



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

June, 2020

Cindy Plank and Nancy Kleiber, Presidents

Jary Stavely and Lee Tepper, Editors

Virtual Annual Meeting this Month

by *Cindy Plank*

We have a fun Annual Membership meeting planned for you! Don't miss it! The meeting will be held online at the usual time: Tuesday, June 9, at 10 AM. Please bring your favorite beverage and snack. If you'd been counting on having a traditional potluck serving of deviled eggs, Carol Czadek is sharing her recipe so you can still have some with our meeting.



Carol Czadek has contributed her deviled egg recipe (and a bonus) so you can enjoy the authentic annual potluck experience. See page 7.

Please also look over the Annual Meeting Packet (sent in April, with a revised nominations report in the May *Voter*), in order to be ready to vote on 2020-21 officers, directors, budget and program areas of focus..

Following the voting, we will welcome member Matt Drewno, as he gets us excited and inspired about the easy steps we each

can take, in small ways or bigger ways, to create our own Victory Garden for Peace. You will not want to miss this fun experience!

You'll need to register in advance for this meeting by going to

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYkcOqhrzMuEtTMWix2r_2yD1W1YHL_MV1.

When you register, you will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the meeting. You can join through various devices — your desk top computer, your lap top, your smart phone — or you can call in from your phone line. If you still have questions, Cindy would be glad to help! (357-4282 / theplanks@yahoo.com)

LWV Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, strives to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Election Integrity Means Inclusiveness

by Cindy Plank

As the 2020 Presidential Election gets closer, it's important for each of us to pay attention to facts about voting methods. There will be many myths floating around out there. It's good to be informed.

LWVUS on voting safety. It's simple: Voters should not have to make a choice between their health and exercising their fundamental right to vote. Our partners at VoteSafe are committed to ensuring all voters have access to secure mail-in ballots as well as safe, sanitary, and accessible in-person voting locations. Learn more at <https://votesafe.us>.

California perspective. Is voting by mail safe? YES! Let's debunk the myth of voter fraud. Check out this new report from the UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Initiative at <https://tinyurl.com/wm76eol>. Read the California League's response to Governor Newsom's executive order about the November election on p. 7.

The History of Vote by Mail. Californians have been voting by mail since the Civil War. Service members used mail-in ballots to serve the country and exercise their right to vote. Today, all voters in California enjoy this same option. Explore the history of vote by mail in California by visiting this online California State Archives exhibit. See historic photos and documents and a full account of how California soldiers were able to vote by mail during the Civil War at <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/soldiers-ballots-california-state-archives/vQIiIVsZ0FNiLg>.

Falsehoods that Could Undermine the 2020 Election (Excerpt from an article by Max Feldman, published May 14 by Brennan Center For Justice). The 2020 election will be hard-fought and divisive. The Covid-19 pandemic has already caused major disruptions to our elections system, and the risk that other real crises—natural disaster, machine breakdown, foreign interference—will further disrupt the election is significant. But there is also a significant risk that political actors will manufacture crises to undermine election results they don't like. These fake crises can undercut trust in the accuracy of election outcomes, inflame partisan tensions, and destabilize our democracy. Here are [two] lies, misconceptions, and false arguments that we think voters will have to contend with in 2020:

Claim #1: “Voter Fraud” Is Rampant. There is widespread voting by ineligible individuals.

The Truth: This type of fraud is extremely rare. Based on a meticulous review of elections that had been investigated for voter fraud, the Brennan Center found miniscule incident rates of ineligible individuals fraudulently casting ballots at the polls—no more than 0.0025 percent. Numerous reports have confirmed our finding that voter fraud is exceedingly rare. Research shows that voter fraud is similarly rare with mail ballots. An exhaustive review by Professor Justin Levitt of Loyola Law School found just 31 credible instances of impersonation fraud from 2000 to 2014, out of more than 1 billion ballots cast. Overhyped allegations of voter fraud are regularly made, but follow-up investigation almost always reveals that these claims were based on fundamental errors.

These results are not for lack of looking for voter fraud. In 2002, then Attorney General John Ashcroft created the Voting Access and Integrity Initiative, which aggressively investigated voter fraud allegations as one of the top priorities of the Justice Department. After five years, however, the U.S. Department of Justice found little evidence of fraud. In 2007, the *New York Times* reported that only about 120 people were charged and 86 were convicted of election-related crimes, despite hundreds of millions of votes being cast, during the period under investigation. While fraud *by* voters almost never occurs, fraud *against* voters does occur, albeit rarely. This type of fraud is committed by bigger players, with bigger weapons than an improperly filled ballot. Think Putin's hackers or election workers stuffing ballot boxes. Importantly, the



policies needed to address this kind of fraud are dramatically different than the policies proposed to address the specter of voter impersonation fraud.

