



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

October 2020

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Calendar

Tuesday, October 13, 2020
 10 a.m. to noon
 LWVSCC Board Meeting
 Virtual meeting via Jitsi
 To attend, email rsvp@lwvsc.org

Tuesday, October 13, 2020
 5:00 p.m.
 Ballot Measure Pros and Cons
 Virtual Event Via Zoom
 Co-sponsored with the American Association of University Women

Saturday, October 17, 2020
 10:00 a.m.
 Ballot Measure Pros and Cons
 Virtual Event Via Zoom
 Co-sponsored with Santa Cruz Public Libraries
 Open to the public

October Virtual Board Meeting

Due to the pandemic, we will be using Jitsi, a secure and free video conferencing system, for our October 13 Board of Directors meeting, which will start at 10 a.m. To attend, send an email to RSVP@lwvsc.org.

A NONPARTISAN LOOK AT NOVEMBER'S BALLOT MEASURES

Two Virtual Events via Zoom:

Tuesday, October 13, 5:00 p.m.

Co-sponsored with the American Association of University Women

Saturday, October 17, 10:00 a.m.

*Co-sponsored with Santa Cruz Public Libraries
 This event is open to the public.*

No reservation required.

See below for information on how to attend.

The League of Women Voters will present nonpartisan overviews of the November 2020 California state ballot measures at two virtual events in October. Each presentation will inform voters about all twelve propositions on this fall's ballot, including provisions, fiscal effects, main arguments for and against, and their supporters and opponents. The subject matters range from stem cell research, rent control, voting age in primary elections, affirmative action in higher education, and property taxes on businesses. Presentations generally run one hour with time afterwards for questions and answers.

Educate yourself on these important issues so you can vote with confidence and improve your participation with U.S. democracy.

Participants may attend either of these virtual meetings online (computer with internet access, audio, and microphone required; video optional) or by telephone (no computer or smartphone needed). League members will receive an email with the meeting link prior to each event. Members who wish to attend by phone may request information on how to do so by calling the League's phone at 831-325-4140. If you would like more information about how to set up Zoom or how to attend a Zoom meeting, or if you have any questions about the events, please send us an email at league@lwvsc.org. No reservation required.

If you cannot attend either of these events live, you can watch a recorded pros and cons event later.

Membership Report

The 2020/21 LWVSCC membership roster will be sent to all members in mid-October. To keep your membership current and keep receiving this newsletter, send in your renewal immediately. While membership renewal is finalized September 30; we like memberships at any time of the year!

It's fast and easy to renew your membership online at lwvsc.org/join. Pay online with PayPal or print out and mail in the membership form with your check. Our calendar of events of local programs as well as state and national news are an integral part of our informative newsletter. To stay informed about local issues, please be sure your membership is up to date!

We look forward to your continued support and interest.

Thank you,

—*Lydia Nogales Parker*
Membership Chair



Voting Info for Fire Survivors

Those who lost their homes in the CZU Fire will not lose their right to vote. If you have changed your address due to the fires, be aware that your ballot will not be forwarded. The Santa Cruz County Elections Department has prepared a web page with information for fire survivors on how to ensure that they receive their ballot at votescount.com.

President's Message



Since so many of us will be voting by mail for the first time and submitting our ballots before the November 3 election date, as League of Women Voters members, that means becoming informed on the ballot propositions early, and deciding how to vote on such diverse matters as funding for California's schools, essential workers, and local government; affirmative action; voting rights; criminal justice; consumer data privacy; and property tax breaks. The recommendations of the League of Women Voters of California, which appear in this issue of the VOTER, are based on positions taken by our members participating in studies over decades and on careful review of the initiatives. The state League can only take a position on a ballot measure that has been studied and that reflects the consensus of our members. A “neutral” or “no position” stance means either there is a problem with the ballot measure, or that our positions (state and/or national) do not cover the issues.

During this dystopian time of the COVID-19 pandemic, fires, evacuations, and destruction, I am aware that focusing on weighing the pros and cons of ballot measures, and thinking about recommendations from the League of Women Voters of California, requires a pivot and some extra effort. Note that in October, our League will hold two live virtual events that will present a non-partisan overview of the pros and cons of measures on the November ballot (see details on page 1).

As the daughter of a firefighter and someone who has lead a community group following the flood of 1982 (the Valley Women's Club of the San Lorenzo Valley), chaired the League of Women Voters public meeting on preparing for pandemics, and worked on helping with set up of emergency preparedness networks in the north county area in the 1980's close to the time of the 1989 earthquake, I have dealt with emergency situations without panicking and learned to cope with reality. Denial does not resolve political or social problems, whereas being informed and acting appropriately does.

