

IN THIS ISSUE



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LWVUS CONVENTION REPORT

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, PART 2

POLICY ISSUE – COMMUNITY
CHOICE ENERGY

MY LEAGUE STORY – DIANE PARK

UPDATES ON LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

PROPOSITION 15 VIRTUAL
COMMUNITY FORUM

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was my great honor and pleasure to be one of LWVSJC's two delegates to this year's biennial national League Convention June 25 to 27. For the first time, and out of consideration for the COVID-19 pandemic, sessions were held using Zoom and other electronic platforms.

Despite constraints inherent in remote participation, great work was accomplished. Current positions were affirmed, new positions were approved, and over 20 caucuses were held over the week.

I attended several caucuses, including one on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. This by far was the most significant, with the caucus filled to capacity, and it was a reflection of the League's position on this issue. This issue, in fact, became in my opinion the default theme for the convention.

Delegates unanimously approved this motion:

We Resolve First, That the League advocates against systemic racism in the justice system and, at a minimum, for preventing excessive force and brutality by law enforcement. We also call for prompt actions by all League members to advocate within every level of government to eradicate systemic racism and the harm that it causes;

We Resolve Second, That the League help our elected officials and all Americans recognize these truths to be self-evident: that Black, Indigenous and all people of color deserve equal protection under the law; and that we demand solutions for the terrible wrongs done, so that regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, disability and gender identity or sexual orientation we may truly become a nation "indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." (Please see page 3 for additional motions passed by delegates.)

As your President for 2020-2021, I am proud to be a part of this national organization that is so



Gretchen Newby, President

committed to responsible and representative government, to equal opportunity for all, to safety in our communities, and to human rights. When I first joined the League in the 1980s in Santa Clara County, it was very clear that I had found a home with kindred spirits...with good and kind women and men who shared my values, my love of country, and a certain feistiness in the tradition of the founding mothers.

It was women from the League who encouraged me to apply to the Public Safety Commission, then the Juvenile Justice Commission, and then to launch a successful campaign for school board. It was those brave, caring and brilliant women who convinced me I could do it, and they stood by me the whole time.

They also taught me that women of privilege have an obligation to share that privilege with others.

I am humbled that you have chosen me to be your leader in this very important work. We are all in the right place, at the right time.

LWVUS CONVENTION REPORT

ADDITIONAL CONVENTION ACTIONS

In addition to resolutions addressing issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (see President's Message on page 2), LWVUS Convention delegates passed these motions:

- That the LWVUS calls for an immediate, wide-scale, mobilization by the United States, to restore, protect and fund an ecologically sustainable environment and climate...
- That we reaffirm our commitment to Immigration reform, for efficient, expeditious immigrant entry into the United States. The League stand in solidarity with immigrants...
- That we adopt the abolition of the Electoral College by Constitutional Amendment...
- That we oppose the Transfer of Federal Public Lands (strongly supported by League member in Indigenous territories and those states with a large Indigenous population)...

Delegates affirmed existing League positions in the areas of representative government, international relations, natural resources and social policy.

Delegates also adopted the 2020-2022 Campaign for Making democracy Work: focusing on voting rights, improving elections, and advocacy for the National Popular Vote Compact, Campaign Finance/Money in Politics and Redistricting and to continue to work on urgent issues: Climate Change, the Equal Rights Amendment, Health Care, Gun Safety and Immigration.

Board member Angelica Lizarraga was LWVUS's second delegate to the LWVUS convention. Says Angelica, "It was my honor to attend this year's historic national convention celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters. As a first-time delegate, I was awestruck by the wealth of information presented during the convention. Particularly, the Parliamentary session and voting on the National Program for 2020-2022 inspired me to become a stronger advocate for my community. It was truly an honor to be part of the decision making by casting my vote on issues identified as priorities (fair and impartial elections, voter rights, racial injustice, health care, immigration, LGBTQ rights and climate change). At the end of the convention, I was left with a strong sense of responsibility as I embraced the League's call to action during this crucial election year."



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Celebrating 100 Years of Women's Suffrage, Part 2

By Cate White

August 26, 2020, marks the 100-year anniversary of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to our Constitution, which grants women the right to vote. We often commemorate the achievement, but the path to it was not easy.

The Nineteenth Amendment was first introduced after the Supreme Court held in 1875 that the Constitution did not assure women the right to vote. It was voted down by the all-male Congress in 1878.

Defeated but determined, the women's movement stepped back to regroup. It re-emerged as the National American Women's Suffrage Association (NAWSA), led initially by Susan B. Anthony and later by Carrie Chapman Catt. Refused at the federal level, the organization began working to pass women's suffrage state by state.

