in our country.

LWVUS and state Leagues around the country are responding to mid-cycle redistricting.



There have been many emails and messages about Prop 50. This is a rapidly developing situation, and I would like to update you with the latest.

LWVC is not taking a position on Prop 50. They are asking us **NOT to use the term "neutral"** as that has a different meaning in this context.

The current statement from LWVC is [here](#).

LWVC will put out an Easy Voter Guide, and they would like us to use that language when available to educate ourselves and voters. **LWVDV is planning to do Pros & Cons presentations to educate voters. Volunteers will be needed for that and Voter Services.**

Several of us will be attending a Zoom meeting with LWVC on Wednesday, September 3, and will be able to provide more details after that.

We will send you more information when we have it.
Thank you for all your hard work and support.

We welcome new members Linda Bailey, Judith Sweet, Kimberly Powleson, Ann Vandepol, Emily Sabet, Mathilda (Matty) Varban, Kiley Martz, and Roberta Whitman!

Mary Schreiber, President, LWVDV

FOR YOUR CALENDAR



ONLY A FEW SEATS LEFT for the **Unite & Rise** panel discussion on local impact of federal funding decisions. **Wednesday, September 3, 7:30-9 pm, Walnut Creek Library.** [More info on our webpage](#), RSVP to unite.rise@lwvdv.org.



Lunch with the League, Wednesday, September 10th

Join us for our monthly no-host lunch on **Wednesday, September 10th, 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.

Talk about everything that's coming up, or just socialize-- or both!

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



Member Orientations -- Choose Your Time!

Want to learn more about LWVDV? **Join us at a new/prospective member Orientation!** See below for the September dates and links to RSVP. September orientations are online only this month (Zoom) so please RSVP and we will

send you the Zoom link after registering:

Friday, September 12, at 4 pm
Zoom only <https://evite.me/UCRzrPHmK8>

Saturday, September 13, at 9 am
Zoom only <https://evite.me/h4ukh4GuHz>



Celebrating Democracy!

September 17, 1787, is the day [the U.S. Constitution was signed in Philadelphia](#) and became the supreme law of the land. “We the People” hold the power in this government. **We have “A republic, if you can keep it” said the eighty-one-year-old Benjamin Franklin** in response to Elizabeth Willing Powel’s question: “Well, Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy?”

“We the people” have been enjoying this democratic republic for 249 years. However, as we see so much of the republic being dismantled, both Ms. Powel’s question and Doctor Franklin’s answer seem eerily relevant in 2025.

Yet, as Leaguers we are warriors of democracy, and as Ms. Celina Stewart said in a recent speech, “Moving from a moment of crisis to a movement of change requires turning fear into fuel and despair into determination.” For more of Ms. Stewart’s wisdom and inspiration, [here is her entire speech](#).

Out And About in the Community!

LWVDV Voter Services met in August with both Los Medanos College (LMC) and Diablo Valley College (DVC) staff to plan collaborative activities for the new semester.

LWVDV participated in LMC’s “Back to Campus” celebrations on August 26. It was a beautiful late summer day on the campus and a super day to be

with young people. Many students stopped by to chat and three students registered and will be first-time voters in the November election.

Voter Services Volunteer Opportunities:

September 17, National Constitution Day

If you can give a bit of time to help at one of the community college campuses, please be sure to let Ana Pan or Shawn Gilbert know. Voter.services@lwvdv.org

- LWV Diablo Valley will be at DVC to do voter registration from 12:30 - 2:30 pm.
- LMC needs volunteers to do voter registration from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm.

September 22, DVC Constitution Event

- DVC will hold an afternoon event from 12:30 - 2:30 pm in the Diablo Room. This event will include panel discussions on several topics. The League will be there to offer voter registration tabling.

Watch for more information on participating in Voter Services activities related to the Special Election in November!

The Challenges to Voting Rights -- Then and Now

Thursday, September 18, 2025
1:00 pm to 2:30 pm (note change in time!)

Join us for an illuminating webinar on the history of the **Woman's Suffrage Movement** and how it inspired the production of **the Broadway musical SUFFS**, followed by a conversation about **the SAVE Act** and how its passage would challenge the right to vote for many Americans. Contra Costa Librarian Alison Peters will moderate the discussion.



Panelists will include:

- LWVUS President Dianna Wynn
- Rachel Sussman, lead producer of the musical SUFFS, which will be performed in San Francisco in October.

Register [here](#) -- a Zoom link will be sent to you 24 hours before the program.

