



# The Sacramento Voter

## January 2017



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### Happy New Year!

It is a new calendar year and time to begin thinking about our new League year and program planning.

January and February units will discuss our local and state agenda for the 2017-2019 League year. What are our priorities? Where should we focus our energy in the next two years at the state level? Where should we focus our energy at the local level for the next League year June 2017-June 2018? What are the issues of concern to us at the city and county level? How can we have an impact on a local issue through our education and advocacy efforts? How can we help "Make Democracy Work?"

As a grassroots organization we can set the agenda and we need your input and participation. League members at our annual meeting and delegates at the LWVC) State Convention in June will be making decisions about this agenda based on our program planning recommendations due in February. Don't miss these important discussions at a unit meeting listed in this *Voter*.

At the last Board meeting the Board voted to add three general meetings with speakers to our schedule and partner with other interested groups. Our first 2017 general meeting will be in March and we promise a very interesting and informative evening! Stay tuned ...

The League of Women Voters of the United States supports the National Popular Vote Compact (NPV) to elect the President. The LWVUS does not support the Electoral College as a method for electing the President. You can follow the progress of NPV, see what states have signed on (only 105 electoral votes until enactment) and get answers to questions such as What about the small states? What about big cities? What about constitutionality? Fraud? Election administration? Recounts? and much more.

Go to [www.nationalpopularvote.org](http://www.nationalpopularvote.org) and to "answering myths" top of the page.

Paula and Nancy

### EVENTS

Unit Meetings, Monday-Tuesday, January 9-10, 2017, pg. 3

Board meeting January 10, 2017, 5:30 p.m. Bernadette Lynch's home, 5001 South Land Park Drive, 916 447-1347

[mimilavelle@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mimilavelle@sbcglobal.net)

Tuesday, January 31 2017, 6 :00 p.m. Joint Meeting on Homelessness & Housing with Mayor Steinberg, City Council & Sacramento County Supervisors. Location TBD

### Welcome New Members

Jessica Sinclair & Patricia Pavone

2016-2017

**Board of Directors**

**League of Women Voters of Sacramento County**  
 1107 9th Street, #300  
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 Catherine Troka, Membership Records

Voter editor-- Alice Ginosar  
 Voter publisher-- Eileen Heaser



[www.facebook.com/LWVSacramento](http://www.facebook.com/LWVSacramento)

**Sacramento League to Host State Convention**

Though the elections are behind us, the LWVSC is not stopping to rest. A creative and energetic planning team has been busy preparing for the League of Women Voters of California's biennial convention which will be held June 1-4, 2017, at the Sheraton Grand in downtown Sacramento. This year's theme is "A Capitol Connection," a nod to the role Sacramento plays in our state's political arena.

An impressive list of speakers and presenters is being assembled as we go to press. To give you a taste of what's in store, we are pleased to announce that Chris Hoene, Executive Director of the California Budget & Policy Center, will be one of the speakers. Chris was a hit at the 2013 convention in San Jose, and will be back to provide his insights and stories about public policy and finance.

Thursday, June 1, will be Lobby Day – a valuable opportunity to meet with our elected leaders to discuss issues of importance to our state and its 39 million residents. On Friday, June 2, our local league will host a dinner aboard the Delta King in Old Sacramento. Stay tuned for details on this lively event.

Additional highlights include a Silent Auction, a Marketplace – and best of all – an opportunity to meet and interact with women and men from throughout California who share our passion for civic participation and a more perfect democracy.

How can you help?

**Donate** to the Silent Auction. We are looking for quality, high-end items, such as a stay at a vacation cabin, airline miles, original art pieces, etc. Contact Silent Auction Chair Heather Skinkle at [heatherskinkle@gmail.com](mailto:heatherskinkle@gmail.com).

**Volunteer** to serve on the planning team. There are still LOTS of details to plan. Contact Nancy Compton at [ncompton43@att.net](mailto:ncompton43@att.net)

**Volunteer** to help on-the-ground during the convention. Contact Barbara Hopkins at [barbhopkins2@yahoo.com](mailto:barbhopkins2@yahoo.com) or Bernadette Lynch at [mimilavelle@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mimilavelle@sbcglobal.net).

**Attend** the LWVSC-hosted dinner aboard the Delta King, scheduled for Friday evening, June 2. Even if you cannot attend the entire convention, you won't want to miss this event.