The Consequences: More restrictive voting laws and lower levels of trust in elections. Voter fraud claims have had a deeply deleterious effect on the last decade of American elections. They have been used to justify restrictive state voting practices—like strict voter identification laws and overly aggressive purges of the voter rolls—that disenfranchise legitimate voters, often in a discriminatory manner. More broadly, they undermine trust in the integrity of our elections process.

Claim #2: People Can't Help People Vote. Groups that help many voters cast their absentee ballots are engaged in illegal “ballot harvesting,” and laws that allow such assistance enable election fraud.

The Truth: Partisans use the pejorative “ballot harvesting” to criticize two very different sets of practices: (a) illegal and illegitimate absentee ballot tampering and (b) legal and legitimate assistance to voters casting their absentee ballots. Voter assistance is not evidence of fraud. Ballot tampering is illegal everywhere. That includes practices like stealing ballots from mailboxes, filling out other people’s ballots without their consent and direction, and changing or throwing out other people’s ballots. Most states allow certain individuals—especially family members, health-care providers, and legal guardians—to assist voters by collecting and submitting their absentee ballots. Many states allow a broader array of individuals to provide ballot assistance. Where allowed, ballot collection is not indicative of any malfeasance or fraud.

The biggest ballot tampering scandal in recent memory was in connection with the 2018 congressional election in North Carolina’s 9th congressional district. There, a GOP political operative ran an operation that collected absentee ballots from voters and tampered with those ballots. This led to the North Carolina Board of Elections ordering a new congressional election in the district. Ballot collection is illegal in North Carolina. Indeed, ballot tampering scandals are not more common in states that allow ballot collection. Some partisans have tried to leverage the North Carolina election fraud into an indictment of absentee ballot assistance laws by suggesting that ballot assistance practices are all forms of illegitimate ballot harvesting. In particular, they incorrectly claim that the “ballot harvesting” that is illegal in North Carolina is actually legal in California because of a 2016 ballot collection law that permits people other than family members to collect voters’ absentee ballots. This is false. Ballot assistance may be legal in California, but ballot tampering is illegal there—as it is everywhere in the country.

The Truth, moreover: Absentee ballot assistance laws can be critical lifelines for voters. Twenty-seven states have absentee ballot assistance laws that permit voters to designate someone other than a family member to return their absentee ballot, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Some voters need this assistance in order to cast a ballot. For example, the Native American Rights Fund has said, “Native voters, especially tribal elders, often lack reliable transportation and reside in geographically remote areas in which they rely upon friends and neighbors to pick up and return their mail.” As a result, barring third-party assistance with absentee voting “would effectively disenfranchise tens of thousands of Native voters.”

The Consequences: Lower levels of trust in elections and more restrictive voting laws. Like other claims of widespread fraud, attacks on “ballot harvesting” undermine trust in the integrity of the elections process. In addition, Arizona and Montana have enacted laws to sharply restrict third-party assistance to absentee voters in recent years. In January 2020, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals struck down Arizona’s restriction, holding that it had a discriminatory effect on American Indian, Hispanic, and African American voters in violation of the Voting Rights Act and that it was passed for a discriminatory purpose, in violation of the Fifteenth Amendment. (This decision has been stayed pending Supreme Court review.) According to the court, minority voters were more likely than other voters to rely on assistance casting their absentee ballots, for a variety of reasons including issues with transportation and mail service.

Hubs and Routes Project Explained

by Jary Stavely

On May 12, Dr. Jennifer Kreger of the Coast Hospital (now officially known as Adventist Health Mendocino Coast) hosted a Zoom meeting sponsored by the League of Women Voters to introduce the Hubs & Routes Project, which she co-leads with mapmaker Rick Hemmings and tech advisor Lisa Weg. Hubs & Routes provides a set of tools that coastal residents and organizations can use in an emergency – including the climate emergency. Its formal name is “Community Resource Hubs and Alternate Rescue Routes Throughout Mendocino Coast Health Care District.” At least 55 League members and community residents attended.

