



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

July 2026 Volume 60, Number 1

In this Issue

<i>President's Message</i> -----	1
<i>Our Annual Meeting</i> -----	2
<i>Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport</i> ----	3
<i>Our Annual Convention</i> -----	5

Calendar

Program Calendar Planning Meeting

Thursday, July 23, 10:00 a.m.

Online

Interested? Contact Barbara Lewis for link

Bobbi44@gmail.com

Notes on Upcoming Programs

Election Pros & Cons

Saturday, October 3

Aptos Library

Meet with Elected Representatives

Early 2027

There will also be upcoming programs on
Housing Affordability and Local Healthcare
Issues.

Is It Time for Your Renewal?

If renewal time is coming up for you, this is the
page with the renewal link:

<https://my.lwv.org/california/santa-cruz-county/join>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thank you to Pam Newbury for all her work making arrangements for our LWVSCC Annual Meeting, which took place June 28 at the Crow's Nest, to all our board members for their support, and to all who managed to attend at this busy time of year. **Nicole Coburn, County CEO**, was an excellent speaker, and we managed to complete our business meeting sooner than expected thanks to the concise delivery of all who presented and cooperation from other members.

In addition to chairing this business meeting, I served with Marilyn Radisch as one of our two allotted delegates to the LWVUS convention, which was hybrid this year, so we could participate without going to Columbus, Ohio. I found the convention fascinating, particularly the Friday and Saturday sessions on the program. Two proposals recommended by the LWVUS Board of Directors, one on **Democracy Under Siege**, and the second a concurrence with the **LWV Washington State Immigrant Rights** position, passed with overwhelming majorities on Friday, with many cheers accompanying the passage of the Immigrant Rights position, which will be included in the next Impact on Issues. There was a debate on Friday as to whether or not to include several non-recommended program items on Saturday's agenda. Both the proposals from Colorado on religious freedom, which includes opposing Christian nationalism, and the one from Port Washington New York to update the privatization position received the majority needed, but a proposal for a two year study on money did not. The vote for the Colorado State concurrence on freedom of religion received a 2/3

vote of participating delegates on Saturday afternoon, which followed the hard-fought advocacy of delegates from Colorado about the need for this to be a national rather than simply a state position for success in court cases that are happening. The privatization update received a majority but not the 2/3 vote required for non-recommended items, so will not be included in the upcoming Impact on Issues or used for LWVUS court advocacy. When asked how LWVUS decided to make the Immigrant Rights position the recommended one, the reply was that 90 out of 100 Leagues voted for it. Our Santa Cruz County LWV members who attended the National Program Planning session at Sandy Warren's voted unanimously to support the proposal on religious freedom, so we were one of the ten Leagues that listed this as first choice. The impressive advocacy of the Colorado delegates, who presented the case for making this a LWVUS position by concurrence, played a major role in securing the 2/3 vote needed to adopt this as a national position. I found the program discussion, both before and at the plenary sessions, one highlight of this well-run LWVUS convention.

---Barbara Lewis, President LWVSCC

OUR ANNUAL MEETING

The following is an edited AI generated summary of Nicole's excellent overview of Santa Cruz County's budget, fiscal challenges, priorities, and strategies for managing a structural deficit.

Reasoning and Approach

To summarize the key county budget highlights, Nicole reviewed the FY 2026-27 Santa Cruz County budget overview, focusing on major financial figures, strategies for closing the budget gap, workforce impacts, service priorities, and identified risks. The summary below distills the most important points for a clear, actionable understanding.

Key Budget Highlights

Balanced Budget Amid Deficit Pressures

- The County delivered a balanced \$1.3 billion All Funds budget, closing a projected \$23.2 million deficit for FY 2026-27.
- No layoffs were required; all position eliminations targeted vacant roles.
- The budget relies on \$43.1 million in one-time resources, including \$30.8 million from reserves and \$12.2 million from trust funds. These funds will not be available in FY 2027-28, posing ongoing risks to fiscal stability.

