

THE VOTER

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
www.lwvstanislaus.org



2025-2026 Board of Directors

President
Amy Wolfe

Vice President
Angelina Ceja

Secretary
Anita Bruce

Treasurer
Ellen Meyer

State Action - Water
Seena Rhine

State Action - Health
Terry Shanahan

Local Action
Colleen Preston

Membership
Colleen Norby
Laurie Carley

Finance Drive
Theresa Kiehn

Voter Service
Jennie Sweeney
Marsha Waggoner

Public Relations: Membership
Marie Bairey

Public Relations: Public
Vivian Lopez

Voter Editor
Jane Manley

Website Manager
Stella Berattis

Nominating Chair
Vivian Lopez

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Amy Wolfe
LWVSC President

Dear LWVSC Members and Friends,

I am truly honored to be serving as your President for the coming year. The League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County (LWVSC) has played an important part in my life since moving to Modesto in 2004. At that time, having just left a role working in our State Assembly and being disheartened by the polarizing gubernatorial recall of Gray Davis, I was eager to find an outlet for my civic duty and commitment to community. League was the answer!

I vividly remember that group of women being kind, welcoming, and eager to embrace my youthful energy. Our Board meetings at the Modesto Peace Life Center, with Myrtle Osner bustling about like the Mother Hen that she was, gave me purpose and helped me feel like I was part of this new community.

Fast forward 21 years and I am deeply grateful to all the women and men whose paths I have crossed in my various capacities volunteering with the LWVSC. Your collective commitment to our organizational values, in particular our dedication to impartial, balanced civic education, inspire and motivate me. I am so proud that we have been the preeminent provider of balanced, thorough candidate forums and ballot initiative education for decades.

Over the coming year, I look forward to lending my experience, relationships, and energy for the betterment of the LWVSC. We will bring our historical experience to this fall's special election, while infusing our outreach and education with new technology and initiatives. I am thrilled with our Meet & Learn speaker line-up and am deeply grateful to our sponsors, whose support helps ensure we can be mindful of increasing costs for everyone.

I want to encourage each of you to share this newsletter with your circle of family and friends, book clubs, faith groups, and other affinity networks. Growing our membership is vital to sustaining our efforts to educate and engage our communities. At any time, if you want to connect with me, feel free to reach out to amy@mujeres-poderosas.com or call 209-499-4091.

In service,

Amy

LWVSC Board Meeting Highlights

August 2025

The LWVSC Board of Directors met on August 13, 2025, to conduct its regular business. Highlights are below.

- New members joined the LWVSC Board this year - welcome to Theresa Kiehn and Anita Bruce!
- The report from LWV California's convention provided a comprehensive list of topics to focus on for the year. (See separate article from VP Angelina Ceja.)
- Membership will be a priority for 2025-26, both adding new members and engaging the membership in community activities.

Welcome New LWVSC Board Members

Anita Bruce, Secretary

Anita Bruce is excited to be the Recording Secretary for the LWV. She retired in 2020 after teaching in Modesto City Schools for 30 years and looks forward to this next chapter. A "joiner," she enjoys putting energy into social causes, in particular those close to home where she can see the benefits. For the last 5 years, she has been president of the Alpha Epsilon Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International, an international organization for women educators. K-12 education is of special interest to her. She joined LWVSC to engage in local policy and political action to affect change close to home and is excited to become familiar with the dynamic community leaders and organizations in Stanislaus County and see where to direct her energy to benefit this community. Married for 43 years to husband, Dan, she has 3 adult children, 1 granddaughter and another on the way! She looks forward to developing relationships in the League and learning more about the needs of Stanislaus County.

Theresa Kiehn, Finance Drive

Theresa Kiehn is the President & CEO of AgSafe, a nonprofit dedicated to advancing the health and safety of agricultural workers and their employers through training and resources. She works closely with growers, farm labor contractors, and community organizations to promote workplace safety, compliance, and workforce development. In addition to her professional role, Theresa lends her time to local and statewide initiatives, serving on nonprofit boards and supporting community-based organizations that strengthen agriculture and civic life in the Central Valley. A lifelong resident of the region, she is passionate about fostering leadership and building a stronger, more connected community.