The Project is open to participation from any resident of the Health Care District, from Usal on the north to Gualala on the south. Since the District follows the outlines of all the Mendocino coast school districts, its boundary also extends eastward to include Comptche. The first phase of the project is to provide online maps which show “resource hubs” which already exist, and the emergency supplies which they both have, and don’t have. These hubs include agencies such as fire departments, community organizations, and even private homes and businesses. The maps also show alternate rescue routes that can be used for getting to the coast hospital, or for getting out of unsafe areas when primary routes are not passable for any reason.

Dr. Kreger opened the meeting by discussing her own experience growing up with a connection to the coast, and her learning from her parents and grandparents the value of planning ahead and relying on ancestral skills in coping with emergencies. She includes in this category both natural disasters like the wildfires and power outages of last year, and the impending climate calamity and the “climate refugees” it is already creating.

She introduced the project itself by imagining an emergency situation on Surprise Valley Rd. in Comptche, in which an elderly woman with no power needed help taking care of her incapacitated husband. Those in the meeting were shown how the map (already in place) shows the location of the residence and the two nearest resource hubs, the Comptche School and the Chapel of the Redwoods. By checking the map, a resource provider would be able to see which hub had all the supplies the family needed, and could begin to make the contacts to get help to the family (and the family to the best help).

The Hubs & Routes project is designed to facilitate the provision of services through channels already established, such as volunteer fire departments, law enforcement, and neighborhood groups which have had CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training. Community members are invited to participate in the project by supplying information about what resources and skills they could provide in an emergency. The online information forms which were introduced during the meeting provide different levels of privacy, so that participants can control which information would be on the publicly available maps, and which information would only be available to hub directors.

Dr. Kreger suggested that everyone become familiar with the H&R maps, download them, and include them in their emergency “go-bags.” The website for maps and participation is <https://hubsandrouten.net/>.

Correction

The May *Voter* article about the League’s April online meeting incorrectly identified the Fort Bragg resident who assisted Helen Hutchison in her presentation about Schools and Communities First. Tim Gage is the gentleman with experience in Sacramento who has been a key planner in the initiative campaign. We regret the error.

Centennial Year Convention June 25-27

by Chris Carson and Virginia Kase

We are so excited to reach out regarding our 54th Biennial National Convention (and our first ever national virtual convention)! We hope that you will join us for our centennial year convention, and we want to thank you for pivoting with us as we've made this difficult change from our planned meeting in Washington, D.C., to the virtual space.

Despite these very different circumstances, we are certain this year's convention will be filled with commemoration, connection, and celebration. Our foremothers worked through a pandemic—the 1918 flu pandemic—to get the vote over 100 years ago, so it almost feels fitting that we honor them a century later by moving the work forward through the COVID-19 pandemic. We know our League members can persist through anything, and we can't wait to see how you will bring your excitement and enthusiasm to our online convention space. We are so looking forward to connecting with you virtually this year.

We are excited to announce our keynote speaker, CBS Evening News anchor, Norah O'Donnell. Throughout her celebrated career, Norah O'Donnell has covered American elections and won multiple prestigious journalism awards, including Emmys for her sexual assault investigation as well as her Election Night coverage. We couldn't be prouder to have such an accomplished and powerful woman deliver a message to our members this year. Registration is currently open to voting delegates only, but we are working through solutions that will allow non-voting delegates to observe.

Our delegates Paula Cohen and Mo Mulheren will be voting participants; hopefully, all interested members will be able to observe. Stay updated at <https://www.lwv.org/2020Convention> -- editor

Happy Birthday Betty

League Member Betty Barber celebrated her 100th birthday on May 22. The Mendocino County League joins many others in the community in sending its best wishes and appreciation for her contributions to our lives. To see a photo of Betty and Grail, and read a poem by Marian Brannon celebrating the occasion, go to <https://www.advocate-news.com/a-happy-100th-birthday-poem-for-betty-barber>.

The League's Work Continues Amid the Pandemic

compiled from LWWUS reports

Leagues in states across the country are filing litigation seeking to protect the rights and safety of self-quarantining voters during the pandemic. In April a federal court judge ruled that Texas voters may cite COVID-19 in mail-in ballot request forms as a “disability” requirement. The League of Women Voters of Texas and the Austin Area had previously urged the court to rule that the definition of “disability” in Texas law encompasses all registered voters, since the coronavirus prevents voters from appearing at a polling location without a real likelihood of injuring their health.

