



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](#)

President's Message

As I write this message, the November 5 election has happened, and most of us are looking to the future with Thanksgiving approaching and gratitude for much that has gone well and concern about what 2025 will bring. I send best wishes to you this holiday season and the coming year. I am grateful for all the good work our League of Women Voters members are doing, with California leading the way in so many areas, including election integrity, gun control, reproductive rights, environmental protection, maintaining water resources, and promoting sustainability of life on this planet.

At the State Program Planning meeting of our Santa Cruz County League, scheduled to take place at the home of Sandy Warren on Tuesday January 28 from 1 - 3 p.m., we will be deciding what we want the state League (LWVC) to focus on and giving our recommendations for the 2025 – 2027 Program, to be adopted at the upcoming state convention. Since this is a grassroots organization, we will also communicate about who would like to work on recommended issues. More details on this and other programs will appear in the 2025 VOTERS.

Thank you to all our members who have been so helpful with this election as well as those who have contributed to the League of Women Voters with additional work, donations, and membership renewals for the 2024 – 2025 year.

Voter Service Report

In keeping with the League's main mission of educating voters, our voter service team had a productive year that involved many of our members. Thank you to our faithful team of volunteers who helped with voter registration, candidate forums and the pros/cons of state ballot measures.

This year our League coordinated voter registration with the County Elections Department. League members registered voters throughout the county. We had a special voter outreach to youth at UCSC and high school students at the Queer Youth Summit in Watsonville.

In preparation for the November election, the League provided a moderator, timekeeper and question sorters for three candidate

forums. The forum team consisted of: Moderator – Dinah Sapia, Timekeeper – Dee Takemoto, Question Sorters – Dorothy Fry, Kit Hein and Laura Grossman. The first candidate forum, on August 27, sponsored by the Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers, was a zoom format for three seats on the Pajaro Valley District Board. On September 26 the Boulder Creek Business Association sponsored a forum for the 5th District County Supervisor seat with two candidates. On October 9 the Valley Women’s Club sponsored a forum for two seats on the San Lorenzo Valley Water District and a pros/cons presentation on Measure U for the water district.

The State Ballot Measures were presented at five pros/cons meetings by League members Sandy Warren, Marilyn McCusker, Kit Hein and Dorothy Fry. We presented on September 23 for the PEO (Philanthropic Education Organization) Santa Cruz chapter; on October 4 at the Capitola Library, with a more than capacity audience, and co-sponsored with AAUW (American Association of University Women); on October 16 at Garfield Park Village, a retirement community; on October 19 at the Downtown Main Library and co-sponsored by the Santa Cruz County Libraries; and on October 23 at Dominican Oaks, a retirement community.

Our voter service teams are proud to have provided information for voters to make informed decisions in the November election. With the help of our many volunteers, the League of Women Voters contributed to the election by educating, informing and registering voters. Many thanks for your commitment to our democratic process.
---Dorothy Fry, Voter Services

Working in an Election Center

Do you know what a naked ballot is? Did you know that in the 2024 elections you could vote in person on the Sunday before Election Day until 9:00 p.m. – if you knew the one place in Santa Cruz County where that was possible?

The two Election Offices in Santa Cruz County, located in Santa Cruz and Watsonville, were open for voting as soon as the ballots were mailed out. In addition, the County opened its first few Election Centers on October 26 – they were open for 11 days. They opened the rest of the centers throughout the county on November 2 – these centers were open for 4 days. Generally, the centers were open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the days leading up to Election Day. However, there was one exception – the Center at the Episcopal Church of Saint John in Aptos could not open at 9:00 on Sunday. On that day, the Center opened its doors at 1:00 p.m., after the church members had concluded their services and meetings. The center was still required to remain open for eight hours, which set its closing time at 9:00 p.m.

There are generally 10 -11 people working each Center. That number may vary in the days before Election Day, but on that day, it’s “all hands on deck.” With the help of your leader, you learn quickly to share responsibilities and work as a team. Team members get to try each of the different positions in the voting center, from greeter as people enter, through verifier of eligibility, to helping new voters and voters with problems, to handing out the proper ballots, to helping those who wish to mark their votes on the tablets, to ensuring the ballots end up in the locked ballot boxes as the voters leave.

