



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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So, You Voted How Did That Go?

This is a serious question. County Elections Officer, Tricia Webber, would like to know. On July 1, from 4:00pm to 5:30pm she is holding a feedback meeting at the Scotts Valley Public Library. If you have any input, or you would just like to hear what others think, join her there. Why is she doing this? Well, the registration of eligible voters in Santa Cruz County is 97% - great. (It matches Australia's registration— and they get fined if they don't vote. They also vote on Saturdays – what an interesting idea!) Unfortunately, the actual turnout is not that good, and she is looking for ways to make it better. The more heads put together – the more chance of a great new idea emerging.

Meet at:

Scotts Valley Public Library
251 Kings Village Road
Scotts Valley
July 1, 2025
4:00pm – 5:30pm

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A hearty welcome to our many new League of Women Voters members, who joined or transferred to the Santa Cruz County League this past year! I have enjoyed meeting some of you and expect to get better acquainted at our programs and other activities in the future. Kimberly De Serpa, 2nd District Supervisor and 5th District Supervisor Monica Martinez talks were most enjoyable, followed by numerous questions that involved most of those who came to the 60th Annual Meeting of our local League held on June 7 at the Fireside Community Room of the Scotts Valley Branch Public Library. Our 1st Vice President/VOTER Newsletter Editor is including an article on their talk in this edition of the VOTER as well as decisions from the business meeting that followed.

From June 17-22, I served with Voter Service Coach Dorothy Fry as a delegate to the League of Women Voters California convention. Before voting on official business, such as election of officers and adopting the program and budget for the next two years at the formal meetings, we both attended workshops, as did other members statewide, held via Zoom this year. I have found workshops to be an opportunity to learn, get acquainted with our leaders, and have some fun. I went to Navigating the Noise: Mastering Communication in the Digital Age, Upholding Democracy Through Justice Reform, Increasing Membership and Engaging Members, Delegate Briefing, and Meet the Nominees. I took extensive notes at the workshops for future reference and also took notes from the convention workbook, which was 82 pages long.

State program Issues for Emphasis adopted by delegates on Sunday morning had been selected by local Leagues in their State Program Planning meetings in these numbers: Making Democracy Work (81), Climate Change and Sustainability, including a focus on Water Resources (69), Housing and Homelessness (51), Immigration (27), Criminal Justice/Juvenile Justice (21). The many interesting and diverse directors elected this year will be led by LWVC officers: President - Gloria Chun Hoo (San Jose/Santa Clara League), 1st Vice President Lorrel Plimer (Piedmont), 2nd Vice President Carol Moon Goldberg (Sacramento), Secretary Suzanne Stassovitch (San Francisco) and Treasurer Kandee Mosley Gandhi (Berkeley Albany Emeryville). In the Meet the Nominees workshop, we learned what the nominees like to do for fun, and I found them to be a collection of interesting personalities who are centered and will provide a clear sense of direction for our group. Dora Rose, LWVC Deputy Director, our

lobbyist in Sacramento, spoke with passion, addressed many threats to democracy, and drew high praise from those familiar with her work, as did LWVUS President Dianna Wynn, another clear and inspiring League speaker, who noted LWVUS registered over 400,000 voters, with 16,700 voters registered in California and goals of the League of Women Voters: 1. Provide Democracy Education 2. Protect Voting Rights 3. Work for Abolishment of Electoral College 4. Reproductive freedom and 5. Preserve Democracy organizations and commitments. We don't endorse any candidate for office, and the League holds to our principles, positions adopted over the years, and is non-partisan.
---Barbara Lewis, LWVSCC President

ANNUAL MEETING

Here are the decisions made, and the officers selected at our 60th Annual Meeting, held on June 7. Thanks to Lydia Nogales-Parker for her excellent notes.

The business meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Barbara Lewis.

The Introduction of Parliamentarian was read by Dorothy Fry, Voter Service Coach. It was moved by Pam Peterson and seconded by Laura Grossman that we adopt the meeting rules. It was determined we had a quorum.

The Program Adoption Rules were read by Dorothy Fry, parliamentarian.

Treasurer's Report: Geri McGillicuddy Geri gave the May budget report. Pam Peterson, as incoming LWVSCC Treasurer, presented the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year July 1, 2025- June 30, 2026. There was discussion about the use of ChapterSpot rather than PayPal and there was a suggestion that we increase our Publicity budget to increase

our visibility in the community and attract new membership.

