



## 2024 Voter engagement: A Message from the LWV of California

by Interim Director Helen Hutchison



Helen Hutchison

### Empowering Voters: Reflecting on Our Impact

As the dust settles from the November 2024 General Election, it's important that we reflect on the really critical voter engagement efforts the LWVC carried out over the past year. We are deeply grateful to our dedicated volunteers and partners for tirelessly ensuring that non-partisan information reached voters across California.

In 2024, the LWVCEF's voter engagement efforts included:

- **Unveiling the Easy Voter Guide (EVG):** We launched the Easy Voter Guide in five languages—English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese—crafted to deliver "snack-sized" information that simplifies the complexities of 10 state propositions. With over 118,000 printed copies distributed in partnership with the CA State Library and community organizations, we ensured that vital information was accessible to every voter. For those who prefer digital, the online PDF was just a click away at [easyvoterguide.org](http://easyvoterguide.org).
- **Launching VOTE411:** Our comprehensive online election guide, VOTE411, continues to be an invaluable resource for California voters, offering nonpartisan insights into candidates and measures at federal, state, and local levels. Thanks to the dedication of over 120 volunteers, we reached out to more than 4,800 candidates and entered detailed information on 600 local measures. VOTE411 also offers essential guidance on polling places, ballot return processes, and more. Dive into the wealth of information at [vote411.org](http://vote411.org).
- **Engaging Communities Across California:** Local Leagues didn't just sit back—they sprang into action by hosting candidate forums and Pros & Cons presentations that empowered communities statewide. Our Pros & Cons PDF, available in both English and Spanish, provides a clear and unbiased overview of state-level ballot measures, arming voters with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions.
- **Expansive Resource Distribution:** Our outreach efforts turned the Easy Voter Guides into a lifeline for voters. Highlights include:
  - LWV Santa Barbara distributed 9,000 guides through local food banks and libraries.

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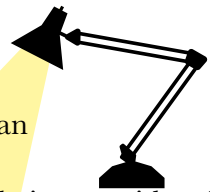
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## 2024 Voter Engagement [Continued from the previous page]

- LWV San Diego provided 5,000 guides to libraries, community groups, and jails.
- Our partner, AltaMed offered 30,000 guides in English and Spanish at their clinics.
- Support from numerous election offices and adult literacy programs across 103 libraries statewide.

As we close out this election year [and welcome the new year], we want to celebrate the unwavering commitment of everyone who helped us reach voters across California. Amid the challenges and uncertainties, your dedication ensured that communities had the resources they needed to cast informed votes and participate in our democracy. Together, we made a powerful impact—reminding us that even in turbulent times, our collective efforts can shine a light on the path forward. Thank you for standing with us, empowering voters, and defending our democracy. Here's to continuing this vital work in the year ahead.

### **Observer Corps Report** by Karen Bender, Ruth Zemke, and Denise Steedman



Perhaps energized by the elections, local government continues with important issues being considered and sometimes passionate input from the public.

**Fullerton City Council** is grappling with meeting the low-income housing mandates and making final decisions about the Housing Incentive Overlay Zone (HIOZ) and the General Plan Housing Element changes to be made on January 7. According to the City of Fullerton website, HIOZ is “a zoning tool that would be applied to selected properties that is currently only zoned for commercial or industrial uses.” There were heated discussions about the city council’s embarrassing failure to implement the previously approved Mayoral rotation.

At the **Orange County Board of Supervisors**, District 4 (Chaffee) discretionary funds of \$500,000 were allocated to support Cal State Fullerton’s Transformative Housing Expansion for Women in association with the Project Rebound Program. This program provides academic opportunity for formerly incarcerated students. Fift Project Rebound students will graduate at the end of the year.

There was additional discussion about the independent external audit that will occur to review county contracts that may have been influenced by former Supervisor Do, who resigned after pleading guilty to bribery charges.

“New” Supervisor J. Nguyen attended her first meeting of the Board of Supervisors on December 17 (she also served as District I Supervisor from 2007 to 2014).

**Please see our LWVNOC website for the full Observer Corps reports.** If YOU would like to join our “Mighty Observer Corps,” contact Karen Bender at [karen.bender063@gmail.com](mailto:karen.bender063@gmail.com)

If once or twice/monthly observations of local government meetings are more than your schedule permits, consider becoming part of our **Part-Time Observer Corps**. As a part-time Observer Corps member, you can share the responsibility of covering a particular government body’s regular meeting with an Observer partner OR just fill in when the regular Observer is unable to attend a meeting. This part-time position can illuminate the workings of government at more than one site. You could potentially observe a county board meeting, a city council meeting, or a local school board meeting.