You might think that Election Centers would be very quiet – but that’s not the case. Even though everyone eligible in Santa Cruz County is mailed a ballot that can also be returned through the mail, or in a drop box, a lot of people like the ceremony of voting in person – and this actually helps the Elections Department, as those who vote in person are verified against the voter database by the Election Center workers – a verification that doesn’t have to be repeated by the Elections Department. Voters can even register and vote at the same time in an Election Center – their ballots are put in separate, sealed envelopes with the voter’s information on the outside, which will be validated in the Elections Office before the ballot is removed and processed.

Our Center also hosted observers from the Asian Law Caucus and from Common Cause. (Observers are always welcome, if they don’t impede the process and don’t take pictures.) One of our most memorable voters was a 102-year-old man, who was brought in by his daughter because he wanted to vote in person – and then there was the family of five who came in to vote together. Three of them were first-time voters -including the father.

The late timing at the Episcopal Church on Sunday night was extremely lucky for one gentleman who discovered he had lost his ballot when he went to fill it out on Sunday night before taking an early flight out the next morning for a trip that would last past Election Day. He couldn't find it anywhere, but he did have the presence of mind to look up voting centers in the Elections Department website, so he turned up at the church at 8:00 p.m. and was able to vote.

Helping all these people is what makes it so worthwhile working at the Centers.

And that naked ballot? Well, that's the ballot in your hand that was mailed to you, but which you want to drop in a ballot box in person – without the envelope. The Centers welcome you to do this and the Elections Office prefers it, as the voter verification is done at the Center – meaning they don't have to do it based on the information on the envelope in the days and weeks following the election. So, if your ballot is still in your hand on the next election day, consider bringing it inside one of the voting centers and meeting some of your neighbors when you vote.

(Report submitted by members Marilyn Radisch and Carolyn Lewis, who worked the Election Center at St. John's Episcopal)

Learn How to Join Boards and Commissions

If you live in the part of Santa Cruz County represented by Gail Pellerin in the State Assembly, you might have received this information already – but those of us in other parts of the county could also find this information to be useful.

Have you ever wondered how to make a meaningful impact in your community? Did you know that you can get appointed to a state or local board or commission to

help shape policy and contribute to the future of California?

Participating in government isn't just for elected officials - it's for community members like you who want to make a difference. You might want to consider applying for an appointment to a board, or commission. Your voice matters, and your experience could help strengthen our democracy.

How to Apply for a Governor-Appointed Position

The Governor's Office appoints members to various California boards, commissions, and committees. These positions range from advisory to hands-on responsibilities and may include compensated, per diem, or volunteer opportunities.

- **Explore Available Positions:** Visit the [Governor's Appointments Index](#) to view a list of open positions and find details on compensation (salaried, per diem, or non-compensated).
- **Start Your Application:** Visit the [Governor's Appointments Application](#) for detailed instructions on how to apply.

How to Apply for a Speaker-Appointed Position

The Speaker of the Assembly appoints members to boards and commissions focusing on healthcare, housing, public safety, and more. These appointments provide an opportunity to influence policies that directly impact Californians.

- **Access Opportunities:** Visit the [Speaker's Appointment Page](#) to explore available boards and commissions.
- **Begin the Process:** Start your application and find step-by-step guidance [here](#).

How to Apply for Senate President Pro Tempore-Appointed Positions

The Senate President Pro Tempore appoints members to various boards and commissions focusing on statewide legislative priorities. These appointments are ideal for individuals passionate about impacting policy areas like economic development, transportation, and social justice.

- Currently, there is no dedicated website for Senate appointments. For more information on available positions and how to apply, please contact the Senate Appointments Office at **(916) 651-4151**.

How to Apply for Local City and County Boards and Commission

Visit Your City's Website: Look for a section on your city's website listening vacant boards and commissions. These are a great way to get involved locally!

Here are links for the cities in Santa Cruz County:

Capitola

<https://www.cityofcapitola.org/bc>

Santa Cruz:

[santacruzadvisoryboardopenings](https://www.santacruzadvisoryboardopenings)

Scotts Valley:

<https://www.scottsvalley.gov/273/Commission-Vacancies>

Watsonville:

<https://www.watsonville.gov/182/Boards-Commissions>

Santa Cruz County:

In Santa Cruz County, you can see vacancies [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What qualifications are needed to apply for an appointment?

A: Qualifications vary depending on the specific board or commission. Each office provides detailed eligibility requirements on their websites or can offer guidance over the phone.

Q: Are these positions paid?

A: Some appointments are compensated, while others are per diem or voluntary. Compensation details are usually specified in the position descriptions.

Q: How long does the appointment process take?