In Arizona, the League of Women Voters has filed an amicus brief in *Arizonans for Fair Representation v. Hobbs*, asking the state to permit online signature collection for ballot petitions via the state's online system that candidates for federal and state office use to collect signatures for nominating petitions. A federal judge ruled against the proposal in early May.

At the same time, however, a federal judge approved an agreement between the Virginia attorney general and the League of Women Voters of Virginia to remove the witness requirement for signatures on absentee ballots there.

The LWV of North Dakota filed a lawsuit asking the US District Court of North Dakota to provide relief for voters from the state's burdensome signature match policy. Currently, North Dakota voters are not notified when their ballot is rejected due to a technical error such as signature mismatch, and there is no method for them to provide verification or cure the mistake to remedy their rejected ballots. The LWV of New Jersey is filing this same case in federal court.

The LWV of North Carolina has filed a motion to intervene in a lawsuit, *Judicial Watch v. North Carolina, et al*, which would remove individuals *en masse* from voter rolls in Mecklenburg and Guilford counties in the run-up to the general election in November. Our Leagues in Michigan and Pennsylvania are experiencing similar challenges and we will continue to push back in each state.

The LWV of Mississippi and LWVUS have joined as *amicus* in a federal lawsuit brought by three Mississippi voters who allege that their congressional district was gerrymandered to disenfranchise Black voters, violating Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

LWV of Michigan has spent the last century promoting and protecting the right to register and vote by educating, assisting, and registering voters in Detroit and throughout Michigan. Now they are defending Michigan voters against unjust and flawed purge practices. On May 29, a federal judge in Michigan allowed the League to intervene in a case seeking to force an aggressive purge of voter rolls in Detroit. Voter rolls should undergo regular maintenance, but not at the expense of eligible voters—and Detroit already meets the requirements of federal law in its list maintenance. This purge is based on questionable and unsubstantiated data by an organization with a history of meddling in voting rights, and would likely result in eligible voters being thrown off the City's voter registration rolls. As parties to the case, we can now fight to ensure that doesn't happen.

According to national CEO Virginia Kase, LWVUS was supportive of the HEROES Act, passed by the House in May, "primarily because it included \$3.6 billion in additional funding for elections. As the bill moves to the Senate, we'll need your help to ensure our three top priorities remain intact: funding for elections, resources for DC to be treated like the other states, and the assurance that immigrants have access to healthcare and stimulus resources."

Finally, to read the League's six-month review of its People Powered Fair Maps campaign against gerrymandering, go to <https://www.lwv.org/blog/six-months-people-powered-fair-maps>.

League Speaks Out after Minneapolis Tragedy

The League of Women Voters of the United States issued the following statement in reference to the murder of George Floyd:

The League of Women Voters grieves the murders of George Floyd and the countless other Black lives that have been tragically taken at the hands of rogue law enforcement officers who are rarely held fully accountable for their actions.

We also mourn those who have lost their lives or been harmed, mentally or physically, as a result of America's pervasive culture of anti-blackness. The systems of oppression that have perpetuated the myth of white supremacy in our country must be dismantled if we are ever to become the nation we pledge to be—indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

As an organization whose mission is to empower voters and defend democracy, we stand in solidarity with all Black communities. The League shall do so not only by speaking out against racism in all forms, but by doing the work required of us to be anti-racist. We are committed to listening to and amplifying Black voices, and educating ourselves and our children on the historic and ongoing systemic racism that plagues this country.

The League acknowledges, painfully, that America is a nation founded on racism. Therefore, all who live in this country must contribute to and participate in organizations actively working to achieve full liberation and inclusive freedom. We must all advocate for anti-racist policies at every level of government.

We join the League of Women Voters of Minnesota in calling on law enforcement officials to provide transparency during this investigation, and to seek justice for George Floyd, his family, and his community.

Finally, we echo the call of our partners at the NAACP: we must all vote in November – the road to change lies at the ballot box.

LWV California Responds to Universal Mail Ballot Order

Voting rights advocates applaud the Executive Order released today [May 8] by Governor Gavin Newsom, which mandates that all registered voters in California will receive a ballot by mail, as a necessary first step to ensuring a successful November 2020 election.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - California, California Common Cause, Disability Rights California, the League of Women Voters of California, Mi Familia Vota, and the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund join Governor Newsom's call for the legislature to enact robust in-person voting location requirements for the fall. Ensuring that all California voters have sufficient opportunities to receive critical in-person voting services, regardless of the county they live in, is essential in this election.