The first state to ratify was Wyoming in 1890, perhaps hoping to lure more women to the sparsely populated, primarily male state. Western states in general were more likely to allow women to vote. In 1911, California was the sixth state to approve suffrage. Mid-western states began allowing women to vote in presidential elections only, but Southern and Eastern states still denied the franchise.

In 1913, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns of the NAWSA organized a parade of between 5,000 and 10,000 women to demand passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. The parade was held in

Washington, DC, just before the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson, in hopes of securing his support. Inez Milholland, dressed in white, famously rode a white horse at the head of the parade.

Impatient with the slow pace of the amendment's approval, Paul and Burns organized the even more militant National Women's Party (NWP) in 1916. In 1917, a group of about 200 members of the NWP were arrested for picketing, some chaining themselves to the fence around the White House grounds. About 100 of the women were jailed. Those jailed embarked on a hunger strike and were ultimately force-fed. Their commitment and the brutality of their treatment turned the tide of the nation's sentiments in favor of their cause.

The NAWSA, then led by Carrie Chapman Catt, combined with women's associations nationwide, bringing their numbers to about two million strong. A letter writing campaign to Congress, along with the fact that many women had entered the WWI workforce, increased pressure on Congress. In June, 1919, Congress passed the amendment with President Wilson's support. Many states hurried to adopt the amendment before the 1920 election. On August 26, 1920, Tennessee was the required 36th state to approve, and ratification was certified by the Secretary of State August 26, 1920. Sixty years later, on March 3, 1984, Mississippi was the last of the remaining states to ratify the amendment.

An Important Step in Decreasing Green House Gas Emissions

By Margo Praus

Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), also known as Community Choice Energy (CCE), is a local, not-for-profit governmental program that buys and may generate electrical power on behalf of its residents, businesses, and governmental entities. CCAs are governed by counties, cities, or a joint power authority (JPA) between the two.

A community might want to pursue Community Choice energy for

- Enhanced consumer choice
- Local control
- Designing programs that respond to community needs
- Expansion of renewable energy portfolios
- Local economic development
- Faster progress toward achieving a community's environmental goals.

A CCA simply replaces the line item on the electric bill for “generation.” The electrical utility (PG&E for most of San Joaquin County) continues to distribute and meter the energy and to handle billing. Once a local government votes to form a CCA, constituents are automatically enrolled and may opt out if they wish.

Stockton has taken the first step of seeking a consultant to identify options to pursue entering into a CCA. When the results of this feasibility

study are ready to be submitted to the City Council, LWVSJC would like to analyze and weigh in on the various options to be presented. The LWVC supports CCAs if the fiscal model used is reasonable in terms of good governance and protection of rate payers.

Currently, we are organizing small groups of constituents to reach out to their City Council member to encourage support for a CCA. Davis Harper, Stockton Community Outreach Specialist for The Climate Center, will assist with setting up the various Zoom or phone meetings and will be available at each meeting for technical assistance regarding Community Choice. If you are interested in participating in a meeting with your Council Member or if you'd like more information, please contact Margo Praus, 209-670-4442 or margopraus@msn.com.

Whether Stockton considers a CCA as one of many options to address Climate Change, one thing is clear – Community Choice is by far the biggest thing the city can do to address climate change. It can reduce Green House Gas emissions and has a huge, ready-made revenue stream with the potential for millions of dollars made available for reinvestment in local communities.



MY LEAGUE STORY – DIANE PARK

Almost 50 years ago, in 1973, Diane Park became involved in the League of Women Voters after being invited to a meeting by member JoAnne Talbot. The League has been an important part of Diane's life ever since.

"I was drawn to the League," she says, "because I was interested in advocacy—in having a voice in public policy. I made the decision based on the fact the League's opinion is sought for the California Ballot, and that their method of arriving at positions was through study and consensus."

Nuclear power soon drew the attention of both the San Joaquin County League and the State League. Rancho Seco Nuclear Power Plant was just 30 north of Stockton—"we were downwind," as Diane notes. "I joined a state League committee to work on this issue on a broader scale. I was able, on behalf of the SJC League, to give a statement in Sacramento to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission regarding the lack of monitoring and the absence of escape routes."

In 1983, SJC League member Marty Mosher convinced Diane to help at Lincoln High School with the influx of Southeast Asian Refugees. "From there,"



she says, "I found a career." She earned a teaching credential at UC Davis the same year her son graduated from High School – 1986. She taught English as a Second Language (ESL) at Delta College and at Catholic Charities with the Southeast Asian refugee community, work for which she received a Susan B. Anthony Woman of Achievement Award in 1991.