# A Message from the President of the League of Women Voters of California

by Chris Carson



Chris Carson, LWVC President

We find ourselves in a moment both familiar and new—a place where our rights are under threat, our democracy is strained, and the path forward feels daunting. But even now, our resolve stands firm.

Democracy has faltered before, and we've seen the grit and determination of Leaguers rise time and again to protect and support her. This is why we're here. Democracy begins at home, and our grassroots organizing will not stop. In this year's Democracy Works, we'll celebrate our accomplishments and gather strength to keep moving forward together.

I'm in awe of what we've achieved this year. Although we all hold immense uncertainty right now, I feel such pride in the groundswell of grassroots energy—much of it powered by women—that emerged across California over the past year.

Election years keep the LWVC busy, and the renewed enthusiasm for democracy fueled our efforts even more. Our production of the Easy Voter Guide reached new heights, with thousands distributed across libraries, food banks, health clinics, and more. I'm also deeply grateful for the tireless dedication of our VOTE411 volunteers, who helped make critical voting information widely accessible.

This year also brought a record workload for our advocacy team as we co-sponsored numerous bills. You'll read about our legislative successes, including the Peace Act, which protects voters and election workers from threats and intimidation. We were proud to support this bill and others that safeguard voting rights.

The story of democracy has no beginning and no end—it's a story the League entered over 100 years ago and one we protect to this day. Serving as your LWVC President is part of my journey in defending democracy, and your involvement in the League is part of yours.

As we step into the next chapter, we need all of us to stay involved—through donations, volunteering, or advocacy. Together, we stand strong with the LWVC.



## Meeting Dates January - May 2025

**Lunch With League 11:00 am at Coyote Hills CC**

All on Thursdays

January 23   February 27   March 27   April 24   May 22

**Board Meetings 2:00 pm at ROP**

All on Wednesdays   All members welcome!

January 15   February 19   March 19   April 16   May 21

(Board meeting dates are occasionally changed.)

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# LWVNOC Members Honored by Woman’s Club of Fullerton at Annual 2024 Leadership Forum

Two of our members, Barbara Johnson and Jodi Balma, were recently honored by the Woman’s Club of Fullerton for their leadership in our community

## **Barbara Johnson: Lifetime Leadership Achievement Award**

Barbara Johnson grew up in Fargo, North Dakota during World War II, and she earned a graduate degree in Sociology from Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon. She moved to Fullerton in 1963 with her husband Bruce when he became minister of the Congregational Church of Fullerton. They raised their five children here in Fullerton.

Barbara has been an active volunteer in her church and community all her life. She enjoys networking with others to solve problems where people are suffering and struggling to survive. This led her to put her energy into alleviating hunger and homelessness— and to the formation of the Fullerton Interfaith Emergency Service, which is now called Pathways of Hope. When she retired at age 75 after 23 years as Executive Director, she had and still has the feeling of a proud parent, grateful for all that has been achieved over the past 40 years.

Now 94, Barbara still lives in the same house and feels blessed to have family living close by to help her stay connected to her many friends and extended family of seven grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.



## **Jodi Balma : Leadership in Education 2024 Honoree**

Professor Jodi Balma started her career as a professor of political science at Fullerton College in 2000. She has served as the faculty coordinator of the Honors Program since 2012.

Professor Balma specializes in American politics and California state and local government. Her goal is to help students learn how to think about politics and community problems with an emphasis on critical thinking and analysis, regardless of political party or ideology. She helps students understand how they can become involved in working with community leaders to find solutions. During election years, her efforts include voter education and engagement with candidate forums, information on ballot measures, and encouraging students to be informed and engaged voters with an emphasis on local elections.

She is actively involved in the League of Women Voters and frequently hosts local candidate forums throughout North Orange County each election cycle. Balma is a regular on-the-record analyst for newspaper and radio media outlets such as the Los Angeles Times, Orange County Register, Voice of OC, KNX 1070, KPCC, and NPR. and hosts a podcast on North Orange County politics titled “A Slice of Orange” to help her students and the community learn more about local government.



## **Other LWVNOC Members honored for stellar leadership by The Women’s Club of Fullerton**

Molly McClanahan (2006), Jan Flory (2009), Greta Nagel (2010) and Bey-Ling Sha (2023)

# Advocacy

by Richard Larsen



This month again there was not much petition activity, but we've been busy getting the coming Legislator interviews organized. On December 18 we received a request from LWV Coast League to call or text the White House and demand that the ERA become a reality. On December 19 we received a petition request from Common Cause California to our Legislators to improve language access in our voting process. Every voice deserves to be heard in our democracy, but for millions of immigrant voters in California who have Limited English Proficiency, casting a ballot can feel more like an obstacle course than a fundamental right. Both requests were distributed to the Advocacy team for action.