—*Barbara Lewis, President LWVSCC*

Voter Service Report

This November's ballot includes twelve state ballot measures. Propositions 14 through 24 are initiatives; Proposition 25 is a referendum, which asks voters to accept or reject a law that was enacted by the State Legislature in 2018. In addition, Propositions 15 through 19 are Constitutional Amendments. The League can help you get the facts and understand the issues at our non-partisan pros and cons online educational presentations on October 13 and 17 (for details see page 1).

Thank you to the League members who made possible the online candidate forum on September 2 for the Pajaro Valley Unified School District board seats for trustee areas 3 and 6. It was sponsored by the Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers Union. Dinah Sapia was the moderator and Kit Hein the timekeeper.

—Dottie Fry, Voter Service Co-chair

What's on Your Local Ballot?

Local Ballot Measures

The three measures on our local Santa Cruz County ballot include:

Measure A—Scotts Valley Unified School District Bond: requires a 55% vote to pass

Measure N—Loma Prieta Joint Union Elementary School District Parcel Tax: requires a 2/3 vote to pass

Measure O—Aromas San Juan Unified School District Bond: requires a 55% vote to pass

November Ballot Offices

Santa Cruz County voters will choose the U.S. President and Vice President, U.S. House Representatives for Districts 18 and 20, State Senate for District 17, and State Assembly for Districts 29 and 30.

Local Offices

Superior Court Judge

County Supervisor—1st District

Santa Cruz County Board of Education—Trustee Areas 3, 5, 6

Cabrillo College—Trustee Areas 4, 5, 7

Pajaro Valley Unified School District—Trustee Areas 3, 6

San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District—Trustee Area 3

Loma Prieta Joint Union School District—2 seats

Capitola City Council—2 seats

Santa Cruz City Council—4 seats

Scotts Valley City Council—3 seats

Watsonville City Council—Districts 1, 2, 6

Water Districts: Pajaro Valley—1 seat; San Lorenzo Valley—2 seats; Soquel Creek—2 seats

—Dottie Fry and Kit Hein, Voter Services Co-Chairs

Resources for Voters

For more information about the November 3 election, check out these websites:

Santa Cruz County Election Department:

votescount.us

Register to vote or check your registration status or address. Local election information for candidates and county measures.

Voter's Edge California: votersedge.org/ca

A comprehensive nonpartisan online guide to elections covering federal, state, and local races in the state of California. Voter's Edge includes information on candidates, measures, and your personal ballot. English and Spanish versions available.

Easy Voter Guide: easyvoterguide.org

A concise guide for first-time and busy voters. Includes general voting information and a brief summary of state ballot measures. Download the Easy Voter Guide in five languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. Produced by the LWV of California Education Fund.

LWV Education Fund Voter Information Site:

cavotes.org

Comprehensive information on the pros and cons of the state ballot measures.

Official Voter Information Guide:

voterguide.sos.ca.gov

The official, in depth voter information guide from the California Secretary of State.

LWV Santa Cruz County: lwvsc.org

Link directly to voter education sites from our local League website.

Vote with the League!

LWVC Positions on the November 2020 Ballot Measures

The California State League evaluates each ballot measure and carefully weighs its merits and whether they align with the League's positions before taking a stance on whether to support, oppose, remain neutral, or, if we do not have any positions relating to the measure, take no stance. The [League's positions](#) have been developed through member consensus after careful study.

Below is a brief summary of each measure and the LWVC's stance on it. Complete, detailed information on the League's position for each measure is available at lwvc.org (or go directly to each measure's page by clicking the title link).

[Prop 14: Stem Cell Research](#)

Our stance: NEUTRAL

Prop 14 would authorize the use of general obligation bonds to continue funding stem cell research. While the League of Women Voters of California supports ongoing stem cell research, we are neutral on Prop 14 because of the funding mechanism used and because of the requirement for a supermajority vote to amend its provisions.

[Prop 15: Schools and Communities First](#)

Our stance: SUPPORT

The Schools & Communities First initiative will raise \$12 billion every year for California's schools, essential workers, and local governments. This will come by ensuring that all corporate properties worth more than \$3 million pay their fair share of property taxes—while protecting homeowners and renters, small businesses, and agriculture. This money is needed now more than ever and is critical to California's recovery and reinvestment. (See more about Prop 15 at yes15.org <https://www.yes15.org/> and elsewhere in this newsletter.)