Workforce Adjustments

- Funded positions: 2,677.28 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE), a net reduction of 62.88 FTE from the previous year, all from vacant positions.
- Largest reductions occurred in Health Services Agency (-23.1 FTE) and Human Services Department (-24.5 FTE) due to federal funding cuts and eligibility changes.
- A countywide hiring freeze is in effect for vacant General Fund positions, with limited exceptions for public safety and direct services.

Three Levers Used to Close the Gap

- **Cost Reductions:** Hiring and travel freezes, targeted service and supply cuts, and realigned salary savings.
- **Revenue Actions:** Updated reimbursement rates, fee increases, and enhanced revenue projections.

- **One-Time Resources:** Significant use of reserves and trust funds to buffer federal funding impacts.

Service Priorities and Investments

- **Mandated Services:** Remain the top funding priority (public safety, health, social services, etc.).
- **Core Initiatives Preserved:**
 - **AI & Organization Modernization** (AI workplan, code updates, new Alternate Public Defender's Office)
 - **Roads, Parks & Infrastructure** (Measure K funds for roadwork and parks)
 - **Housing & Homelessness** (funding for housing studies, homelessness reduction, and maintaining CORE contracts)
 - **Public Safety & Justice** (sustained funding at \$216.6M, new Alternate Public Defender's Office to reduce heavy caseloads).

Fiscal Risks and Outlook

- **Structural Imbalance:** Without permanent corrective action, the deficit is projected to reach \$67.5 million by FY 2028-29.
- **Federal and State Risks:** Federal legislation (H.R. 1) and pending state budget decisions threaten further reductions, especially in health and social services.
- **Reserves:** After planned drawdown, reserves will drop to 10.3% of General Fund expenses, just above the minimum target.

Board-Adopted Budget Principles

- Maintain mandates and generate revenue
- Balance impacts across departments
- Address workload and cost shifts
- Build ongoing fiscal capacity

Examples of Implementation:

- The County avoided layoffs by targeting only vacant positions for elimination and using one-time funds to buffer service impacts.
- Investments in modernization and infrastructure were preserved despite fiscal constraints, demonstrating a commitment to long-term priorities.

This summary provides a clear snapshot of the County's budget approach, priorities, and challenges for FY 2026-27.

--Many thanks to Jane Cohen and her AI partner for the documentation of Nicole's presentation

Annual Meeting – Business Session

Here is a link to the business decisions made at the annual meeting:

<https://my.lwv.org/california/santa-cruz-county/minutes-2024-2025>

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote, is formally adopted into the U.S. Constitution by proclamation of Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby. The amendment was the culmination of more than 70 years of struggle by woman suffragists. Its two sections read simply: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be

denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex" and "Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

America's woman suffrage movement was founded in the mid-19th century by women who had become politically active through their work in the abolitionist and temperance movements. In July 1848, 200 women suffragists, organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, met in Seneca Falls, New York, to discuss women's rights. After approving measures asserting the right of women to educational and employment opportunities, they passed a resolution that declared "it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise." For proclaiming a woman's right to vote, the Seneca Falls Convention was subjected to public ridicule, and some backers of women's rights withdrew their support. However, the resolution marked the beginning of the woman suffrage movement in America.

The first national woman's rights convention was held in 1850 and then repeated annually, providing an important focus for the growing woman suffrage movement. In the Reconstruction era, the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was adopted, granting African American men the right to vote, but Congress declined to expand enfranchisement into the sphere of gender. In 1869, the National Woman Suffrage Association was founded by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to push for a woman suffrage amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Another organization, the American Woman Suffrage Association, led by Lucy Stone, was formed in the same year to work through the state legislatures. In 1890, these two groups were united as the National American Woman Suffrage Association. That year, Wyoming became the first state to grant women the right to vote.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the role of women in American society was changing

drastically: Women were working more, receiving a better education, bearing fewer children, and three more states (Colorado, Utah, and Idaho) had yielded to the demand for female enfranchisement. In 1916, the National Woman's Party (formed in 1913 at the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage) decided to adopt a more radical approach to woman suffrage. Instead of questionnaires and lobbying, its members picketed the White House, marched, and staged acts of civil disobedience.