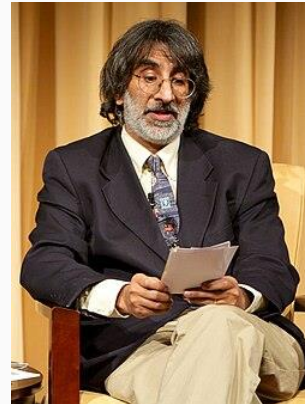
Community Conversations are co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley, the League of Women Voters of West Contra Costa County, CCTV, and the Contra Costa County Library. The Library and LWVDV are underwriting simultaneous Spanish translation. This program will be recorded and uploaded to the [Library](#) and [LWVDV YouTube](#) channels after the event.

Contact programs@lwvdv.org for more information

Coming Up in October

A Conversation with Professor Akhil Amar
Monday, October 13th, 6:30 - 8:00 pm
St Mary's College, Soda Center

Professor Akhil Amar, Yale constitutional scholar, will discuss his **new book, *Born Equal: Remaking America's Constitution, 1840–1920***, which explores the transformative amendments that redefined freedom, equality, and voting rights in the post–Civil War era. At a moment when there are multiple challenges to our Constitution, this conversation with Dr. Amar is timely.



St. Mary's College and Community Conversations -- a partnership of the League of Women Voters Diablo Valley and West Contra Costa County, the Contra Costa County Library, and CCTV -- will host this event. Professor Emeritus Stephen Woolpert will moderate the conversation. A book sale and signing will follow the program.



Join the League at SUFFS in San Francisco!

The Broadway production of the musical "[SUFFS](#)" is coming to the Orpheum Theater in San Francisco. A Tony Award-winning musical, SUFFS is about the passionate American women who fought tirelessly for the right to vote.

GET YOUR TICKETS! SUFFS will be playing at the Orpheum from October 22 to November 9, 2025. There will be a special League Day performance for the

League on Saturday, October 25 at 7:30, with special mixers before and after the show. **Broadway SF is offering discounts for the League and will donate \$10 to our League for each ticket purchased with the promo code LWVDIABLO.** The promo code is good for any performance except for Saturday matinees.

NOTE: LWVDV has reserved a block of tickets for the 1:00 pm matinee performance on Sunday, October 26. Contact Ashley at ashley@lwvdv.org for information on this offer if you did not receive our email with details.

LWVDV Fact Over Fiction Presentations

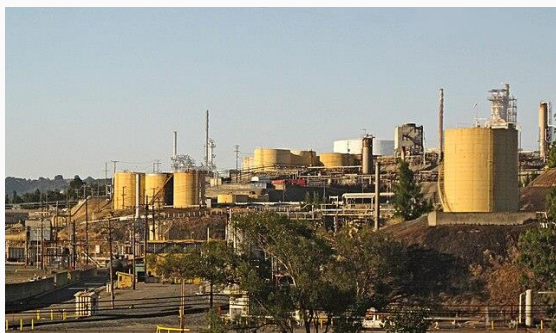
Three of these popular presentations will be open to the public in October. Please see the [LWVDV events listings](#) on our website for details.

- **Tuesday, October 14, 12 pm** -- Lone Tree Golf & Event Center, Antioch, hosted by the Retired Public Employees Association of California
- **Thursday, October 23, 6 pm** -- San Ramon Library, Program Room, co-hosted by the San Ramon Library and San Ramon AAUW
- **Thursday, October 30, 6:30 pm** -- Lafayette Library, Homework Center, hosted by the Lafayette Library



OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS

Proposed Refinery Closure Will Impact County



This is a summary of an important local climate/environment issue from the LWVDV Action Advocacy meeting of August 18, 2025

The **Valero refinery in Benicia** has **announced its closure** in April of 2026, which will have a significant impact on many local communities in

Contra Costa County. Here is some context around the Valero closure.

- There are three traditional gas/oil refineries and two “renewable diesel” refineries in the Bay Area. Contra Costa has four and Solano/Benicia has one.
- The Valero/Benicia refinery that has announced closure this year produces gasoline. It is the second gasoline refinery to announce closure in 2025. The other is in SoCal (Phillips 66).
- In addition to the anticipated impact on gasoline production, the Valero refinery is responsible for 20% of Benicia’s tax revenue.
- While Valero is in Benicia, there is still a ripple effect in Contra Costa. The fact is that refineries provide a foundation for much of the Contra Costa economy. For example, Chevron provides 30% of Richmond’s tax base and there are huge multiplier effects.

If California plans to meet its legislatively mandated goals to move away from fossil fuels, and towards safer, cleaner and more sustainable alternatives, **we need to understand this impact and plan for it.**

This is a hugely complicated topic with real implications for transforming our county. Links are provided below for additional information on the economic, social, and political implications.