[Prop 16: Opportunity for All](#)

Our stance: SUPPORT

Affirmative action in state hiring, contracting, and education was banned in California by Prop



209 in 1996. Prop 16 will reverse that ban and allow schools and public institutions to take race, ethnicity, color, national origin, and gender into consideration when admitting students to colleges, hiring employees for public jobs, and selecting contractors for public projects. Equal opportunity programs are a time-tested way to fight systemic racism and gender discrimination by leveling the playing field and giving everyone a chance at good public jobs and wages and quality public schools. Prop 16 provides all Californians a fair opportunity in education, employment, and contracting.

[Prop 17: Restore Voting Rights](#)

Our stance: SUPPORT

Restoring voting rights to Californians who have completed their prison term is a matter of justice, equity, and fundamental fairness. Right now, nearly 50,000 people who have been released from prison and are on parole are denied the right to vote—a right that is owed to every citizen and important to successful reintegration into the community. Our neighbors who are working, paying taxes, raising families, and rebuilding their lives deserve a voice in the policy-making that shapes their lives. Including their voices will help California achieve a more representative democracy.

[Prop 18: Voting Rights for 17-year-olds](#)

Our stance: SUPPORT

Seventeen-year-olds who will be 18 by the next general election should be able to vote in primary and special elections. Prop 18 will give them that right. Young people are significantly underrepresented in California's electorate. Allowing 17-year-olds to vote in primary and special elections will engage young voters while they are studying the issues in high school and have a strong interest in participation.

[Prop 19: Property Tax Breaks](#)

*Our stance: **OPPOSE***

Prop 19 exacerbates an already inequitable property tax system by offering tax breaks to people who do not need them. Providing tax breaks to homeowners over 55 who purchase a replacement home, and allowing them to “transfer” their current tax assessment to a new home anywhere in the state, does nothing to help low-income seniors or families struggling to find housing. Senior citizens are already allowed to keep their current tax assessment when they purchase a home of equal or lesser value. This law broadens a current law that allows one such tax break under limited circumstances

[Prop 20: Rollback on Criminal Justice Reforms](#)

*Our stance: **OPPOSE***

Over the past decade, California has made progress enacting laws that reduce the prison population and create a more effective and equitable public safety system. Prop 20 would roll back many advances in criminal justice reforms and reinstate a “get tough” law enforcement system that believes longer incarceration is a solution to crime. Longer sentences do not lower recidivism rates and reducing non-violent crimes to misdemeanor charges does not increase violent crime.

[Prop 21: Local Governments and Rent Control](#)

*Our stance: **NEUTRAL***

The League supports efforts to help resolve California’s housing crisis. We promote solutions aimed at increasing housing production in a sustainable, accessible, and equitable manner. Rent control policies are one strategy to address California’s housing challenges, offer tenant protections, and prevent displacement. Rent control may be an effective short-term solution, but studies suggest that its longer-term impact may, in certain cases, stifle the building of high-density and more affordable housing.

Proponents of Prop 21 say that these proposed rent control policies would help improve the housing challenges faced by renters and help stem

the tide of evictions and displacement. Yet Prop 21 also authorizes landlords to increase rental rates at a higher level than currently allowed (15 percent within three years), calling into question this measure’s claim to protect tenants from rent gouging. Furthermore, some of the modifications in Prop 21 have already been addressed through recently passed legislation. Because there are benefits and drawbacks to rent control, the League has chosen to be neutral on Prop 21.

[Prop 22: Rideshare and Delivery Drivers](#)

No Position

A 2018 decision by the California Supreme Court created a stricter classification test that resulted in more workers being considered employees rather than contractors. In 2019, the California Legislature passed Assembly Bill 5, limiting the ability of companies to hire workers as independent contractors, and instead classifying rideshare and delivery drivers as employees, requiring their employers to provide protections and benefits to their drivers. In response to AB 5, app-based gig companies like Uber and DoorDash put Prop 22 on the ballot.

Prop 22 would enable those companies to preserve their business models by continuing to treat their drivers and delivery-people as independent contractors, not employees. Under Prop 22, companies would guarantee workers a minimum wage based on driving time, a health insurance stipend, and some compensation for on-the-job injuries, but would avoid costly legal mandates—like state minimum wage, paid sick leave and unemployment insurance—that apply to other people who are employed in California. The initiative would close off a potential path to unionization, given that federal law reserves collective bargaining for employees.

