



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

There has been much to celebrate in May, which is one of my favorite months, with music programs, drama, birthdays, and graduations. I want to commend our Voter Service team for their work at the May 14 Candidate Forum sponsored by the Valley Women's Club at Highlands Park Senior Center, Ben Lomond, for the 19th Congressional District candidates. Dinah Sapia served as moderator assisted by Dee Takemoto as timekeeper; Dorothy Fry and Kit Hein sorted and selected the questions from the audience. Voter service is our focus in May leading up to the June 2 primary election., We have been receiving emails expressing interest in helping with voter registration for this and the upcoming election in November. Voter outreach is a major focus of what LWVUS has named Playbook 5, which includes expanding the base of eligible voters, access to voting, and a special day on August 8 to honor the Voting Rights Act and protest the gutting of portions of it. The League of Women Voters is encouraging working with other community groups that want to preserve voting rights and expand rather than restrict who can vote. This could be the summer of our discontent, as outrage is being expressed at the attempt to suppress voting by minorities and deny access to the ballot which was won in the 1960's in hard-fought battles, and the League of Women Voters plans events throughout the United States for August 8, with a focus on those areas where voting rights are in the most danger.

If you have not already done so, please [renew your membership](#), so we can stay strong and effective at this time of great challenge.

-----*Barbara Lewis, President*

RSVP TODAY FOR OUR 61ST ANNUAL MEETING

Keynote Speaker: County CEO Nicole Coburn

When: Sunday, June 28, 2026

Where: Crow's Nest (Harbor Room), 2218 E Cliff Dr, Santa Cruz

Time: 10:00 AM (check-in begins at 9:40)

Breakfast Cost: \$40 per person (optional)

The public is welcome. Join the League as we celebrate 61 years of education and advocacy at our annual meeting in June.

RSVP by June 21.

This year we are honored to welcome Nicole Coburn, our County Executive Officer, as our featured speaker. Since her unanimous appointment in October 2025, CEO Coburn has been leading our county with over 20 years of public service experience and a deep community connection. She will share her "view from the top," discussing her current plans, priorities, and the unique challenges of being Santa Cruz County's CEO.

This event is open to the public. Reservations are required to attend (meal purchase is optional).

Click here for reservations.

Download the Annual Meeting Kit, which contains the meeting agenda, the proposed budget for FY 2026-27, the proposed local program, and nominations for the board of directors. We suggest printing a copy to bring with you to the meeting.

IT'S ELECTION SEASON

Information About Casting Your Ballot

A couple of the League Board members also will be working at election centers in the county. As a result, we have gained some insights about voting from the county Registrar's Office that are not too widely known but might make a difference in how you cast your ballot.

You can return your ballot by mail, without paying any postage. If you choose to do this, especially during the final week of voting, be aware that mail in Santa Cruz County does not always get postmarked the day you drop it in the post office mail slot. The safest way to mail is to give the ballot to a postal worker to have them stamp the mailing date.

Before you head to the post office, however, you might want to check out this list of drop box and voting center locations. The drop boxes are accessible 24 hours a day and all the voting centers will have drop boxes available for you while they are open.

[Voting Center & Drop Box Locations](#)

Consider Voting Naked

Well, that would be the ballot, not you. Voting a naked ballot gives you as much time as you want to consider your options and make your selections. And with 61 people running for governor, 16 running for Lieutenant Governor (2 with the same last name) 6 running for Treasurer, 11 for Insurance Commissioner and 6 for the Board of Equalization, you'll need some time, especially since they are not listed in alphabetical order.

When you are finished marking your ballot at home, you can bring your ballot – without the envelope – to any voting center, where you will check in with them and just drop your ballot in their ballot collection box. Your ballot will be counted more quickly, as the Registrar's Office will not have to compare the signature on an envelope with their

files – as they have to do with every ballot submitted in an envelope. If a significant number of people choose this option, the final figures on the election will be released more quickly.

Voting in the Voting Center

Once you check in at the Voting Center, you will be asked to choose between voting on a paper ballot or using a tablet which will print your choices on paper that you will also place in the ballot box. Usually, either choice is a good one. However, this is an unusual election because of the number of people running for some offices. The tablet can only show you 7 options on a screen. That means you'll have to scroll through 9 screens to see all the choices for governor – and remember, they won't be in alphabetical order. It's still possible to use the tablets, but it may take more time than usual.

Redistricting Has Become an Issue Once Again

Here's some background on redistricting from the US League:

The Census and Apportionment

Every ten years, the US Census Bureau counts the United States population and uses the updated counts to determine which state populations have increased or decreased.

These new population counts are used to decide the number of representatives that each state in the country receives. By federal law, the size of the House of Representatives is set at 435 seats, but the number of elected representatives and their district areas change over time. This process is known as **apportionment**.

- **Example:** Based on the data released in the [2020 census](#), Colorado, Florida, Montana, North Carolina, and Oregon's populations grew, so they each gained a district and, therefore, one Congressional representative. Texas gained two districts and two representatives.

It's crucial that the Census Bureau has sufficient time to carefully collect and review their data. Otherwise, we risk undercounting the population. The more complete the population count, the more likely districts will reflect our communities.