The organizations have been working with the California Secretary of State, county elections officials, and other experts to devise guidelines for the November 2020 election that will ensure all voters can access a safe and accessible vote. Last month, advocates wrote a letter to Governor Newsom and the Secretary of State with specific recommendations for the November 2020 elections.

Those recommendations included sending every registered voter a ballot by mail, as well as:

- (1) the establishment of in-person voting locations at a mandatory minimum ratio;
- (2) a statewide early vote period;
- (3) the expansion of remote accessible vote-by-mail as well as additional protections for voters, including offering opportunities to request translated ballots, extending the voter registration deadline, extending the deadline to request a replacement ballot, and extending the date that counties can accept returned vote-by-mail ballots;
- (4) the establishment of ballot drop boxes at a minimum ratio of one for every 15,000 registered voters;
- (5) meaningful opportunities for the public to comment on and shape their county's election administration plan; and
- (6) sufficient resources for counties and community-based organizations to educate and engage voters on how to cast a ballot in the November elections.

We call on the Governor and the State Legislature to work together and take swift action to adopt the above remaining provisions and to appropriate the necessary funds to implement them, so county elections officials can make the plans needed to serve voters this fall.

Carol Czadek's Special League Eggs

For deviled eggs: Halve 6 peeled hard-cooked eggs lengthwise and remove yolks. Mash with ¼ cup mayonnaise, 1 teaspoon vinegar or dill pickle juice, 1 teaspoon prepared mustard, and salt and pepper. Refill egg whites and garnish with paprika. Possible additions are chopped dill, chives, parsley, blue cheese, whatever.

For pickled eggs: Eat all the pickles from a jar of Claussen Kosher Whole Dill Pickles. Hard cook and peel 10 – 11 eggs. Run a skewer through each egg several times and place into the jar of leftover pickle juice. Refrigerate and wait 1 – 2 weeks before eating.

Breaking news on June 1 ...

Schools & Communities First on November 2020 Ballot!

The official announcement that the Schools and Communities First initiative has qualified for the November ballot appeared on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/LWVofCA/>) today. The announcement was prefaced by an acknowledgement of the current moment:

Events across the nation have reopened some of our nation's oldest wounds that we have yet to heal from.
Inclusive progress will take more than words -- it will take ending systemic racism.
We stand in solidarity for Black lives.
We cannot look away.
We loudly demand meaningful change that will make the promise of California accessible to everyone because #BlackLivesMatter.

The post continued:

Some good news, today our California Secretary of State has announced Schools and Communities First will be on the 2020 ballot! Passing Schools and Communities First is an important step to reclaim sorely-needed resources in historically marginalized communities. Let's support investments in schools and public health and prevent further painful cuts to vital services. Now is the time to address the historic underfunding of low income communities of color. Schools and Communities First is a critical step to invest in our future by reclaiming \$12 billion from the wealthiest corporations.

On Wednesday, June 10, at 5:30 PM Schools & Communities first leaders and activists from across California are coming together for a virtual town hall to recommit our efforts to make sure Schools & Communities First is an essential part of our state's recovery. To register, go to the campaign launch website:

<https://www.mobilize.us/schoolsandcommunitiesfirst/event/274718/>

If you can't make the June 10 virtual town hall, make sure you follow us on Facebook_ and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/LWVC>) for crucial campaign updates.

Opinion ...

Discussing Election Systems

by Dorine Real

The position on election systems proposed for adoption by concurrence at the upcoming LWVUS convention saw a very brief discussion at our last face-to-face meeting. There was not time to clarify some terms in the position that sound familiar and even judgmental but were used in a technical way.

“Wasted” votes are votes in excess of what the winner needed to win. Having “wasted” votes could be good if it means there is a broad consensus; but it's bad when it indicates that some voters have been gerrymandered out of a competitive district into one where their votes are not needed. Minimizing “wasted” votes means creating more competitive districts.

“Sincere” voting is voting for one's actual preferred candidate or party. “Strategic” voting means voting for a candidate you think can win. When voters can express their real opinions voting is much more attractive and turnout may increase. Moreover, the voters can send a clear message to lawmakers about which platforms they endorse.

These terms are confusing until one thinks about the details of election systems; but when considering the details, having technical terms is very useful. So does it make sense to use such terms in our position?