



President's Message Gerri McNenny

A lot has been going on in our local LA area, as you all know. One of the more encouraging events has been the appearance of Celina Stewart, CEO of LWVUS, at several venues in the Pacific coast area. She recently spoke at the LWV LA Civic Society in Sherman Oaks, a community church group in Manhattan Beach, and the San Diego LWV.

Here are some of the issues she highlighted in her talks. First of all, she noted how the Federal Government is trying to make Los Angeles an example, and she encouraged League members to stand up for democracy. Part of our good efforts to counter various attacks on democracy and due process include making the League a safe space for men and minorities to join.

She also noted the importance of opposing the SAVE Act. She recounted how New Hampshire, in the wake of adopting legislation that mirrors the SAVE Act, turned women away from voting because they had changed their names when they got married.

Stewart also highlighted the good news--that last year the LWV registered 24 million voters and assisted 240 million voters through Vote411. The LWVUS estimated that members contributed over 900,000 hours of volunteering which equates to \$35,000,000.

In her talk she drew special attention to the LWVUS's action on April 17th, when the LWVUS declared our country to be in **a constitutional crisis** due to various actions on the part of the Trump administration. In the LWVUS's press release, Stewart wrote, "From the flagrant disregard for congressional authority and governmental checks and balances to defying Supreme Court orders to bring Kilmar Abrego Garcia back home, one thing is abundantly clear: **our country is in a constitutional crisis.**

"We the people must fight back. That is why the League of Women Voters is launching a powerful new initiative, **Unite and Rise 8.5.**

"Unite and Rise 8.5 will engage and mobilize 8.5 million voters between now and November 2026 to protect and preserve our democratic institutions.

"The foundational principles that have sustained our democracy — checks and balances, the rule of law, free and fair elections — are under direct and sustained threat. In this extraordinary moment, we cannot proceed with business as usual. All Americans — no matter who you voted for in 2024 — need to come together, stand united, and fight back to save our democracy. We cannot afford to fail the generations to come."



Celina Stewart, CEO of LWVUS:
Our country is in a Constitutional crisis.

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In her talk, Stewart underscored the goals of the **Unite and Rise program--to energize and activate 8.5 million of us.** Unite and Rise is a 90-day campaign with every month focused on doing one thing from the League's list. Central to Unite and Rise is the belief that woman can and must turn this country around.

Stewart also recommended two books for Leagues to read together: [*How Democracies Die*](#) (Levitsky and Ziblatt) and [*198 Methods of Nonviolent Action*](#) (in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* by Gene Sharp).

In one of the LWVUS's recent press releases (on July 18, 2025), she highlighted the need to defend election officials against attacks by the US Department of Justice. She wrote the following:

"Voting officials and poll workers across the country have been the target of harassment and vitriol since the false claims of a stolen presidential election in 2020. The Department of Justice demanding state election officials share sensitive data on voters and have voting equipment inspected is another attempt to undermine the security of our elections. With every attempt to interfere in the constitutionally mandated election processes of states, our democracy weakens.

"Make no mistake, these actions are intended to remove eligible voters based on the color of their skin or the language they speak, remove those who disagree with the administration's goals, and sow doubt about the integrity of our elections.

"We must protect not only the practices that keep our elections free and fair, but also the people who sacrifice their time and energy to work at the polls, get voters registered, and carry out our democracy.

"We condemn the Trump Administration's continued abuse of power in this action to inappropriately target voter data."

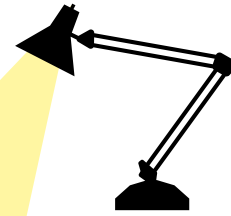
A couple of specific actions she mentioned that we can all consider are the following:

- Go to Immigration hearings, just to sit in and observe. Being white and wearing a LWV pin or name tag could and does make a difference.
- Set up a Facebook group to protect workers when they are in your neighborhood.
- Join your Observer Corp and get involved in monitoring meetings and elections.
- Go to Protests with LWV on your signs.
- Write to your representatives - often - and if they are doing the right thing, thank them.
- Respond to the Action Alerts the League of Women Voters US sends out.