Pam Newbury proposed a motion to amend the publicity budget, line item #380, from \$300.00 to \$900.00 in the 2025-2026 budget. Jane Cohen seconded the motion; the motion passed.

Kit Hein made a motion to accept the Proposed Budget with the amended amount in line item #380. Dorothy Fry seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The following topics were suggested for general meetings in fiscal year 2025-2026:

- 1. Youth Justice
- 2. Issues of equity and education, especially childcare, with a legislative focus.
- 3. How to improve fire protection through better utilization of volunteer and ad hoc local resources.
- 4. Tour of Soquel Creek Water District's wastewater recycling facilities for LWVSCC members.

The motion to adopt local program topics was made by Geri McGillicuddy and seconded by Laura Grossman. The motion passed unanimously. The next step is to schedule a calendar planning meeting and establish program dates and venues.

Laura Grossman, a member of the Nominating Committee, presented the nominations for the Board of Directors and Nominating Committee for fiscal year 2025-2026.

OFFICERS:
President.....Barbara Lewis
1st Vice President/ VOTER Newsletter Editor.....Marilyn Radisch
2nd Vice President/ Membership Chair/Roster Manager.....
Laura Grossman
Co-Secretaries.....Jane Cohen and Beth Herrick
Treasurer.....Pamela Peterson

DIRECTORS:
Co-Program Chairs..... Pam Newbury and Mindy Ryan
Publicity Coordinator.....Mindy Ryan
Webmaster..... Denise Gurer

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:
Members.....Judith Heher, Catherine Rusmore, and Dee Takemoto

Our Two Female Supervisors Talk About Their Work – and Answer Questions

Of the five members of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, two are women. They are Kim De Serpa, who represents the 2nd District and Monica Martinez, who represents the 5th District.

Kim's district includes parts of Watsonville and Capitola, as well as the communities that lie between those two cities: La Selva Beach, Corralitos, Freedom, Aptos and Soquel. Kim's background lies in public health, child welfare and healthcare. Kim grew up in Salinas and her mother worked for Sam Farr with a focus on health care. She also worked on health care issues in DC during the Clinton administration.

Kim is also involved in public education and served as a member of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District Board for 14 years. She became an expert on budget issues in the district. She has also been a delegate to the California School Boards Association. Some of the issues she handles in District 2 include housing affordability, transportation issues and conservation, especially the balance between development and maintaining natural resources.

Monica's district includes Scott's Valley and runs northwest from there and borders both Santa Clara and San Mateo County, as well as Supervisorial District 3 to its west. Monica comes from Bakersfield, where her parents still live. Her mother is a teacher and her father a fire captain. Once active in the Future Farmers of America, Monica shifted her focus to political science and began her career working on Skid Row in Los

Angeles. She also has a background in health services and served as the CEO of Encompass Community Services, which is the county's largest health and human services nonprofit. Her work as CEO introduced her to the effects of decisions made by the Board of Supervisor, which was a white male organization at the time; she realized it needed some diversity. Issues in her district include disaster recovery, infrastructure improvements and equity in public services.

Kim and Monica talk a lot about issues facing the Board. They often have each other's back on issues.

After these introductions, the two Supervisors answered questions from the audience.

Question: You talk to each other – are there also conversations with other Supervisors?

Monica: Curiosity is always useful in setting agendas, so there are always questions among all the Supervisors.

Question: People in power sometimes don't listen to their constituents. How much do you hear from your constituents?

Kim: I hear a lot from my constituents. I often find that issues are more complicated than they seem at first. I also sit on other boards in my district, which help with getting info. My staff also works nonstop on issues. I know of the problems with getting permits through the Planning Department and am working toward improving the process.

Monica: I represent an area that formerly did not have a strong voice on the Board. One of the things I have done is to work with my staff to ensure that they have a process to address issues. I also hold office hours and visit cities in my district. I also hold town halls on issues important to my constituents. I try to make the best decisions for the County as whole – not just for her district. Over half of Santa Cruz County residents live in unincorporated areas and we are fifth from the bottom of counties in California in getting property tax dollars, due to the effects of Proposition 13. As a result, the General fund is too low to maintain our infrastructure. As a result, the Parks Department was eliminated.

The five year anniversary of the CZU fire is approaching and there are still rebuilding issues. The County didn't handle the recovery well. We are hiring consultants to review planning in this area – there is too much of a culture of "no" in existence there.

Question: Why does the Women's Commission cancel a lot of their meetings?

Both Supervisors said they would check into this.