A: The timeline can vary depending on the position and the office responsible for the appointment. For the most accurate information, it's recommended to check the specific instructions on each website.

It looks like there are a lot of options here – a lot of organizations that could use your help.

League of Women Voters of California Climate Issues

The California League is currently focused on four major issues: Climate Change & Sustainability, Housing & Homelessness, Criminal Justice Reform and Making Democracy Work. In this issue we'll look at Climate Change & Sustainability. The following is from the LWVC website:

California Climate Interest Group (CCIG)

The California League's Climate Change effort began in 2006 with the Berkeley-Albany-Emerlyville League and grew to encompass California with over 400 League members working on climate action.

Our California Climate Interest Group has four state-wide teams, which have expanded to the national level.

Forests and Wildfires

California has 33 million acres of forest land, about 1/3 of the total area of the state. California manages only 1.6 million acres; the rest is federal, local jurisdictions, or private. Forests are natural sinks for carbon, but drought and wildfires are taking a large toll. See also [LWVUS CIG Forests and Wildfires](#).

Water

California's Water Interest Group has been active for decades, working on an understanding and policy for surface waters, groundwater, water conveyance (canals), and, more recently, climate change and water. See also [LWVUS CIG Water](#).

Food, Soils, and Agriculture (FSA)

California's 77,500 farms and ranches produce more than 400 commodities and two-thirds of the nation's fruits and nuts. About one-quarter of what California produces is exported around the world. Currently natural and working lands are a net carbon emitter, but California's greenhouse gas emission (GHG) goals rely on changing lands to be a net carbon sink. In addition, food waste is a significant contributor to GHG emissions. See also [LWVUS CIG Food, Soils, and Agriculture](#).

Electrification

The use of renewables in electric power generation is increasing rapidly, so a move to electricity is a move away from fossil fuels. Currently California's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) has the goal to have 60% of all electricity sources to be carbon-free

by 2030 and 100% by 2045.

Electrification of vehicles and buildings are the targets for electrification. The LWVC has co-hosted [EV events](#) and is collaborating with the [Building Electrification Coalition](#).

In 2020 the California Climate Interest Group joined with other Leagues across the U.S. to form the LWVUS Climate Interest Group (CIG).

US League Key Climate Issues

There are four major climate change areas that the LWVUS is focusing on:

Food, Soils & Agriculture

Food production and food waste are major greenhouse gas contributors. Agricultural practices contribute 10% of those emissions. One third of the food we produce is not consumed and 25% of the waste sent to landfills is food where the decomposition becomes a major source of methane. However, soils and agriculture can be part of the solution, as healthy soils and climate friendly ag practices can capture and sequester carbon.

Here's a link to their [Food Page](#).

Renewable Energy

We must move away from fossil fuels. Renewables are growing and costs are falling, and 30 states (California included) are mandating a percentage of power from renewable resources.

But – there are challenges, including:

- Electricity capacity to transfer renewable energy from generators to users.
- Energy storage and load balancing to smoothly meet demand.

- Investment needed for infrastructure.
- Sustainable and ethical sources of raw materials – like rare earths and lithium

[Learn about Renewable Energy in a 3-minute video](#)

Water

Governments need to change policies, as 20th century water strategies no longer make sense in the face of climate change. State and local officials need to update water management strategies and invest in a 'green' infrastructure, as climate-related changes cause drought and water scarcity in some areas and flooding in others. Flooding is made worse along coastlines due to sea level rise. Runoff from flooding carries pollutants and debris into waterways – including those that supply drinking water.

Read a blog on [Climate Change Threats to Food and Water](#)

Oceans

Oceans affect everyone, no matter where you live. (In Santa Cruz County, we probably don't think about that.)

Oceans are the largest carbon sink. They have absorbed 25% of all carbon dioxide emissions and 90% of the excess heat generated by greenhouse gases. However, climate change has impacted the oceans in many ways, including:

- Acidification damage to coral reefs and fisheries
- Environmental injustice to low lying communities
- Sea level rise, bringing storm surges and groundwater salt contamination
- More frequent and more severe storms.

Read a blog on [Why Oceans Are Part of the Climate Solution](#)

Our Plans for Change

We must include these specific actions:

- Move away from fossil fuels.
- Electrify Buildings
- Electrify Vehicles
- Reduce Vehicle Use

And use processes that set goals and ways to measure them, as well as setting specific actions and budgets for them. Our actions should be integrated with public priorities and be transparent.