Observer Reports

by Ruth Zemke, Dee Steedman,
Sherlan Neblett, and Karen Bender



Today we have a report by Dee Steedman on the **June 30**, meeting of the **Fullerton Library Board of Trustees**. The Library Foundation representative reported that the Foundation is being audited by the Department of Justice. The Foundation is not allowed to fundraise until the audit is completed. The cancellation of the June book sale has impacted revenue. The Library Director suggested that the \$200k appropriated from the City Council go to one full-time Children's Librarian, one full-time Tech Assistant and an increased Guard service. Her full report appears on our website: Click on "Observer Corps," then on "LWVNOC Observer Reports," then on "Reports – Cities," and scroll down to the bottom of Fullerton. Click on "Fullerton Library." Thank you, Dee.

The **Orange County Board of Supervisors** did not meet in July. On **June 24**, the Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 to extend their partnership with Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services. Staff had recommended utilizing Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance for the suicide support hotline and delivering therapy and support services to people who've lost loved ones to suicide. The recommendation was based on ability to bill MediCal insurance.

Fullerton City Council met on **July 15**. There was lengthy, contentious discussion about the Fullerton Train Station lease amendment. After discussion about the history of the Bushala brothers' lease, the plans for development of the space, extending the lease, and questions about subletting without notice to the council, the lease amendment passed 3-2.

A consent calendar item about a memorandum of understanding between the City and Wisk Aero, LLC, a helicopter taxi service at Fullerton airport, prompted Karen Lloreda to publicly comment that discussion with residential and commercial neighbors of the airport should be included in planning.

On **July 22**, the **Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District** discussed a material revision to the charter of the **Orange County School of Computer Science at Bernardo Yorba**. The grading method of this program demands a full day/week for professional collaboration among teachers. How to cover the cost of this time while the district is facing a funding deficit and what instruction the students would receive during this day was the subject of the revision. The revision was accepted.

Three **OC Board of Education (BOE)** reports were recently posted by the Coast League. At the **June 2nd** meeting of the BOE, it was reported that public and staff input was received on the Ethnic Studies curriculum for Orange County's numerous charter schools. A new draft was presented to the Board at the **June 18** meeting and adopted. It will be shared with the public and staff through local media. The curriculum will be pilot tested in the 2025-2026 school year. There was discussion by the Board about to what extent they should (or could) control the exposition of critical race theory, gender/identity issues, DEI, etc. in the county charter schools.

At the **July 9th** meeting, the Board of Education voted 5-0 to send a resolution to the legislature in opposition to AB 84 (which proposes having all Boards of Education members elected during the main election, rather than during the primary election).

The full observer reports can be found on our website. The Orange County Board of Education reports are provided by the Coast League and can be found by scrolling to the very bottom of the Observer Corps page and clicking on "Reports – County."

Good Trouble Lives On

by Sharon O'Hara

On July 17th members of the LWVNOC participated in the Good Trouble Lives On rally in Brea. As you may know, the LWVUS supported a national day of action entitled "Good Trouble Lives On." The LWVUS emphasized its commitment to nonviolent action across the country to advocate for voting rights and defend democracy. One of the main organizers of "Good Trouble" was Indivisible. Here in North Orange County, we have Indivisible CA 45 (CA Congressional District 45).

Indivisible is a progressive movement and organization initiated in 2016. The movement's organizational leadership includes the **Indivisible Project**, **Indivisible Civics**, and **Indivisible Action**. The movement began with the online publication of a handbook written by Congressional staffers with suggestions for peacefully but effectively resisting the move to the right.

The purpose of the guide was to encourage resistance by attending town halls called by Republican elected members of Congress, by calling congressional officials, by visiting their offices, and by showing up at public events.

Since January 2025, the Indivisible organization has continued its activities and declared that the democracy of the republic is under threat and that the organization will not yield to fascism, pledging to stand together to fight in defense of rights, communities, and values.

