



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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Coming in 2025 Program Planning Meetings

State Program Planning

When: Tuesday, January 28, 2025
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Where: The home of Sandra Warren

Local Program Planning

When: Tuesday, March 4, 2025
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Where: The home of Sandra Warren

Renew your Membership or Make a Donation online

[join or renew](#)

Save the Date and be an Informed Voter

October 4, 2024, 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Community Forum on State Ballot Propositions

Co-sponsored by LWVSCC and AAUWSCC

Capitola Library, 2005 Wharf Rd., Capitola

This November's state ballot includes 10 propositions on everything from building schools to prisons, rent control and drug crime penalties. When you receive your ballot be an educated voter by attending this *free forum* where all the state ballot measures will be presented with pros and cons by the League of Women Voters Santa Cruz County. *Get a free copy of the LWV Easy Voter's Guide at the forum.* Learn more: <https://my.lwv.org/california/santa-cruz-county>

President's Message

We all have our story, and so does The League of Women Voters. The first part of the story was engaging in the political struggle to secure voting rights for women, which was followed by the realization that providing information on a broad range of topics, so voters will make decisions based on facts and then be motivated to cast their ballots wisely, is just as important. In 2024, this mission is still ours, as misinformation confuses prospective voters, and the need for a group that presents the pros and cons of ballot measures and encourages those now eligible to cast their ballots based on accurate information has never been more important.

A special thank you goes to Voter Service Chairperson Dorothy Fry and all those assisting her. The Pros and Cons of State Ballot Measure presenters, Kit Hein, Sandy Warren, Marilyn McCusker, and Dorothy

Fry, will be doing numerous presentations, some open to the public and some limited to members of groups that have made requests on our local League's email. The team for candidate forums, as of this writing, includes Dinah Sapia as moderator, Dee Takemoto as timekeeper, as well as Dorothy and other LWVSCC members to help sort audience questions.

If you haven't done so already, please renew your membership in the League of Women Voters to help us continue this work, which is urgently needed now and in the future.

---Barbara Lewis, President, LWVSCC

Propositions –And More Propositions

Here are the California League's recommendations on the 10 propositions on November's ballot:

The October meeting will give you pros and cons on the ten propositions that are on the November ballot. However, the California League has taken positions on many of those propositions. Their positions may help you as you make your way through the mounds of confusing information on the propositions. (Since the Voter guide is out and contains a lot of information on the propositions, we're only showing information from the League's California website that is not part of the Voter Guide.)

Those Placed on the Ballot by the Legislature

Yes on Prop 2: School and Community College Facility Bonds. *This is the main argument in favor:* Prop 2 would supplement local bond funds by authorizing \$8.5 billion in state bonds for construction and modernization of K-12 schools and \$1.5 billion for community colleges. All children in

California deserve school facilities in good repair and equipped to provide them with a 21st century education. Research shows that modernized school facilities correlate with better test scores, higher attendance, and lower suspension rates. There has been no new bond money going to school facilities since 2016, and there is a massive need for modernization of old and construction of new educational facilities across the state.

There are issues with this proposition – the funding is not equitable, as the proposition requires all districts to pay 40% - 50% of the costs of projects, and this is more difficult for poor districts – those that are mostly rural and have a higher percentage of Latine, non-English speakers and poorer students. However – this is a start toward more equity among districts.

Yes on Prop 3: Freedom to Marry: Despite the existence of modern legal safeguards guaranteeing marriage equality, California's Constitution carries the shameful stain of language declaring that only marriage between a man and a woman will be recognized by the state. Prop 3 would enshrine marriage equality in the California Constitution. While U.S. Supreme Court decisions have made California's prohibition unenforceable, the current Court has shown that it is willing to upend decades of precedent and revoke hard-earned rights.

Prop 3 reinforces California's commitment to equality and dignity, setting a precedent that personal freedoms and civil rights are foundational and non-negotiable, thus promoting a more inclusive and equitable society for future generations. A vote for Prop 3 is a vote for justice, recognizing that love and commitment should be honored and protected for everyone in our diverse community and that we must protect the fundamental right to marry for same-sex and interracial couples.