[Prop 23: Kidney Dialysis Clinics](#)

*Our stance: **NEUTRAL***

This measure will require operators of chronic dialysis clinics (CDCs) to have a minimum of one licensed physician at the clinic whenever patients are being treated, offer the same level of care to all patients regardless of how payment is being made, and make reports about dialysis-related infections

to the state's health department and the National Healthcare Safety Network. There is disagreement about whether the presence of a doctor is always necessary or could exacerbate a doctor shortage, and over whether costs are manageable or prohibitively high. The League questions why voters should be deciding questions of recordkeeping and medical staffing. Dialysis is a serious life-saving, life-sustaining treatment and should not be left to ballot box decision-making. As with most multi-faceted issues, there is room for improvement on all sides. For this reason, the League takes a neutral position.

Prop 23 is simplified version of Prop 8, which appeared on the November 2018 ballot and was defeated. The League reviewed Prop 8 and took no position because it was too detailed in an area not within League expertise. Furthermore, Prop 8 clearly reflected a battle between for-profit dialysis businesses, the labor union, and other organizations seeking more regulation of CDCs.

[Prop 24: Consumer Data Privacy](#)

*Our stance: **OPPOSE***

The League of Women Voters supports the protection of consumers' private data. Prop 24 includes some beneficial elements, but we oppose due to the complexity of a 52-page initiative with impacts and nuances that are difficult for voters to discern and rollbacks to existing protections. Among the troubling aspects of Prop 24 is its expansion of "pay for privacy" through the addition of loyalty and rewards programs, allowing businesses to charge consumers more or provide worse service if they choose to exercise their privacy rights. The initiative also allows businesses to require consumers to direct each individual website and app not to sell information—weakening the current legal requirement that companies respect a global opt-out for all services. These burdens are fundamentally inequitable, placing the onus on the average consumer to protect their own privacy. Working people don't have the time to do the paperwork and they can't afford to pay companies to respect their wishes. Finally, the initiative comes less than a year after the 2018 California Consumer Privacy Rights Act went into effect, before we have had an

opportunity to see how the new law works or the legislature has had a chance to address any defects.

[Prop 25: End Cash Money Bail](#)

*Our stance: **SUPPORT***

A YES vote on Prop 25 is a vote to replace the money bail system with the use of pretrial risk assessment tools that focus on safety and flight risk. If passed, this initiative would uphold Senate Bill 10 (SB 10), which ended the cash money bail system. The California Legislature approved SB 10 in 2018, and Governor Jerry Brown signed it into law. The bail bond industry immediately challenged the bill, and is seeking to overturn SB10 by placing it on the ballot for voters to decide.

A "no" vote would repeal SB 10, thus keeping in place the use of cash bail for detained suspects awaiting trials. A "yes" vote would uphold SB10, thus abolishing the cash bail system.

Around 46,000 Californians, a disproportionate number of whom are Black and Latinx, are being held in jail while awaiting trial and sentencing. Cash bail both criminalizes poverty and reflects the systemic racism that plagues our criminal legal process. Those who have money can pay to be released from jail and continue to work and live their lives, while those without the resources to come up with the bail must stay in jail, disrupting their lives and denying them a way to make a living, thus punishing them even before they have been found guilty of any crime.

California must move away from the money bail system to create a fairer, more equitable criminal legal system that balances public safety with the presumption of innocence. People who pose little threat to public safety should not be subject to losing their jobs, homes, and families simply because they lack the money to pay for release from jail while awaiting their day in court. While the new law that would go into effect with a YES vote is not perfect, it can be amended by the legislature. A NO vote, however, could enshrine cash bail and prevent future legislative action to curtail the commercial bail industry.

Independent Research Shows Prop 15 Benefits

Helps our communities, reduces racial disparity, and protects small businesses

The [Silicon Valley Community Foundation](#) and other philanthropic partners have commissioned independent, objective, nonpartisan research into the potential impacts of Prop 15 so voters can make an informed decision in November. To date they have commissioned studies on how Prop 15 will impact education, infrastructure, and revenue; how Prop 15 will affect racial disparities; and how Prop 15 will impact California's small businesses.

The [Urban Institute](#) looked at how California compares to the national landscape, and the probable impacts of additional revenue on [education](#), [infrastructure](#), and [revenue streams](#).