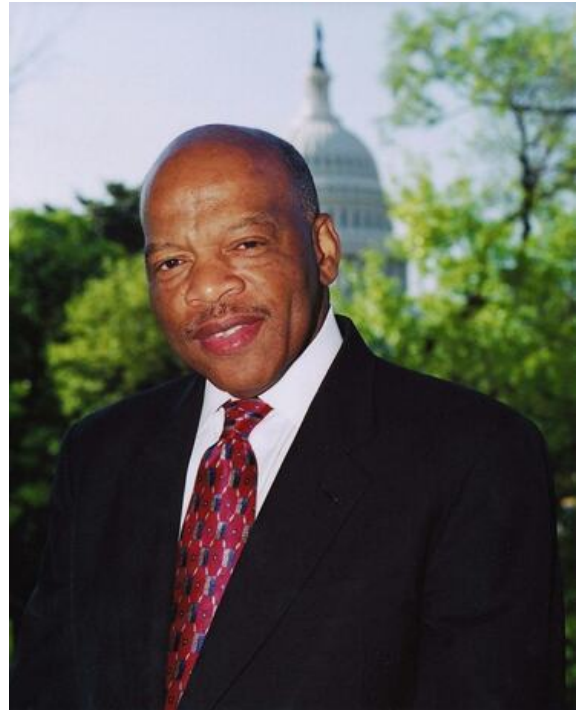
They post the organized efforts to protest, and the Indivisible co-founders Leah Greenberg and Ezra Levin hold a weekly conversation regarding the news of the week, to answer questions, and to inform about calls to action.

Indivisible encourages these advocacy tactics and key opportunities that can have great effect

- Town hall attendance,
- district office visits,
- and coordinated calls and letters to decision makers' offices.

Indivisible groups in California focus on issues like voting rights, healthcare, environmental protection, and other areas where they see the need to resist the current administration's policies. They collaborate with other progressive groups and organizations to amplify their impact and build a strong, unified movement with campaigns to protect democracy.

Beyond political action, Indivisible groups in California foster a sense of community among their members, providing a space for like-minded individuals to connect, organize, and support each other.



US. Rep. John Lewis (1940 - 2020)

"Protest is an act of love, not one of anger." John Lewis 1940-2020

From LWVUS: League Update

by Dianna Wynn, President of LWVUS
July 24, 2026



Friend,

Our Nation

Next week, Senators Durbin and Warnock will reintroduce the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA). This important legislation will restore and modernize the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) and ensure that every voter has equal access to the ballot box. Ahead of the reintroduction, I urge you to review our [updated toolkit on the VRAA](#) for talking points and action guidance. To mark the VRA's 60th anniversary on August 6, LWVUS will issue an action alert on the VRAA. Watch our take-action page next week to share our action alert!

And as we gear up for local elections this fall, it's critical to recruit poll workers who can ensure safe, free, and fair elections for all. Since 2020, the League has partnered with Power the Polls, and I'm thrilled to announce we're continuing this partnership in 2025. Join us on Thursday, August 12 for National Poll Worker Recruitment Day! You can find more information about participating in this day of action, as well as access social media tools and our unique registration link [in our toolkit on the League Management Site](#). National Poll Worker Recruitment Day is just the first of many civic holidays coming up this year. If you haven't already, register for our civic holidays webinar [next Tuesday at 3pm ET](#) to learn more about how your League can participate.

Our League

Over the past three months, you all have worked tirelessly to mobilize and engage voters in Unite & Rise 8.5. Thank YOU for your commitment to protect and preserve our democratic institutions in our fight against authoritarianism. With August just a week away, I know many of you are waiting for the second power playbook, the activation guide that outlines the different calls to action and activities for the next few months. LWVUS will share the second power playbook with League leaders early next week. Look for the new playbook soon on the League Management Site.

To support Leagues in the second phase of our Unite & Rise initiative, LWVUS is hosting a community call next week at 5pm ET. This is a space to coordinate and brainstorm with national staff and fellow League members on the second power playbook. Register for our community call [here](#), and if you haven't already, make sure to complete our online [commitment form](#).

Finally, I am excited to announce that this summer, the League is going on tour! We are proud to join Cyndi Lauper on her Girls Just Wanna Have Fun Farewell Tour, which [kicked off](#) last week in Wantagh, NY. Throughout the rest of the summer, partnering Leagues will register concert goers to vote and talk about how to get involved with the League. This past week, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to volunteer with my local League at a concert and meet Cyndi. She loves the League and is passionate about defending democracy! [Join the League](#) at a tour stop near you.