LWV California 2025 Convention

By: Angelina Ceja, Vice President

LWVSC President, Amy Wolfe, and I had the opportunity to virtually attend the 2025 League of Women Voters of California (LWVC) Convention that took place in June. It was an inspiring and productive experience. The event featured incredible speakers, including Dianna Wynn, LWVUS President, who shared valuable insights on the future of our democracy and the role Leagues play in shaping it.

We also learned about innovative outreach strategies and youth voter initiatives from Leagues across the state. Hearing how other chapters are engaging their communities was both motivating and encouraging.

Program Recommendations for 2025-2027

One of the major focuses of the convention was reviewing and adopting the proposed program for 2025-2027. Key recommendations included:

- Retaining all existing LWVC positions
- No new studies or update studies for the 2025-2027 cycle
- Adoption of three issues for emphasis:
- Making Democracy Work in California – including redistricting, civic education, response to changing federal policies, misinformation, voter participation and rights, money in politics, threats to the Constitution, informed information access, reproductive rights and justice, citizen participation, free speech, equal rights, and government transparency.
- Climate Change – with focus on water resources, natural disaster response and wildfire management, climate-smart infrastructure, and air quality.
- Housing and Homelessness – including disaster relief reform.

Secondary priorities were identified as Immigration and Criminal Justice.

Leadership and Governance

The convention also included the election of the 2025-2027 slate of LWVC officers and Board of Directors. In addition, attendees reviewed the financial report and proposed budget, ensuring the organization remains positioned for sustainable operations in the coming years. On the final day, delegates also considered proposed bylaw amendments, underscoring the League's commitment to responsive and transparent governance.

(continued on page 6)

Voter Service Needs You!

Anticipating the special election in November, the voter service committee will be planning events and opportunities for members to receive information about the special election issue, redistricting.

Message from Jennie Sweeney, Voter Service Chair:

Hello All!

We welcome any and all help with the Voter Service activities! Please watch your email for invitations to participate. As we get closer to Election Day, events are planned to help you make informed voting choices. If you would like to join the voter service committee, or have an idea for our committee, contact me.

I am especially interested in getting help with forming relationships with other civic organizations. If you are someone with contacts, please let me know.

Jennie Sweeney
Voter Service Committee Chair
jenniesweeney@gmail.com or 209 404 4414

Follow Us On Social Media

Throughout the year, our social media accounts will provide important reminders for elections. Like, follow and share with your networks!



@lwvstanislauscounty



@lwvstanco

Modest Rotary Club Senior Stride

September 19, 2025

Our LWVSC will be participating in the Modesto Rotary Club's 34th Senior Walk on September 19, 2025, from 7:00 am to 12:00 noon.

We will have a table with information about our League.

Membership forms and Information will be available. If you are interested in assisting us at our table, please contact the League at 209-324-3375.

If you wish to participate in the walk, register by contacting Modesto Rotary:

<https://www.modestorotary.org/sr-stride>



LWV California Convention, continued:

Closing Thoughts

Overall, the 2025 LWVC Convention was a valuable opportunity to connect with League members across the state, celebrate ongoing achievements, and set the direction for the years ahead.

The shared energy and commitment to strengthening democracy, addressing climate change, and advancing social justice leave us both optimistic and motivated to carry this work forward in our own community.

Democracy is not a spectator sport: Thank You, Board Members!

Again this year, your L WVSC Board of Directors consists of dedicated community volunteers, committed to promoting democracy in our area, our state, and nationally. We endeavor to provide education and encourage voter participation. Anita Bruce and Theresa Kiehn, our newest members, are especially welcome.

Thank you: Stella, Colleen P, Anita, Marsha, Jane, Angelina, Colleen N, Laurie, Theresa, Seena, Vivian, Marie, Terry, Jennie, Ellen, and Amy!