What the Legislature is considering:

If folks want to hear what the legislature is considering right now, there was an Informational Hearing held on August 20. It was a Joint Oversight Hearing of the Assembly Utilities and Energy, Natural Resources, and Transportation Committees, and focused on the refinery and transportation fuel situation.

To see, or hear, a recording of the meeting, please [go to this link](#).
[If you go to Media Archive site you can download video, audio and captions.](#)

Webinars and podcasts:

The Climate Center’s webinar held on July 31, [Planning for Refinery Closures that Benefit Workers, Communities, and the Environment](#), featured the mayor of Benicia as well as representatives from the Contra Costa Labor Council, the California Energy Commission, and a community environmental organization.

Valerie Ventre-Hutton

Public Forum: Hazardous Materials Safety for Residents

Thursday, September 22, 4-6 pm

- **In-person:** 1025 Escobar Street (arrive early, doors open at 3:30 pm)

- **Online:** cchealth.zoom.us/j/99537244542 (no preregistration required)

Learn about:

- Household hazardous waste and pharmaceutical disposal
- Rechargeable batteries safety
- Hazardous Materials Incident Prevention and Response
- Community Warning System
- Reporting odors and air pollution

This forum will be recorded and the recording posted on the Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials Commission [webpage](#).

Board Briefs for August 2025

At its meeting on August 14, the Board took the following actions:



- Appointed Brooke Schwartz to the Board.
- Approved the Executive Committee for 2025-26: Mary Schreiber, Kathy Gallagher, Paul Derksen, Anne Granlund, Shawn Gilbert.
- Approved the formation of a Youth Council as part of LWVDV and appointed Shawn Gilbert and Paul Derksen as co-advisors to the Youth Council.
- Approved taking a neutral position on the LWVC Action Alert on redistricting and decided to send a letter of concern to LWVC.
- Appointed Leslie Winslow and Kim Homes to the Financial Review Committee.
- Appointed Karen Dolder and Brooke Schwartz as Board members of the Nominating Committee.

The Board also

- Discussed holding a full-day retreat in October.
 - Noted the opportunity to table for the LWV at the Cyndi Lauper Farewell Tour on August 26th.
 - Heard plans for the next Unite & Rise rally and the September 3 panel discussion.
 - Learned that Fact Over Fiction has an improved presentation, new speakers, and a full calendar.
 - Received team reports including Action-Advocacy, Communications, Community Conversations, Fact Over Fiction, Immigration, Membership, Observers, and Voter Services.
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Membership Updates and Information

Welcome new members Linda Bailey, Judith Sweet, Kimberly Powleson, Ann Vandepol, Emily Sabet, Mathilda (Matty) Varban, Kiley Martz, and Roberta Whitman!

Thank you to our Renewing Members!

We very much appreciate our continuing members. With more members, our voice is stronger.

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 (*preferred*), or send a check made out to LWVUS to the LWVDV address at the end of this Voter (*only if you have no other option*). **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!**

Want to learn more about LWVDV? **Join us at a new/prospective member Orientation! See below for the September dates and links to RSVP! September orientations are online only this month (Zoom) so please RSVP and we will send you the zoom link after registering:**

Friday 09/12 at 4 pm

Zoom only <https://evite.me/UCRzrPHmK8>

Saturday 09/13 at 9 am

Zoom only <https://evite.me/h4ukh4GuHz>

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.)

Image credits: Community Conversations, Contra Costa Library; Liberty, LWVDV; chairs, Beth Mills; Bar Camino, restaurant website; Info, Anne Nygard on Unsplash; Constitution, wynpnt on Pixabay; League

members with signs, LWVDV; Professor Amar, Wikimedia; SUFFS, their publicity used with permission; computer, pixel2013 on Pixabay; Valero refinery, Downtowngal on Creative Commons, CC 3.0.

CALENDAR of MONTHLY MEETINGS

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

Wednesday, Sept 10, 11:30 am	Luncheon
Thursday, Sept 11, 10:00 am	Board Meeting
Monday, Sept 15, 3 pm	Action-Advocacy
Wednesday, Oct 8, 11:30 am	Luncheon
Thursday, Oct 9, 10:00 am	Board Retreat
Monday, Oct 20, 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 2026):

[Mary Schreiber](#), *President*

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

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

[Paul Derksen](#), *Treasurer*

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

[Anna Honda](#), *Action-Advocacy Co-Chair*

[Audra Ruthruff](#), *Membership Chair*

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

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

[Janet Hoy](#), *Civic Engagement Chair*

[Kathryn Wilder](#), *At-Large Board Member*

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

[Brooke Schwartz](#), *At-Large Board Member*

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Editor: Leslie Stewart

Current/past issues are posted on our [website](#).

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