Immigration: Resistance and Resilience

Because of the recent events in Los Angeles, which led President Trump to send in the National Guard, even though neither LA Mayor Karen Bass nor Governor Gavin Newsom requested the help, immigration issues are on our minds. The following discussion notes are from a webinar on immigration recently held by the LWV of California.

The webinar was overseen by League moderator Melanie Kim, and included three panelists:

Pedro Rios is a member of the American Friends Service Committee who works on their US-Mexico Border Program.

Gustavo Solis has a degree in journalism from Columbia University and has worked as a journalist all over the US. He currently works in San Diego.

Jason Bercovitch works for California's 50th District Congressman, Scott Peters, who represents much of San Diego and the surrounding area.

All three agree that our immigration system is broken, but we are unable to do anything about it. Gustavo says that it is a casualty of the polarization in the US and the lack of communication and cooperation between the political parties. Proposals may pass the House or the Senate, but not both.

Jason noted that the backlog on the issuance of green cards is partly tied to the per country cap on cards allowed to be generated. Many smaller countries never meet their cap, but countries like Mexico and China are constantly going above the level of green cards allowed to them.

Immigration issues are also exacerbated by poor staffing levels in Border Patrol and Customs and Border Protection.. San Diego invested almost a billion dollars in modernizing their ports of entry. Infrastructure was fixed, but staffing levels were not.

Immigration courts are only quasi-legal. They are under the Department of Justice and are not independent – the Attorney General can change rules on them at any time. They would be able to function better if they were independent.

Jason noted that another issue is those who have Temporary Protected Status because they come from countries which would be dangerous to return to have no pathway to permanency. DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) immigrants should also be allowed to stay as they really know no other country – but guidelines were never set to do this. This needs to be negotiated and legislated – there are currently too many executive orders and not enough permanent change.

Pedro questions the focus on prevention through detention that has been the approach to immigration issues since the Clinton administration and its focus of militarization of the border. California, however, has done a 180 on its position since the 1990s, when there were extreme right-wing stances on immigration. In 1994, the state passed Proposition 187, which was designed to establish a state based citizenship screening process and would ban undocumented immigrants from accessing non-emergency health care and public schooling. The Proposition passed and was taken to court the next day, where it was ruled unconstitutional. Now we have increased our awareness of the importance of immigrants. The California Values Act (SB54), enacted in 2017, now provides protection and dignity for migrants. Local governments around the state are also trying to provide money to help migrants deal with legal issues.

We have seen state initiatives fail – like one to protect police who work with ICE in violation of SB54. There is also the problem of the ICE presence at immigration courts, so they can attack those who are without status if their case is dismissed. Local people are attending these hearings to provide witness to what the Feds are doing.

In his journalism work, Gustavo sees how these policies are affecting people just going about their business, like a grandmother who goes out to shop for groceries for her grandchildren. He points out we have a bipartisan failure in addressing this issue. We make crossing the border increasingly dangerous in order to stop it, but that has not worked – it just caused more deaths along the border as it shifts the migration attempts to more difficult areas.

Now there is more enforcement in the interior of the country as the focus shifts to those who are already here – some for a long time - and are losing their status as they are caught in Trump's deport machine. Being a journalist, he spends time correcting the lies of the Feds, like the story that they are prioritizing threats and this is all for public safety. That is not so! The data does not match the DC rhetoric. As of March, the data shows that only 43% of the migrants detained were convicted of a crime. (Pedro pointed out that the 43% are mostly not crimes of moral turpitude – many are just for re-entering the US after being deported.)

Melanie then asked if the panelists could point out bipartisan failures. The panel pointed out that deportations are not up since the Biden years. It is easier to detain someone than deport him. The Feds are good at catching people, but the courts don't have enough people to try their cases. Due process rights take time. There were 700 immigration judges at the start of the year, but that was before the DOGE firings, and there is a backlog of three million cases.

Melanie asked the panelists to point out major challenges in dealing with immigration.

Pedro said that one of the major challenges is the toxic narratives of the Trump

administration, which are constantly drawing a distorted picture of border communities. Another is the Feds contempt for the asylum process and the failure of the government to handle the lack of due process, leading to a loss of constitutional protections. There is also a lack of basic resources for people.

On the other hand, there is an opportunity for the development of community power when people come together to help immigrants. Allies have been showing up to help their neighbors who fear taking the next steps. For example, 60 Know Your Rights presentations have been given in and around San Diego this year.