**And finally --** take out your brand new 2017 calendar and write "LWV Convention" over the dates June 1-4. And join us as we meet in a spirit of camaraderie to look at how together we can navigate the road ahead. By *Nancy Compton*

**How Can Sacramento Be a Better Place to Live?**

Mayor Darrell Steinberg and Supervisor Patrick Kennedy believe that Sacramento can be a more compassionate community. They made a pledge to develop more housing for homeless individuals, who most often are nameless and faceless. People gathered to remember and name the 81 homeless individuals who have died on the streets to date in 2016. The City and County will join forces to create housing and at present Mayor Steinberg promised to open city facilities to provide warming shelters on all nights. He said it is shameful that in Sacramento, the Capitol of the wealthiest state in the wealthiest nation on earth, that one homeless person has died every seven days for the past 14 years.

According to *The Sacramento Bee*, 12/11/16 1A homeless individuals are being forced out of downtown apartments by renovations for affordable housing, but too costly for them. Some of these apartment complexes have less than 1/3 of the units rented to people on social Security. For example, at the newly refurbished Ridgeway Studios on 12th Street, NONE of the original tenants have returned. The recent rising costs of housing are putting more people on the streets. Mayor Steinberg has called a joint meeting for the City Council and County Supervisors for January 31, 2017 to increase housing for homeless people.

At the Memorial we were reminded of the words of Mother Jones (1837-1930), "Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living." By Alice Ginosar

### January 2017 Unit Meetings

At the January Unit meetings we will discuss our future. It is time for our League to hold Program Planning Meetings so we can choose the discussion topics for the coming year. What issues do you think are important for us to examine during the coming year? What actions can we take to help resolve those issues.? S. Kamhi

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Mid-City</b>	Monday January 9, 2017, 6:15 p.m.	Eileen Heaser 916- 456-2154	449 San Miguel Way. Sacramento 95819
<b>Morning Suburban</b>	Tuesday January 10, 2017, 9:15 a.m.	Anne Berner-944-1042 Helen Shryock- 944- 2274	2426 Garfield Ave. Carmichael 95608
<b>Greenhaven/ Land Park</b>	Tuesday January 10, 2017, 9:00 a.m.	Mary Hopkins 916-422-6958	45 Sunlit Circle Sacramento, CA 95831
<b>Elk Grove</b>	Tuesday January 10, 2017, 1:00 p.m.	Bill & Elaine Lee 688-5360	8622 Shasta Lily Drive Elk Grove 95624

Contact Sheila Kamhi, Unit Coordinator, (916)-880-2213 [grandmakamhi@gmail.com](mailto:grandmakamhi@gmail.com) if you are unable to attend the Unit meetings, but would like to receive the Unit discussion materials.

### Discussion

The past discussions we had at last year's units are still critical and important. Locally, what the passage of Measure L in the last municipal election will mean in 2018. We will be monitoring the implementation of an independent redistricting commission for the city and in the meantime we will continue to move forward with the new mayor on the balance of the good governance framework that includes transparency and ethics. Climate change, homelessness and civic engagement are still critical. What remains to be done about these issues? Do we retain them as our "Issues for Education and Advocacy" for another year? or they may be around forever.

Are there other issues we might want to adopt? Remember, we may be busy with the State Convention in June.

I think we need to put transportation, particularly public transportation on the list of emphasis issues. Transportation and driverless auto regulation, for instance, impacts on climate change. How does automation impact homelessness and what can be done to adjust? Members should have some issues they want to bring to the discussion in the Units. The recommendations should make a lively, productive meeting. By S. Kamhi

## Mayor Steinberg, LWVSC & Common Cause



Lt to Rt  
 Nicolas Heidorn  
 Mayor Steinberg  
 Paula Lee

Just a week after his inauguration as Mayor of Sacramento, Darrell Steinberg meets with League of Women Voters Sacramento County Co-President Paula Lee and Common Cause Legislative/Policy Counsel and LWV member Nicolas Heidorn to discuss our recommendations for a “Sunshine ordinance” (aka open government transparency) and an Ethics Commission for the City of Sacramento. Part one of the good governance framework, an Independent Redistricting Commission was adopted by voters in November. The LWVSC and Common Cause have been working diligently with the City staff to achieve this three part ambitious agenda for the last two years since the defeat of Measure L (“strong mayor” proposal).