In 1917, America entered World War I, and women aided the war effort in various capacities that helped break down most of the remaining opposition to woman suffrage. By 1918, women had acquired equal suffrage with men in 15 states, and both the Democratic and Republican parties openly endorsed female enfranchisement.

In January 1918, the woman suffrage amendment passed the House of Representatives with the necessary two-thirds majority vote. In June 1919, it was approved by the Senate and sent to the states for ratification. Campaigns were waged by suffragists around the country to secure ratification, and on August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the amendment, giving it the two-thirds majority of state ratification necessary to make it the law of the land.

The package containing the certified record of the action of the Tennessee legislature was sent by train to the nation's capital, arriving in the early hours of August 26. At 8 a.m. that morning, Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby signed it without ceremony at his residence in Washington. None of the leaders of the woman suffrage movement were present when the proclamation was signed, and no photographers or film cameras recorded the event. That afternoon, Carrie Chapman Catt, head of the National American Suffrage Association, was received at the White House by President Woodrow Wilson and Edith Wilson, the first lady.

This is from **History.com**, but there is more. This is what a few of the White House demonstrators endured:

- 40 prison guards went on a rampage, beating the 33 women who demonstrated outside the White House.
- The guards beat Lucy Burns, then chained her hands to the bars above her head and left her hanging for the night.
- Guards hurled Dora Lewis into a dark cell, smashed her head against an iron bed and knocked her out cold.

So – some of us women don’t vote because-why?? We have carpool duties? We have to get to work? Our vote doesn’t matter? It’s raining? It’s inconvenient?

Well, we need to remember what those women before us went through to get us the vote – so – whichever party you belong to, **REMEMBER TO VOTE!!!**

---Thanks to Nancy Ball for providing this thought-provoking information

UNITE AND RISE – OUR ANNUAL CONVENTION

The League recently welcomed more than 800 members to Columbus, Ohio (as well as over 400 attending virtually) for our 2026 National Convention. Over four days, members from across the country came together to learn, collaborate and prepare for the work ahead – electing new national leadership, setting the League’s priorities for the next biennium, and recommending to Unite & Rise 8.5 as we mobilize communities to strengthen democracy and drive record participation in the 2026 midterm elections.

The grassroots nature of the League is what sets it apart from other organizations and contributes to our continued success. 2024-26 League President

Dianna Wynn emphasized this during her speech to delegates.

“We are not built from the top down. We are built from the ground up.

The League has always been rooted in community. In local leadership. In volunteers who show up because they believe in something bigger than themselves.

And I believe that we are only beginning to tap into the full potential of grassroots power. And remember that change should not weaken our grassroots, but when done well, it will strengthen them.”

The League also elected a new national Board President, **Sania Irwin**, who joined the League of Women Voters of Glen Ellyn, Illinois in 2018. That same year, Irwin spearheaded the League’s nonpartisan Get Out the Vote (GOTV) effort, increasing voter participation in low-turnout precincts by five percentage points. An active and respected civic leader, Irwin has organized public forums and town halls on issues including campaign finance, freedom of the press, health care, education, and immigration, helping to inform voters and inspire civic participation.

“I am deeply honored to serve as President of the League of Women Voters during such a consequential moment for our democracy,” said Sania. “The League has always met history with courage, conviction, and action. Today, we are called to be an unshakable, visible force for a just and inclusive democracy. **Together, we will continue building a League that equips people to organize, advocate, educate, and lead so that power remains where it belongs: with the people.**