Jason pointed out that there is a key difference between the first and second Trump administrations in the responses of legislators at the Federal level. The strategy of the two Trump admins is the same – create chaos. He got that done the first time around, but now he is in overdrive on the issue. In the first round he called for a Muslim ban, but now he's listing all sorts of countries and people to be banned.

Jason followed by saying that now Democrats are hyper-focused on their areas of jurisdiction. For example, his boss, Scott Peters, is on the Budget Committee. Our debt is now \$35 trillion. 7 trillion of that – 20% of it was caused under Trump's first term. COVID did play a part, but between 3 and 4 trillion happened before COVID. His boss is also on the Energy and Commerce Committee and now is having to deal with proposed cuts to Medicaid. Immigration falls under the Judiciary Committee.

Gustavo said that San Diego is an epicenter of immigration issues and, as a reporter, he has to decide where to focus. In the first Trump administration, it was one Trump story after another and quickly became too much. So, he chose to focus on issues that affect the area he serves. He talks to people about how they are affected. There is some tragedy, but there is also the positivity of seeing people step up to help their neighbors. There is a distressing lack of local leadership in San Diego, but individuals are stepping up.

Pedro commented that San Diego seems like a testing ground for immigration enforcement. What the Feds need are accountability, oversight and transparency. We need to look for abusive practices, like keeping migrants in open air detention sites, with only water and 4 porta potties, for up to a week without regard for protection and human rights. That is why he is asking elected representatives to visit these sites. There needs to be genuine dialog with local leaders to possibly step in where the Feds are failing.

Jason talked about two major concerns. The first is that due process and constitutional protections are being ignored. For example, they admit to wrongdoing and then say they can't rectify the wrongdoing. The second is that Trump keeps saying that the immigrants are all gang members, even though they have no knowledge of that – they just want to convince people by repeating themselves. This broad brush painting is destructive – everyone's story is different. Many of the detained have personal connections in the community.

Melanie then asked if red cards work.

Red cards are informational cards that help individuals, particularly in immigrant communities, understand and assert their rights under the U.S. Constitution. They provide guidance on how to respond in situations involving immigration enforcement, such as encounters with ICE agents.

Pedro said that red cards do work – they have information for the holder on one side and for law enforcement on the other. There is a caveat to this – you want first to assert your rights and point out any protected status like DACA or TPS. If agents keep asking, pull out the red card.

Is the Amnesty Act a solution?

Jason said to try and stay away from amnesty – it paints with too broad a brush and is toxic in some political situations – you will lose Republicans. A focus on "Dreamers" or "coming to work" is better. By the way, there are currently 7 million job openings in the US, and the numbers is growing as Baby Boomers retire.

What steps should we take to solve these problems?

Jason responded that we should look for the red lines on each side of the issue and narrow the focus to those things both sides can agree on. Can we agree on hiring more agents – perhaps with some controls on how they do their job? Let's start with agreeing on dreamers and workers. There will be no home run, so don't sacrifice the good for the perfect.

If someone witnesses an ICE raid, what can they do?

Pedro's response was to inform people of their rights and watching for bad tactics of ICE so they can be reported. Before that – organizing and developing relationships with your neighbors.

Gustavo said that it's important to document what you see – and verify before you share the info. Contact your Congressperson or Senator if you have questions.

Jason said to humanize what is happening. People from different countries have different issues and experiences.

Gustavo said there are lots of opportunities – you can always donate food and water.

Pedro suggested joining the AFSC or a faith based organization. (Does your faith teach you a way to respond?)

There was a comment that deputies or District Attorneys could get in trouble if they don't cooperate with the Feds. At this point, we do not know what next steps the Feds will take.

Jason commented that there was a bipartisan bill that was held back because of politics. He thinks the bill is dead. It centered on enforcement. Democrats would have supported but Republicans pulled the bill to help get Trump elected. It will not come back, but there is the possibility of writing a new bill.

What can we do to help people facing ICE?

There is no expectation of privacy – they do have the right to ask for ID. Don't get between the ICE agent and the person being interrogated. Witness and document the situation.

Final Thoughts

Gustavo: Thanks for the chance to have this conversation. Uncertainty continues. Try to be present and build community where you can.

Jason: Two things: 1) A political problem has a political solution. Find the right political person to solve it. 2) Long term solutions are bipartisan. We must go back to being able to talk and find places of agreement.

Pedro: Structural changes are needed. He worries about mean-spirited legislators – there have been some. There is some targeting of those opposed to the Fed approach, but organization is continuing – moving toward a participatory democracy.