With the redistricting commission in place, Mayor Steinberg is not wasting any time moving forward with a transparency and ethics proposal. With many issues needing his attention, we were very pleased to see Mayor Steinberg make transparency and ethics a top priority and meet with us in the first week. He clearly understood the nature and need for our amendments and recommendations and surprised us with a suggestion regarding ad hoc committees we especially look forward to supporting. Over and over at our 10 public forums held in all council districts on these topics, we heard from voters that ad hoc committee meetings should be public with agendas and minutes just like other meetings where public business is discussed and policy recommendations are made.

The Mayor also had some good practical suggestions for how to accomplish transparency and ethics goals cost effectively. It was a very productive meeting and we look forward to the coming details. The transparency ordinance and ethics commission proposals will be presented by Mayor Steinberg at the Law and Legislation Committee January 5, 2017, 3:00 p.m. and with the full Council on February 21, 2017, 6:00 p.m. By Paula Lee

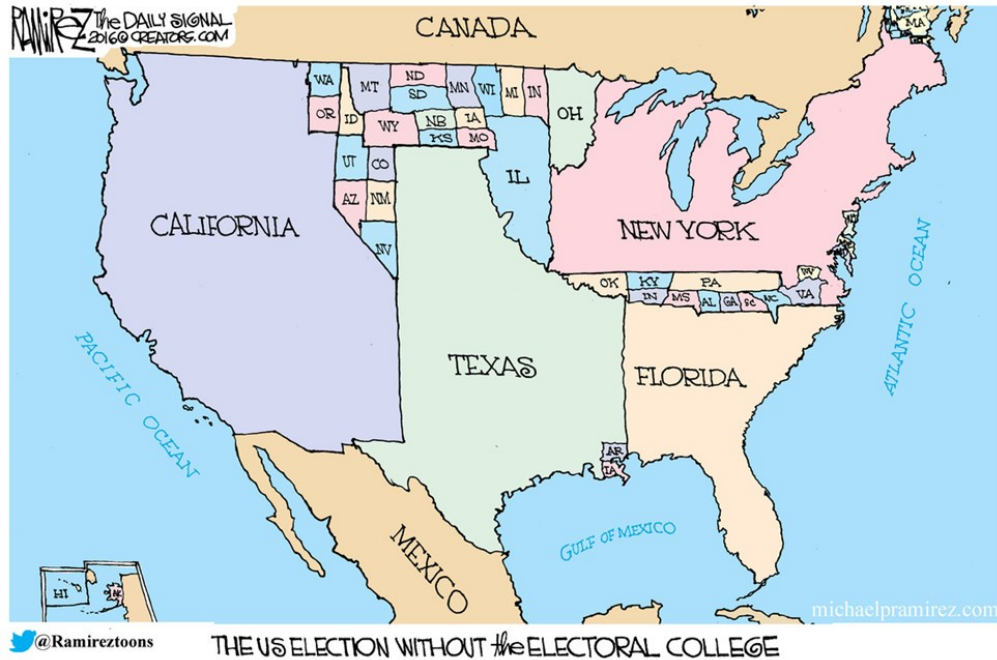
## Juveniles and False Confessions

Laura Nirider, Clinical Professor of Law and Co-Director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions of Youth, North Western University of Law, Chicago, spoke at a Moon lecture, St. Mark’s Church on 12/2/16. The focus of her talk and work is on the ways that youth are persuaded into giving false confessions once accused of a crime. Nirider is profiled on the NetFlx Global Series, *Making a Murderer*.

The lecture focused on a video of a 16 year old developmental needs youth from Wisconsin who was coerced into pleading guilty even though he had an alibi. She described the two stages of police questioning: Interview that uses information seeking and is open ended, in contrast to Interrogation which is accusatorial and designed to obtain a confession, police are dominant and they assume a presumption of guilt, it is confrontational. The police may also use a minimization tactic, e.g., you are a good guy you just snapped. The defendant may think that the police are there to help and that if they told the police something they would be allowed to be released. Police may promise to help in exchange for a confession.

Nirider states that these techniques are “garbage”. Even trained people are only correct 45-65% of the time in determining the veracity of a confession, yet police think the techniques they use are correct. She noted that in murder cases false confessions are the most common reason that leads to a wrongful conviction, further, that most false confessions are detailed and appear plausible. She labels as myths the following: it’s obvious when a confession is false, an accused person would only falsely confess if they were beaten, a person would never confess to a crime they did not commit, only juveniles or a mentally retarded person would falsely confess.