Our legislator interviews are planned for early February. As it stands right now, we have five interviews to perform and report to LWVC, two State Senators; Steven Choi and Thomas Umberg, and three State Assembly members; Phillip Chen, Sharon Quirk-Silva, and Avelino

Valencia. There are two other Senate districts that NOC is in with other local leagues outside Orange County, D30 and D32. Emails have been sent to those leagues about coordinating the interviews but we have not had a response. We only have about eight NOC members in each of these districts so will probably not have to do them. We'll send our requests for interviews late December, early January, for interviews in January and early February. We have eight people signed up for the interview team as of this date. Because the interview dates will be subject to the Legislator's discretion and availability, we appreciate a generous list of volunteers.

Anyone interested in participating or just receiving updates or information contact Richard Larsen [rkajdane5@gmail.com](mailto:rkajdane5@gmail.com) or (562) 652-3211 (cell). Whether you actually participate or not depends on needs and availability for the Legislators dictated time and location.

## Hinky-Pinky by Jim Hill

A hinky-pinky is a two-word phrase consisting of a two-syllable adjective and a two-syllable noun that the adjective modifies, and the words rhyme. For example, a joyous father is a "happy pappy." Or a tide could be "ocean motion." You can also have hinkety-pinketies, the same idea with three syllable words. For example, a creepy pastor is a "sinister minister." All right, see if you can figure out the puzzles below.

### Hinky-pinkies (2 syllables)

1. an urban cat
2. the pilot at a greater elevation
3. an amusing burrowing animal
4. a famous virologist in a bad mood

### Hinkety-pinketies (3 syllables)

5. 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
6. a non-military person from Rio de Janeiro
7. an almanac
8. careful examination of a shipboard rebellion
9. drummer talk

### Hinkinkety-pinkinkety (4 syllables)

10. condition which prevents disease from spreading in a particular area

## Answers

1. city kitty
2. higher flier
3. funny bunny
4. grouchy Fauci
5. President's residence
6. civilian Brazilian
7. annual manual
8. nutty scrutiny
9. percussion discussion
10. community immunity





## LWVNOC Current Officers and Directors

### Officers

President	Gerri McNenny
Vice-President	Sherlan Neblett
Secretary	Ruth Zemke
Treasurer	Karen Bender

Special Events	Vacant
Nominating Comm.	Vacant

### Directors

Action/Advocacy	Richard Larsen
Lunch w/ League	Betty Hammond
	Jennifer Trafford
	Maggie Lee
Co-Membership	Marcy Fry
	Maggie Lee
Voter Service	Linda Lockwood
Speaker Committee	Jodi Balma
E-mail Blasts	Maggie Lee
<i>Voter</i> Editor	Jim Hill
Web Host	Ed Smith
	Maggie Lee

### Off-Board Directors

Read with League	Love Adu
Past President	Kristina Fruneaux
League Phone	to be discontinued
League Mail Box	Karen Bender
Student Outreach	Jodi Balma
Facebook	Jodi Balma
	Kristina Fruneaux
Climate Change Comm.	Vacant
Observer Corps	Karen Bender

**MEMBER INFORMATION FOR 2024-2025**

First Name	Last Name
Email Address	
Street Address	
City	Zip
Phone Number	Cell Number

**MEMBERSHIP FEES AND DONATIONS**

- Individual Membership @ \$85
- Two in a household @ \$120
- Free Student Membership
- Donation to the LWVNOC \$\_\_\_\_\_
- Renewal
- Renewal
- Renewal
- Donation to LWVNOC Education Fund \$\_\_\_\_\_
- New Member
- New Member
- New Member

(Must be separate check made out to LWVCEF)

**PAYMENT INFORMATION**

- Check enclosed (payable to LWVNOC)
- Credit card

Name on Credit Card	
Billing Address	City, Zip
Credit Card Number	
Expiration Date	Security Code

Please circle areas of interest for you and/or add a special interest to you:

- |                         |                   |                |   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---|
| Read with League        | Education         | Climate Change | Affordable Housing/<br>Homelessness     |
| Observers               | Action & Advocacy | Voter Services | Help with Technology/<br>Communications |
| Special Events Planning | Fund Raising      | Field Trips    |   |

Do you have any skills or background that would support any of these areas?

Yes                      No

**Please send this completed form to:**  
 League of Women Voters of North Orange County (LWVNOC)  
 PO Box 3073, Fullerton, CA 92834





**League of Women Voters**

**P. O. Box 3073**

**Fullerton, CA 92834**