



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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In this Issue:

<i>President's Message.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>End Human Trafficking.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Renewal Reminder.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Gail Pellerin's Keynote.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>LWVC Co-sponsored Bills.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>SCOTUS Upholds Voting Rights....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Get More Info.....</i>	<i>3</i>

#End Human Trafficking

Saturday, July 29, 2023
1:00 – 3:30 PM

At the **Resource Center for Non-Violence,**
612 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz

Hosted by the American Association of
University Women of Santa Cruz County

Co-sponsored by LWVSCC.

Kenny Besk, our Santa Cruz expert on fighting human trafficking, has been in law enforcement for 16 years. He has fought this battle locally and internationally. He will inform you about how human trafficking exists right here in our own backyards and how we can fight it..

Time to Renew Your Membership

By now you have received Barbara's letter, asking for you to renew your membership. You can either use the return envelope she enclosed to send a check, or renew online using PayPal at this link:

<https://my.lwv.org/california/santa-cruz-county/join>

Thanks for your continued support!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The transition to our 2023-2024 year that happened on June 10 at the 58th Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County went very well, with good food at the hot buffet breakfast provided by the staff of Seascope Golf Club, plenty of members and guests coming to socialize and hear about what's happening with legislation in the State Assembly from Assemblymember Gail Pellerin, followed by presentations and discussion at our business meeting. Gail Pellerin, the first woman from Santa Cruz County to be elected to a state political office, spoke with enthusiasm and candor, while also providing a wealth of information and detail about her job representing the 28th State Assembly District. The question-and-answer time that followed her talk elicited many questions and some forthright answers.

All topics proposed for our Local Program were adopted by a unanimous vote of our members, and we will be working on the local program calendar this coming month. I enjoyed meeting in person at the Annual Meeting and look forward to including the following topics in our programs:

1. Coastal sustainability and plans for adapting to climate change
2. Voting rights with emphasis on targeted voter outreach to under-represented groups and accessing basic voter information.
3. Healthcare, with a focus on mental health.
4. Transportation

On Saturday July 29, we are co-sponsoring a free public forum "End Human Trafficking" with the Santa Cruz County Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and Soroptimist International of Capitola from 1-3:30 p.m. at the Resource Center for Nonviolence and are sharing publicity provided. Please come, if available. The program will include speakers with impressive backgrounds in this area who will discuss how young people are being recruited by human traffickers and how to help prevent this from happening. Our co-sponsorship on this program and others on this topic applies the position of LWVUS on human trafficking.

--Barbara Lewis, President LWVSCC

GAIL PELLERIN'S KEYNOTE



Gail Pellerin is the first woman elected to the state legislature from Santa Cruz County – but her district isn't confined to our county.

It extends north and east from Santa Cruz Harbor and includes parts of Santa Clara County as far away as Morgan Hill. Her district also encompasses Los Gatos, as well as parts of Campbell and San Jose..70% of her voters are Santa Clara County residents.

She was the Santa Cruz County Clerk from 1993 until her resignation in 2020. Many of our members have worked closely with Gail in the past during voter registration and on election day.

In the Assembly, Gail serves on the Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee; the Elections Committee; Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee; State Parks and Recreation Committee; National Resources Committee; and is Vice Chair of the Mental Health Committee. She has no problem keeping busy!

She mentioned she is working on legislation to improve our elections process. In California, all active registered voters are mailed a ballot before each election. If that voter loses or damages the ballot, s/he may request a replacement ballot. She is also trying to make it easier for a No Party Preference voter to get a presidential primary ballot from a party that allows for that. She is hoping the process is streamlined so that those ballots may be easily dropped in a ballot box on Election Day.

Then she talked about the Shasta County Board of Supervisors, who threw out Dominion voting machines, and then

spent \$3 million of taxpayer money to hand count votes in March. There is legislation currently in California that states you cannot throw out a voting system without having another in place, unless you have fewer than 1000 voters.