Yes on Prop 4: Climate Protection Project Bonds: The bonds for "safe drinking water, wildfire prevention, and protecting communities and natural lands from climate risks" would allow the state to borrow \$10 billion for much-needed climate and environmental projects. Prop 4 is vital for mitigating the escalating costs of climate change and safeguarding our state's future. This bond will provide essential funding for projects that improve water quality and supply, protect against wildfires, and enhance the resilience of our natural ecosystems. It will also allocate at least 40% of its funding to low-income communities which are vulnerable to a disproportionately heightened risk or increased sensitivity to impacts of climate change

and lack adequate resources to cope with, adapt to, or recover from such impacts.

The economic toll of climate change is immense, with billions spent on disaster response, health impacts, and infrastructure repair. We have an urgent need for proactive measures to combat increased wildfire risks, sea-level rise, and severe droughts. By funding critical projects, Prop 4 will enhance resilience, protect communities, and ensure California continues to lead in environmental stewardship and innovation. This investment is essential for a sustainable and prosperous future.

YES on Prop 5: Lower Voting Threshold On Local Housing & Infrastructure Bonds. Prop 5 would reduce the voting margin necessary to approve local bonds and taxes for affordable housing, transportation, parks and other public infrastructure, from 66.7% to 55%. The constitutional amendment is essential to eliminate the anti-democratic supermajority vote requirement that hinders the approval of local housing and infrastructure bonds. The current two-thirds supermajority vote threshold stifles progress by making it extremely difficult to secure necessary funding for vital projects. Lowering the voting threshold to 55% enhances democratic participation and allows communities to address urgent housing shortages and infrastructure needs more effectively. By empowering local governments to act quickly, Prop 5 promotes economic growth, improves quality of life, and ensures timely investment in essential public services and facilities. The League of Women Voters of California has signed the formal [ballot arguments](#) in support of the measure.

YES on Prop 6: End Slavery In California Act. Prop 6, the End Slavery in California Act, is long overdue and both a moral imperative and practical necessity. Morally, it addresses a profound injustice embedded in the state's constitution, which permits involuntary servitude as a punishment for crime. This archaic exception allows for modern-day slavery. Due to persistently large racial disparities in arrest and sentencing, this form of slavery disproportionately impacts Black and brown communities and perpetuates systemic racial and economic inequalities.

Practically, abolishing this exception supports the rehabilitation and reintegration of incarcerated people by allowing them to choose meaningful educational and rehabilitative programs over forced labor. Ultimately this will reduce recidivism rates because people have a better chance to integrate into meaningful life outside of incarceration which benefits society by fostering more equitable communities. By passing Prop 6, California will right a centuries-old wrong and lead by example in upholding human rights and dignity, ensuring that our legal framework reflects the state's commitment to justice and equality.

Those Placed on the Ballot by Initiative Petition

YES on Prop 32: Raises Minimum Wage To \$18/hr. California has a high cost of living and our current \$16 minimum wage is well below the estimated living wage needed to support a household's basic needs. Prop 32 would raise the minimum wage for employers that employ 26 or more people to \$18 per hour in 2025 and 2026. For businesses that employ 25 or fewer people the minimum wage would be \$17 an hour in 2025 and \$18 per hour in 2026. Prop 32 pauses inflation adjustments until 2027, giving businesses and the economy time to adjust to the new wage levels. After that, the minimum wage would go up each year based on inflation.

A minimum wage of \$18 an hour will reduce income inequality and improve the standard of living for millions of California workers. Plus, an \$18 minimum wage is likely to increase wages across the board which will increase consumer spending that will help the economy. Also, increased spending creates more jobs, making everyone better off.

NEUTRAL on Prop 33: Expands Local Authority To Enact Rent Control On Residential Property. 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 discourage construction of new housing units, as developers could find it less profitable to build rental units if the rent is controlled by law. This could stifle the building of high-density and more affordable housing and exacerbate the existing housing shortage. Because there are benefits and drawbacks to rent control, the League has chosen to be neutral on Prop 33.

NO POSITION on Prop 34: Restricts Spending By Health Care Providers Meeting Specified Criteria. When the LWVC has no position relevant to a ballot measure, we offer no analysis.