League member Sylvia Kothe asked Diane to participate with the Concerned Citizens Coalition of Stockton (CCCOS), which opposed OMI Thames purchasing the Stockton municipal water utility. It took almost a decade of citizen activism and legal maneuvering to return Stockton's water utility to public control. The effort led to a State League checklist for members to use when privatization of public water utilities is being considered.

Diane's experience as the legislative aide to then-County Supervisor Doug Wilhoit made her a desired addition to the State League board, on which she served from 1994-1998. She served as Government Policy Director, and later as LWVC Executive Vice President, before the time when LWVC had a paid executive director. She commuted from Stockton to Sacramento to oversee office staff, publications, councils and conventions.

She then worked for LWVC (1998-2000) as a paid Development Director, including undertaking a mentor program at UC Davis Alumni Association for a certificate in Development, her subsequent career.

Diane's name was submitted to serve on the national League board, but she was unable to do so because her husband, Dick, had had a stroke. He passed away in 2010.

Diane has recently resigned from the LWVSJC board of directors to spend more time with nieces with young children, but we continue to rely on her help on myriad matters. The League has been immensely fortunate over the years to benefit from her enthusiasm and commitment.

UPDATES ON LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

Welcome new Members and Friends of the San Joaquin County League of Women Voters!

Beatriz Bellesteros
Kimberly Bozeman
Margo Cortes
Paula Elias

Cynthia Lau
Laurie Thompson
Eno UtoUko
Melissa Williams

LWVC Cosponsors California Racial Justice Act

LWVC is a cosponsor of AB 2200, the California Racial Justice Act, which would prohibit the state from seeking or obtaining a criminal conviction, or from imposing a sentence, based upon race, ethnicity or national origin. Specifically, the Act would make it possible for a person charged or convicted of a crime to challenge racial bias in their case, as shown through evidence of:

- Explicit racial bias by an attorney, judge, law enforcement officer, expert witness, or juror involved in the case.
- Use of racially discriminatory language in court and during the criminal proceedings, whether or not intentional.
- Racial bias in jury selection, such as removing all or nearly all people of color from the jury.
- Statistical disparities in charging and convictions – that is, evidence that people of one race are proportionately charged or convicted of a specific crime or enhancement.
- Statistical disparities in sentencing – that is, evidence that people of one race receive longer or more severe sentences, including the death penalty or life without parole.

California's Unruh Civil Rights Act prohibits racial discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodation. It is time to establish a statewide policy that makes it unlawful to discriminate against people of color in the state's criminal justice system.

The California Racial Justice Act will take a clear and profound step towards establishing a clear prohibition on the use of race, ethnicity or national origin in seeking or obtaining convictions or sentences.

2020-2021 LWVSJC Board of Directors and Portfolios

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Voter Services/Speakers Bureau –
Dee Matteucci, Bea Lingenfelter
Advocacy – Cate White, Margo Praus
Voter Editors – Jane Wagner-Tyack,
Mary Kenefick

*The Board of Directors appointed Jeri Bigbee as 2nd Vice President in July 2020 following Diane Park's resignation.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

PROPOSITION 15 VIRTUAL COMMUNITY FORUM



On September 23rd from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. LWVSJC is hosting an online community forum in support of the Schools and Communities First Initiative (Proposition 15 Fair and Balanced Reform) in collaboration with Faith in the Valley San Joaquin, the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton, and the California Alliance of Retired Americans Central Valley Action Committee.



Speakers include **Helen Hutchinson**, League of Women Voters state and local advocacy leader since 1969, followed by a panel of local leaders who will address the impact of Proposition 15 on San Joaquin County. Panelists include **Candalaria Vargas**, Stockton Unified School District Board member; **Pastor Trena Turner**, Executive Director of Faith in the Valley; and **Margo Praus**, California Alliance of Retired Americans Central Valley Action Team member.

Proposition 15 closes commercial property tax loopholes benefiting a fraction of corporations and wealthy investors, without affecting homeowners or renters, and reclaims \$12 billion every year for California’s schools, essential workers, and local governments – all while protecting homeowners and renters, small businesses, and agriculture.

The League of Women Voters of California and LWVSJC support this measure because it:

- RECLAIMS over \$12 billion per year for K-12 schools, community colleges and local communities.
- CLOSES commercial property tax loopholes and ends shady schemes that big corporations and wealthy investors use to avoid paying their fair share of property taxes.
- PROTECTS all homeowners and renters by maintaining tax protections for ALL residential property.
- INVESTS in educating all of our kids and in the vital services necessary to support our families and communities.
- PROVIDES the single largest tax incentive in a generation to spur new investment in small businesses.
- LEVELS the playing field for all the businesses that already pay their fair share.
- ENSURES strict accountability so that money goes directly to our students and communities.

Mark your calendars, and watch your email or the LWVSJC webpage for registration details.