Cont. pg. 6



Credit to: Ramirez, The Daily Signal. 2016@creators.com. "Pick of the Week's Cartoons". 12/2/16). "The US Election Without the Electoral College" *The Week*, 16, 799, pg. 21. Retrieved 11/27/2016

Muriel Strand notes: "I calculated that if every state's electoral votes were allocated proportionately to the popular vote, Hillary would have 272 and Trump 266 ... but the choice of how to allocate seems to be at the state level, and it's hard to see states making such a change one by one."

California's elections: 3/4th of Californians voted on 11/8/16, President Obama had 3.3 million votes in 11/4/08 = 61.1% of the vote, Hillary Clinton had a wider margin— 4.3 million votes = 62.1% of the vote on 11/8/16. "Turnout among all Californians eligible to vote, not just those registered, stands at 58.7% ... the highest since the 59.2% in 2008. By Jim Miller. *The Sacramento Bee*, 12/9/2016, 8A. Submitted by E. Heaser

### Thoughts on the Electoral College [EC}

All references are to articles from *The Sacramento Bee* [Bee] grouped in paragraphs.

-There have been more than 700 proposals to abolish the EC. *Bee* 12/16/16 3B

-By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, no state approximated majority rule ... America at the time had some of the most unequal representation in the world." "... a series of Supreme Court decisions ... established the standard that equal representation means 'one person, one vote'." *Bee* circa 11/21/16 1B

-Other candidates that lost to the popular vote: A. Jackson to J. Q. Adams, S. Tilden to R. B. Hayes, G. Cleveland to B. Harrison and A. Gore to G. W. Bush.

-The Constitutional Convention members of 1787 thought the popular vote would give too much power to the larger populated northern states, since slaves could not vote. (see last paragraph) <sup>1</sup>

-The number of electoral votes is based on each state's congressional delegation. However, each state has two senators. Rural states with less population get more influence. *Bee* 12/16/16 3B

-The 1920 census showed that more people lived in urban rather than rural areas ... in 1790, 95% of the population was rural. The 2010 census indicated that the rural population was less than 20%.

Cont. pg. 6

Cont. from Pg. 4 Juveniles

From 1930 through the 1940's the [Reid Technique](#)<sup>1</sup> named after a former street cop, was employed and is still used. The Technique used polygraphic skills and psychology. Previous to the Reid Technique the third degree was in effect, viz., defendants were beaten.

Nirider strongly urges training and education for policemen.

<sup>1</sup> For more on the Reid Technique: "The Interview. Do Police Interrogation Techniques Produce False Confessions," by Douglass Starr, *The New Yorker*, 12/9/13. Retrieved 12/20/16. E. Heaser

Cont. from pg. 5 Electoral College

-By design our political institutions still have distinctly a pro-rural bias. "In the Senate, the least populous states are now more overrepresented than ever before ... equaling a Republican bias." "States containing just 17% of the U. S. population ... can theoretically elect a Senate majority ... the bias also shapes the House of Representatives." Prof. F. Lee

-Equal representation in the Senate is the only provision in the *Constitution* that cannot be amended. *Bee 11/12/16 3B*

-<sup>1</sup> Slavery played a role as the Southern delegates attending the 1787 Constitution convention thought the south would be outnumbered (J. Madison). A 3/5<sup>th</sup> Compromise was devised that allowed states to count each slave as 3/5<sup>th</sup> a person thus ensuring the south a majority in presidential elections. *Bee circa 11/11/16 1B*. Submitted by E. Heaser

### [How many Americans are Unnecessarily Incarcerated?](#)

Brennan Center for Justice, The New York University School of Law, 2016

"In 1974, the country's imprisonment rate was 102 per 100,000. By the turn of the century, it had quadrupled, reaching 138 in 1980, 295 in 1990, and 470 in 2000. The surge continued. By 2007, the imprisonment rate reached its peak of 506. Since then, the rate has decreased marginally to 471 prisoners per 100,000 Americans." "... a yearly declining rate of 1 percent is modest at best. At this pace, it would take nearly 75 years to return to the 1985 incarceration rate of 200 per 100,000. Like other failed social experiments, mass incarceration was not a spasm without a cause. It was the result of sustained policies beginning in the mid-1970s and campaigned on even earlier." Page 3

"To a large extent, what average Americans saw on their television screens squared with their own experiences. From 1960 to 1980, violent crime soared 270 percent. It continued to increase, peaking at 758 violent offenses per 100,000 people in 1991. African American and Latino communities bore the brunt of this crime rise. By the late 1970s, people of color were crime victims at a rate 24 percent higher than white Americans. In response, states and the federal government enacted a series of laws that dramatically lengthened sentences for many crimes, and also created entirely new crimes. One early example is the passage of the "Rockefeller Drug Laws" in 1973. Named after New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller, the laws imposed mandatory minimum 15-year terms for possession of marijuana and other drugs." Page 4