California ranks in the bottom half of all states in K-12 education funding. According to the Urban Institute, "It is likely to fall further in response to pandemic-induced revenue changes that are likely to be larger in California than in the average state. This is especially problematic for English-language-learner and low-income students, who are disproportionately affected by the health crisis. Because of...the state's reliance on a highly volatile income tax, K-12 education spending is vulnerable to shifts in funding levels, especially during crises such as the current recession." Prop 15 would help stabilize education funding in California by diversifying the state's revenue base.

The Urban Institute's brief on infrastructure relates how revenue from Prop 15 could help localities address longstanding infrastructure funding challenges, such as poor conditions in some areas, regional inequities, and climate change: "Given the COVID-19 pandemic, California's near-term fiscal and economic future is uncertain. But in the longer term, the state will continue to face pressures on its infrastructure including from population growth (especially in previously underserved communities and regions) as well as from extreme heat, drought, poor air quality, sea-level rise, and other threats posed by

global climate change. Like other state and federal infrastructure, California's infrastructure investment requires a stable, predictable, and adequate revenue source."

SVCF commissioned [Dr. Isaac Martin](#), Professor and Chair of the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the University of California, San Diego, to examine how Proposition 15 might affect the income gap between California residents of different races. (at [siliconvalleycf.org](#)).

In his research, Dr. Martin sought to discover the alternative outcomes if Proposition 13 had not included a commercial property assessment cap. From his research, Dr. Martin concluded that "public expenditure cuts that result from the commercial property assessment cap have most likely disproportionately reduced the incomes of Black people" and that "California's commercial property assessment cap likely widens income disparities among racial groups." Prop 15 could reduce income disparities among racial groups.

Although 92% of the increase in taxes will be paid by the largest 10% of property owners, critics have claimed that small businesses will subsequently pay more for rent, as property owners will simply pass the increase in taxes on to tenants in the form of higher rents. To look at this more closely, the SVCF commissioned a study by [Beacon Economics](#), of the relationship between commercial and industrial rents and the reassessment of commercial property values. The Beacon study (at [siliconvalleycf.org](#)) concludes that commercial rents are primarily driven by location, local market conditions, the nature of a local economy (higher wage areas are associated with higher rents), and building age and building size.

They also looked at triple net leases and saw no indication that they were affected by property tax reassessment: "If rents increased for thousands of tenants each time properties were reassessed; it would be revealed in the findings. For the most part, these findings hold across all property types except for office properties." For office properties, they concluded that, if a property last sold 10 years ago were revaluated for the current period, this would be associated with a one-time 1% increase in rent.

Continued on Page 8

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Send your check payable to League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County or LWVSCC with this form to LWVSCC, Box 1745, Capitola, CA 95010-1745.

___ \$65.00 Individual annual membership

___ \$100.00 Two members in a household

___ \$10.00 Student membership

___ Contribution \$ _____

Checks made out to LWVSCC are not tax deductible.

To make a tax-deductible donation, write a separate check to LWVC Education Fund.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone: _____

Email _____



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

The League Says YES on 15!

Prop 15 to bring \$57.9 million in new revenue to Santa Cruz County

Prop 15 is a fair and balanced reform that, when fully implemented, will reclaim an estimated \$12 billion per year from wealthy corporations to invest in California's public schools, community colleges, and vital services in our communities.

For Santa Cruz County, Prop 15 would generate an estimated increase in annual revenue of \$57.9 million. Based on our current county budget, this would bring an additional \$25.5 million to K-12 schools; \$4.7 million to Cabrillo College; 2.26 million to special districts, such as parks and libraries; \$4.8 million for fire protection; and 20.6 million to the county and cities for public safety, health services, housing, transportation, and infrastructure. (From Yes15.org.)

For decades, corporations and wealthy investors have avoided reassessment by using convoluted schemes to "transfer partial ownership" rather than outright selling their properties. Exploiting this loophole in our tax code allows these large businesses to avoid paying their fair share of property taxes—while small businesses and working families bear more and more of the burden of funding public education and local services. Another key factor in the shifting tax burden is that many large commercial properties, such as those owned by Disney, Chevron, and Wells Fargo, rarely change ownership while benefiting from taxes paid by others. Prop 15 closes that loophole by requiring that commercial and industrial property valued at over \$3 million be reassessed at fair market value at least every three years.

—Pam Newbury, VOTER Editor



Prop 15 Benefits

Continued from Page 7

Small businesses (fewer than 20 employees) comprise 85% of all businesses in California, and together they employ over seven million people. Prop 15 significantly benefits all small businesses by providing relief from the business personal property tax by exempting the first \$500,000 of fixtures and equipment.

—Pam Newbury, VOTER Editor