Opinion: A Pressing Need

by Jim Hill

In **Wealth of Nations** Adam Smith acknowledged that the free market should not be expected to provide efficiently for **all** goods and services the public might need, only for those that would be profitable. For a variety of reasons some endeavors that are beneficial for society, are just not feasible investments no matter how popular they may be. Take housing for example. Both real estate and building costs have skyrocketed in recent years, placing home ownership out of reach for many Americans. The home building business is in free fall because of high costs and a lack of qualified buyers.

Lately, builders have begun catering to high-end buyers because big spenders were the only market left. As housing costs rose and wages fell behind, building affordable housing no longer made economic sense. In short, the free market is failing to produce an adequate supply of dwelling places that people can afford. Both mortgages and rents have just rocketed out of reach for the average consumer. Oh my! What to do?

In my opinion it's time for non-profit home building. This is a nationwide problem, so the federal government needs to get into the home building business. The essence of the mission is simple: make places to live affordable again. There are two ways to tackle the problem, and both should be pursued. First, a federal agency should be established to provide decent affordable housing across the nation. Second, since the federal minimum wage is ridiculously too low, a program of regularly scheduled percentage wage hikes should be put into law. With housing costs falling and incomes rising this two-pronged policy should become increasingly effective. As housing costs fall, even for-profit builders may find their projects profitable again, and they will compete with government projects by providing housing with attractive features the government dwellings don't have. As the industry begins to right itself, the need for government intervention may eventually no longer be needed.

Who pays for all this? First, consider the history of the top marginal rate (TMR) for income tax. Income is taxed according to a set of designated tiers of increasing rates. Everybody with a taxable income pays the same rate up to a certain amount. Above that, those additional dollars get taxed at a higher rate at the second tier. Dollars above that put you into the third tier with an even higher rate. Currently the top marginal rate is 37% for income over \$626,350 for individuals and \$751,600 for couples. Even if you make millions or tens of millions in a year, 37% is currently your top marginal rate.

Now for a little historical perspective. From 1951 to 1963 the top TMR was 91 to 92 percent. In 1964 it dropped to 77% and then stayed at 70% until 1980. From 1982 until 1986 it was 50%. For three years it hit 28%, its lowest rate since the depths of the Great Depression. For the last three decades or so, it has bounced around in a narrow range centered on 35% until landing at 37% now. During that time the richest among us have spectacularly widened the gulf between themselves and those with more modest incomes.

The simple truth is wealth and its power beget more wealth and more power until this imbalance presents democracy with the kinds of serious problems we see today. Money is like blood. If it doesn't circulate through the entire body, the body sickens and dies. Raise the TMR, and raise the minimum wage.

ADVOCACY by Richard Larsen

We received eleven petition requests this month along with an invitation to a John Lewis demonstration in Brea on July 17 to commemorate his life and work on voting rights. This event was attended by several of our LWVNOC members.

The following petitions were distributed to the Advocacy Group to submit. These are listed in the order they were received.

1. LWVUS requested petitions be sent to Congress about the impact of the “Big Beautiful Bill” on health care and food supplements.
2. Common Cause requested petitions be sent to our House Representatives to reject the “Big Beautiful Bill.”
3. Common Cause requested petitions be sent to Congress to investigate Steven Miller for his orchestration of attacks on immigrants.
4. LWVC requested petitions be sent to CA Legislators for a yes on SJR-1 to rescind calls for US Article V Convention.
5. Common Cause requested petitions be sent to Congress to protect the 14th Amendment on Birthright.
6. Common Cause requested petitions be sent to Congress to investigate Steven Miller, same as #3.
7. LWVC requested petitions, a repeat of #4 for a yes on SJR-1.
8. ACLU requested petitions be sent to Congress to keep DOGE’s hands off our personal data.
9. Common Cause California requested petitions be sent to CA Legislators for YES on SB42 Fair Elections Act.
10. LWVC requested a call or note to our Governor and Legislators to not do redistricting for political reasons.
11. Common Cause California also requested a petition to our Governor to not do the redistricting.

LWVNOC Current Officers and Directors

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Secretary	Ruth Zemke
Treasurer	Karen Bender

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Voter Editor	Jim Hill

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Maggie Lee
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Student Outreach	Jodi Balma
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2025-2026 Focus Committee Heads

Federal Judiciary	Ruth Zemke
Climate Sustainability	Sharon O’Hara
Education	Marcy Fry



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