NO on Prop 35: Permanent Funding For Medi-Cal Health Care Services. Medi-Cal provides health services to over 15 million low-income Californians. Prop 35 is a well-meaning but misguided effort to try to provide more and steady funding for Medi-Cal and potentially improve reimbursement rates for medical providers. Prop 35 would change the temporary tax that helps fund Medi-Cal to a permanent tax on Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) and require the tax proceeds to be used to support only Medi-Cal and other health programs – making that money unavailable for other priorities and making it difficult to respond to future changes to Medi-Cal that might be mandated by the federal government.

The League of Women Voters of California is generally opposed to “ballot-box budgeting,” which limits the legislature’s flexibility to

make budgetary decisions and adjust priorities based on emerging and essential needs. Budgetary decisions should be made

by the legislature, not by earmarking funds through ballot initiatives. Earmarking can undermine the state’s fiscal stability and its ability to effectively respond to changing conditions. While there is no organized opposition to the measure, Governor Newsom has [expressed concerns](#) that it hamstrings the state’s flexibility.

Another problem is that Prop 35 could inadvertently decrease overall revenue. This is because the proposition imposes a low cap on taxes collected from non-Medi-Cal enrollees. This cap is designed to prevent the tax from becoming overly burdensome on non-Medi-Cal health plans, but it also introduces a potential risk. If the federal government changes the rules to require a greater share of the tax to come from commercial enrollees, this cap could limit the amount of total revenue that can be collected, potentially reducing the overall effectiveness of the tax.

NO on Prop 36: Increase Penalties For Theft And Drug Trafficking. Prop 36 would erode criminal justice reform in California by reversing key advances aimed at reducing mass incarceration and promoting rehabilitation. It would impose stricter sentencing laws that disproportionately impact people of color and those with low-income, exacerbating existing racial and socioeconomic disparities in the criminal justice system. Harsher sentencing for minor offenses, like drug possession and retail theft, would take California back to the days when we had unconstitutionally overcrowded prisons. The increased penalties are draconian. For example, if someone gives or sells a controlled substance like psychedelic mushrooms or peyote to someone who suffers a major injury from using it, they could be sentenced to state prison instead of county jail and required to serve a longer term.

By shifting money from treatment and rehabilitation to prisons, Prop 36 would undermine programs that reduce recidivism and support reintegration into society. Emphasizing punishment over rehabilitation detracts from effective and humane criminal justice policies, and increased incarceration rates will lead to higher costs for taxpayers without improving public safety. Prop 36 would perpetuate a cycle of incarceration by reducing mental health and substance use disorder treatment, victim services, reentry assistance, programs to prevent school truancy and dropout, and crime prevention programs that prevent recidivism.

Coastal Resilience at Seacliff and New Brighton State Parks

You probably remember the storms of 2023 that severely affected the Seacliff and New Brighton State Parks and wiped out some of the camping and picnic areas in those parks. On Thursday, September 26, the California State Parks held an initial meeting in Aptos on the challenges and possible solutions to the destruction in those areas – destruction that could continue. The meeting was very well attended – possibly by more people than the organizers expected. One major focus of this meeting was to gain input from people who use the park resources on how they use the areas and how they feel about the possible developments that would mitigate the destruction.

Attendees at this meeting could use four information stations to learn about the vulnerability assessment and possible mitigations – then, at a fifth stations, give input on their feelings about the possible solutions.

If you live in this part of the county, or are otherwise interested in this issue, there is still a chance to get involved and give input. A community workshop webinar will be held on Monday, October 21, from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Here is the link to register for that workshop:

[seacliff-resilience-webinar](#)

Remember the Zombie Sea Urchins? Here is an Update

If you attended our Annual Meeting in June (or read the July issue of the VOTER), you might remember that our speaker, Lisa Wooninck, talked about the zombie sea urchins that are mowing down kelp and are not being eaten by any creatures – including humans - because they had no nutritional value.

But now there are people working on a solution to this problem. The solution started as part of a hands-on aquaculture class at Moss Landing Marine Labs, part of the College of Science at San Jose State University, through funding from the California Sea Grant – a NOAA program. The urchins are being caught and given to the Monterey Abalone Company, which feeds them on the same kelp they use to fatten up their abalone. Now there are people working on the economic feasibility of ‘urchin ranching,’ which will bring sea urchins back to your dining table.