She pointed out that there are real needs in the mental health area. There are shortages of beds and all other resources to support those with mental health issues. There is no parity with the resources supporting physical health. She has met with childcare professionals who have told her of children as young as 2,3 and 4 who have mental health issues. This is also an issue with the senior population; people with mental health problems are also the largest population losing their homes. She is working on three bills relating to mental health. One would add mental health screening at Planned Parenthood, another is to ensure that mental health prescriptions are available without interruption, and that there is a Mental Health Directive as part of an Advance Care Directive for end-of-life care.

Gail is working closely with the Santa Clara water districts; cannabis farming in Santa Cruz County that would allow farmers to sell directly; expansion of mobile home parks by 10%; and hospital care. She mentioned that of 17 bills introduced in the State Assembly, 14 are on their way to the California State Senate.

Gail closed by saying that her motivating factor is "the future of our children."

--- Thanks to Lydia Nogales-Parker for her excellent notes from this and many other meetings

FROM THE LWVC: BILLS BEING CO-SPONSORED

The League of Women Voters of California is co-sponsoring two redistricting bills that would ensure **that local jurisdictions adopt electoral maps that result in fair representation for all Californians.**

AB 764 would strengthen the FAIR MAPS Act (FMA), which prohibits partisan gerrymandering in cities and counties and sets standardized redistricting criteria to ensure neighborhoods and diverse communities are kept intact. Specifically, AB 764 would:

- Prohibit incumbency protection in the redistricting process.
- Increase transparency and public engagement.

- Expand provisions of the FMA to include educational and special districts.
- Create a clear legal process for bringing claims alleging violations of the FMA.

AB 1248 would require that the state's larger cities, counties, and educational districts establish independent redistricting commissions (IRCs). Voters and communities should choose their elected representatives, rather than elected officials choosing their voters. IRCs are one tool to ensure that the redistricting process respects and fairly represents communities, neighborhoods, and shared interests. This will ensure that every voting Californian's voice will be heard at all levels of government.

Both bills have passed the Assembly and are currently being considered by the Senate – so it's time to contact your Senator and ask for support for these bills.

LWVUS SEES WIN AS SCOTUS UPHOLDS VOTING RIGHTS IN ALABAMA

The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) upheld in [*Allen v. Milligan*](#) a lower court ruling that Alabama must create a second majority Black congressional district in compliance with Section 2 of the *Voting Rights Act*. The court's decision affirms the ruling of a district court panel of three judges, which included two appointees of former President Donald Trump.

The [Southern Poverty Law Center \(SPLC\)](#), the [League of Women Voters of Alabama \(LWVAL\)](#), the [League of Women Voters of the United States \(LWVUS\)](#), [Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP \(SRZ\)](#), and [Stand-Up Mobile](#) submitted an [amicus brief](#) to the nation's highest court outlining how Black Alabamians in the Black Belt and in Mobile

constitute a community of interest and have been systematically deprived of their right to elect candidates of their choice to represent their interests in Congress.

"Today the Supreme Court affirmed the rights of Black voters in Alabama to elect the leaders of their choice," said **Kathy Jones, president of the League of Women Voters of Alabama**. "This ruling supports the decision of the three-judge panel that these maps diluted voting power based on race. It is a powerful declaration that Black voices in Alabama will no longer be ignored. We are pleased that we are one step closer to finally achieving equal representation in our state."

"Today's decision was worth the wait. The Court has affirmed the crucial role of Section 2 of the *Voting Rights Act* in ensuring that states cannot dilute the political power of Black communities during the redistricting process and that Black voters must have the opportunity to elect the leaders of their choice," said **Celina Stewart, chief counsel and senior director of advocacy and litigation for the League of Women Voters of the US**. "Today's ruling protects equal access to representation and is a necessary assurance to Black Alabamians and Americans that equal representation in our democracy is not out of reach, and instead recognition of a hard-fought and deserved right."

---From the LWVUS Website

FOR MORE INFO FROM LWVC AND LWVUS, USE THESE LINKS

[LWVUS Update](#) - Twice a month

[LWVC Update and Other Communications](#) - Leaders Update published after State Board meetings - 5 times a year. LWVC Newsletter-sent out monthly. Action Alerts, Easy Voter Guide, and Voters Edge -sent out as needed.

FLAGS FOR JUNE AND JULY (AND THE REST OF THE YEAR)



Have a Glorious Fourth of July!