

LWV Constitutional Amendment Consensus Meeting

Saturday, October 31, 1:00 – 4:00 pm

West Valley College, Campus Center

14000 Fruitvale Ave. Saratoga

Park in Lot 5

Mark Your Calendar & Prepare to

Be a Part of This Important Decision

with the Southwest Santa Clara Valley League

Our SWSCV League is joining other Leagues across the nation in a Constitutional Amendment Study. The Consensus Meeting on Saturday, Oct. 31 will examine how the League should evaluate proposed amendments to the US Constitution. Numerous recent proposals for Constitutional Amendments by groups as a result of the Citizens United Supreme Court ruling and related issues involving campaign finance provide incentive for this Study. LWV has not previously established a position on how to consider and evaluate proposed Constitutional Amendments.

The framers of the Constitution deliberately made it difficult, but not impossible to add amendments. Article V of the Constitution specifies that 2/3s vote of both houses of Congress must approve a proposed amendment. Alternatively, the legislatures of 2/3s of the states may ask Congress to call a Convention to propose amendments to the Constitution. In either case the proposed amendments must be ratified by 3/4s of the States. As a result of these stringent requirements, Congresses have typically taken the legislative route to accomplish their agendas rather than constitutional revision.

Such restraint has been and remains important because constitutional amendments bind not only our generation, but future generations as well. Thomas Jefferson warned that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes.

There have been 33 amendments submitted to the states, beginning with the Bill of Rights. Of these, 27 were approved; 26 are currently in effect, while one – the 18th Amendment (Prohibition) — was subsequently repealed by the 21st Amendment. The 21st Amendment also stands out as the only amendment ratified by conventions in the states, rather than by state legislatures. The second method of amendment, an Article V Convention, has never been successfully invoked.

The LWV believes it is right and permissible to amend the Constitution of the United States when circumstances demand. The League was born from the successful, decades-long effort to pass the 19th Amendment. The central question is: what are the shared values and beliefs within the League - what consensus do we have - regarding the circumstances that might compel the League to endorse a constitutional amendment or an Article V Convention? If we come to consensus on some of the principles that should guide us, mobilizing LWV to advocacy for or against a particular amendment would fall under established League protocol.

Our Constitutional Amendment Consensus Meeting will discuss these issues and attempt to reach agreement on 15 Consensus Questions. The issues will be presented by SWSCV's Constitutional Amendment Study Committee: Danice and Tom Picraux (co-chairs), Liz Gibbons, Meg Giberson, Dale Hill, Emily Lo, Cherri Nelson, Marico Sayoc, and Patty Weber. The San Jose-Santa Clara and the Los Altos-Mountain View Leagues will join us and will also be seeking their members' consensus opinions.

Schedule:

1:00 Welcomes

1:15 Overview of the Constitutional Amendment study

1:45 Discussion and decisions on the 15 Consensus questions

3:45 Wrap-up

Directions: Exit Highway 85 South on Saratoga Rd., turn left onto Fruitvale Ave. From Fruitvale Ave. turn left (East) onto Admissions Way and park in Lot 5 on the left or the right. Follow the League signs down the central walkway to the Campus Center.

For consensus questions and additional information see:

<http://lwvnet.org/ca/cs/files/Qs-ConstitutionalAmendment.pdf>

For questions call Danice & Tom Picraux at (408) 356-8129 or Email dpicraux@gmail.com