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## In Memory Of

### Vivian May (Chapman) Skintauy

9/4/1925-11/26/2016

Vivian Skintauy was born in Oklahoma . She was a bookkeeper/accountant for approximately 50 years. Vivian was an active member of the LWVSC and served on the Board and was the treasurer for fourteen years. For several years she was a volunteer tax preparer with AARP, assisting the elderly. *The S. Bee*, 12/11/16, 7B. Vivian had a large acreage in Rio Linda, where she lived for many years after moving to California. She was very proud of her grandchildren. As she needed more assistance Vivian lived with her sister, Jo Townley, where her family was nearby. By A. Ginosar



Vivian (Rt.) in 2009 with  
then LWVSC President,  
Roseanna Torretto

Cont. from pg.6 Brennan Center for Justice

Suggestions for change:

“Eliminate Prison for Lower-Level Crimes Barring Exceptional Circumstances: State legislatures and Congress should change sentencing laws to mandate alternatives to prison as the default sentences for certain lower-level crimes. These include drug possession, lesser burglary, minor drug trafficking, minor fraud or forgery, minor theft, and simple assault — offenses that now account for 25 percent of the prison population. Alternative sanctions — such as community service, electronic monitoring, probation, restitution, or treatment — should be the default for such crimes instead. Judges should have flexibility to depart and impose a prison sentence if certain enumerated factors are present — for example, repeat serious offenses or heinous circumstances of the crime.” Page 9. Retrieved 12/20/16. E. Heaser

## Books & Reports

### *Evicted. Poverty and Profit in the American City*

By Matthew Desmond, Harvard Sociologists

“The Chicago Public Library rates this as one of their best books of the year. From the dust jacket: “Even in the most desolate areas of American cities, evictions used to be rare. But today, most poor renting families are spending more than half of their income on housing and eviction has become ordinary, especially for single mothers ... As we see families forced into shelters, squalid apartments, or more dangerous neighborhoods, we bear witness to the human cost of America’s vast inequality—and to people’s determination and intelligence in the face of hardship.” Retrieved 12/14/16 For more reviews click on the title-link. Cont. pg. 8



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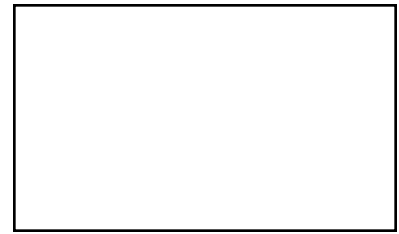
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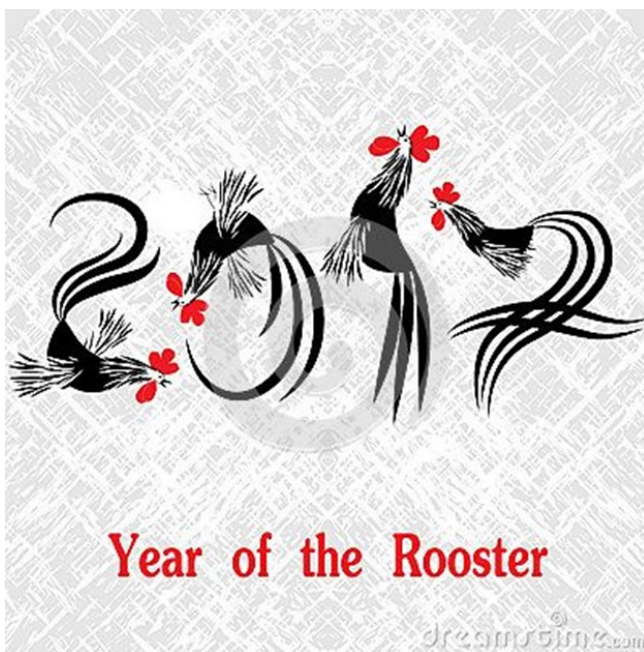
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Cont. pg. 7. Books and Reports

[The global climate 2011-2015: heat records and high impact weather.](#) World Meteorological Association Nov. 8 2016. 2011-2015 was the warmest five-year period on record globally and for all continents apart from Africa (second warmest). Submitted by E. Heaser



**HAPPY NEW YEAR 2017**

Google Images 12/10/16