Redistricting Files

Following apportionment, more detailed information is released to each state (plus DC and Puerto Rico) in the form of "redistricting files." This information includes details like race, voting age, and more. Once it is released, states can begin the redistricting process.

Drawing Our Communities

There is no universal process for drawing district maps, so states use different methods. These include:

- **Redistricting Commissions:** 17 states currently give some form of redistricting commission responsibility over the map-drawing process. The commission may be made up of voters residing in the state (**independent commissions**), voters and representatives from both parties (**bipartisan commissions**), legislators (**advisory commissions**), or a backup group if the primary commission is unable to create new maps (**backup commissions**).
- **State legislators:** 33 states currently assign redistricting to their legislators. Unfortunately, with legislators drawing their own boundaries, there is ample room for political bias and gerrymandering.

For more specific information on redistricting alternatives, [click here](#)

The Redistricting Stand of the California League

We oppose partisan and racial gerrymandering that strips rights away from voters. We promote transparent and accountable redistricting processes and work to end hyper-partisan practices that don't benefit constituents. We believe responsibility for fair redistricting should be vested in an independent special commission, with a membership that reflects the diversity of the unit of government.

The League of Women Voters of California were leaders in the movement to create California's

independent [Citizens Redistricting Commission](#) in order to ensure that the process is transparent, the players are accountable, partisanship is minimized, and our election district maps are drawn fairly. Furthermore, we built in rules to guarantee that Commission members reflect California's diversity. We continue to work to promote independent redistricting commissions and fair map criteria in local jurisdictions across California.

In 2016, we co-sponsored legislation (SB 1108) to authorize all California counties and general law cities to establish independent citizen commissions to redraw district lines.

In 2018, we supported SB 1018, which clarified the original intent of SB 1108 on two matters:

- Commissions may be used for an initial districting and not simply redistricting.
- Hybrid commissions, where both the local government and commission share authority in adopting final maps, must meet the same standards of independence and transparency required of independent commissions.
- In 2019 and 2020, we cosponsored the Fair Maps Act, AB 849, and AB 1276. They bring fair redistricting criteria to California's cities and counties. AB 849 prohibits partisan gerrymandering, standardizes criteria, and prioritizes intact neighborhoods and diverse communities. AB 1276 ensured that the new requirements would fit within the California election schedule. These new laws represent an extension of the LWVUS' [People Powered Fair Maps Campaign](#), a coordinated effort to reform redistricting across the country.

On May 19, the League of Women Voters of California stands before the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to defend the privacy rights of California voters in our case against the Trump administration, *United States v. Weber*.

At stake is whether the federal government can force California to turn over the private personal data of millions of voters.

Earlier this year, [a U.S. District Court ruled that the federal government is not entitled to this sensitive voter information](#) — a major victory for voters, privacy rights, and the principle that elections are administered by states and

local jurisdictions, not controlled by Washington. Tomorrow, we will fight to uphold that victory on appeal.

This case matters far beyond California.

Ours is the first of more than a dozen similar lawsuits across the country to reach the appellate level. The outcome could shape the future of election administration nationwide and determine whether the federal government can continue its dangerous campaign to seize control over elections that the Constitution clearly entrusts to the states.

These attacks are not isolated. **They are part of a broader effort to undermine trust in elections, intimidate election officials, and make it harder for Americans to participate freely and confidently in our democracy.**

That is why this litigation is so important.

The League of Women Voters of California has stepped forward to fight back in court - even though we have no dedicated funding to support this work - because democracy itself is on the line.

Unite & Rise for Voting Rights

A National Day of Action – Saturday, August 8, 2026



The United States is in a constitutional crisis. Now is the time to band together to defend our constitution, protect the rule of law, demand the preservation of checks and balances, safeguard the right to vote, and build a democracy where every person and every voice counts. Hopefully, you can commit to three things:

1. Taking action by voting and volunteering to ensure our freedom to vote is protected.

2. Mobilizing in nonviolent efforts to hold government accountable.
3. Staying informed about the policies and decisions that affect us all, combatting disinformation, and amplifying the voices and stories of those most impacted.

Stay tuned for an upcoming nationwide mobilization on August 8, 2026.

The League of Women Voters' Unite & Rise 8.5 initiative aims to mobilize 8.5 million voters using the power of voter engagement as a cornerstone of our democracy. Unite & Rise 8.5 showcases the many ways voters can drive change through advocacy, mobilization, civic education, and engagement. We need you to be a part of this movement and help us grow this network of 8.5 million people who commit to defend our democracy.

You can officially commit to the fight by clicking the link below

<https://act.lwv.org/page/84217/petition/1?locale=en-US>

A Request From the US League

This week, Congress is voting on a fast-tracked budget that would allocate more than \$70 billion to scale up Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) activities for the next three years. We need all hands on deck to demand that they serve the actual needs of the American people and reject this bill.

Take two minutes to demand that Congress reject more funding for ICE and CBP and forward the opportunity to three friends to magnify your impact.

[Contact Congress Before They Vote](#)

Yours in the Fight,
Jessica Jones Capparell
Director, Government Affairs
League of Women Voters