Membership Renewal

Are you up to date with your L WVSC membership?

Beginning in May this year, the US League of Women Voters created an on-line system for joining and renewing members of the L WV.

There are two ways to renew:

1) Online, go to lwvstanislaus.org and click "JOIN" until you get to our local league, League of Women Voters Stanislaus County, and follow instructions. (Some membership categories have changed.)

OR

2) Write a check for \$75.00 to L WVUS and send it to our mailing address:

PO Box E, Modesto, CA 95352. Dues are processed at the national level and a portion of them go to the local league.



upcoming events

SAVE THE DATE

Plans for the 2025-26 year are shaping up and we are excited to share them with you. Please mark your calendars for the upcoming events. Details will follow.

Meet & Learn Lunches

September 18, 2025
October 16, 2025
November 20, 2025
January 22, 2026
February 19, 2026
March 19, 2026
April 16, 2026

Holiday Fling

December 10, 2025

Annual Member Meeting

May 13, 2026

Welcome New Members!

Welcome to the new members joined us in recent months:

Isabella Barry
Melissa Barry
Kathleen Heinzinger
Joyce Hickman
Barbara Owens
Lyn Raible



MEET & LEARN

September 18, 2025

Sheriff Jeff Dirkse

Immigration Update

** Registration now open! **

October 16, 2025

Joe Kieta and Misty Avila

Central Valley Journalism

Collaborative

*Modesto Focus and the Local
Journalism Movement*

November 20, 2025

Marvin Jacobo

City Ministry Network

*Building the Latino Leadership
Initiative*

January 22, 2026

Randy Fiorini

Farmer and Water Expert

*5 Most Pressing Water Issues in
California*

February 19, 2026

Amanda Hughes

Stanislaus 2030

Childcare Expansion

March 19, 2026

April 16, 2026

Topics of focus

Homelessness in Stanislaus County
Civic Education & Community Connection

All luncheons held at Gather, 2424 McHenry Avenue, Modesto

Cost: \$30 per person

Register online only at www.lwvstanislaus.org

No day-of registrations or payment at the door.

Thank you to our Meet & Learn Sponsors



Kay and Mike Christensen

Anonymous Marie Bairey Kenni and Lou Friedman Theresa Kiehn Angelina Ceja



MEET & LEARN

September 18, 2025

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

Gather, 2424 McHenry Avenue, Modesto

Stanislaus County Sheriff Jeff Dirkse

Sheriff Dirkse will provide an update on the state of immigration enforcement across our community. He will also offer his perspective on the impending update to the county's emergency dispatch system and is open to questions.

Cost: \$30 per person

Register online at www.lwvstanislaus.org or scan:



Advanced registrations online required. Deadline is September 15, 2025.

Thank you to our Meet & Learn Sponsors



Kay and Mike Christensen

Anonymous Marie Bairey Kenni and Lou Friedman Theresa Kiehn Angelina Ceja



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF STANISLAUS COUNTY



JOIN TODAY

*League
Mission*

Empowering
Voters.
Defending
Democracy.

Scan to learn more
and join!



Membership

Join the League of Women Voters and be part of an organization that is:

- **Empowering** millions to exercise their right to vote by holding voter registration drives, sponsoring candidate forums, and informing the public about their rights on Election Day.
- **Protecting** the right to vote against threats and ensuring that every vote is counted by fighting for voting systems that are free, fair, and accessible.
- **Advocating** for positive change at the local, state, and national level on issues such as land use, water management, and education.
- **Fostering** civil dialogue about important community issues, such as immigration, economic development, and healthcare.

Nonpartisan

The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

Our History

Established in 1920 as women were gaining the right to vote, the League is one of the nation's most respected community-based organizations. In addition to our work in elections, League volunteers work on issues of local importance, from education to land use and housing.

Learn more about LWVSC and join at
www.lwvstanislaus.org

