The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

Empowering voters, defending democracy

Charlene McAllister, President September 2026 Jary Stavely and Dorine Real, Editors

League Kicks Off Program Year

Meet & Greet Returns Sept. 18

Meet and Greet

Friday
September 18
5:00 to 7:00

Caspar
Community
Center

Mendocino County Supervisor Ted Williams and Superintendent of Schools Nicole Glentzer are among those planning to attend the League's annual Meet & Greet Your Public Officials reception, Friday, September 18, from 5 to 7 pm at the Caspar Community Center. The invitation list includes officials and leaders from Mendocino County offices in Ukiah, Mendocino College, the City of Fort Bragg, the Mendocino Coast Health Care District, the Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District, coastal school, water and fire districts, and more, plus candidates in the upcoming November election. This event will provide opportunities to interact with our public representatives, both elected and appointed, as well as with prospective ones.

We have had great success with a format of having no program, no ceremony, and no speeches. Instead, a friendly atmosphere is provided where public officials and community members have time and space to visit and become acquainted. This is not a political event or a candidate forum, so the League therefore asks that no campaign materials be brought to the reception. To ensure fresh air and adequate spacing for participants, this will be an outdoor event again this year.

Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served. Our League is proud of the reputation developed for the tasty treats offered at this event. Members who can help in providing them (finger food is best) should please bring them in by 4:45 to allow sufficient time for setup. If you have questions, contact Jary Stavely at 964-4942, or email them to him—jstavely@mcn.org. Meet & Greet Your Public Officials is free and open to the public. We hope to see you there, and please bring a friend!

Calendar

September 2 (Wednesday) *Primary reform webinar*	6:30–8pm	Zoom
September 8 (Tuesday) *League Board meeting*	6pm	Zoom
September 14 (Monday) *Democracy Summit*	9am–3pm	Sacramento/Zoom
September 16 (Wednesday)	7–8pm	Zoom

			Healthcare webinar
September 17 (Thursday)	3–5pm	Zoom	*GRI Mendo Vision Planning Review*
September 18 (Friday)	5–7pm	Caspar Comm. Ctr.	*Meet & Greet Local Officials reception*
September 19 (Saturday)	all day	various beaches	*Coastal Cleanup Day*
September 19 (Saturday)	12:30	Noyo River Bridge	*Signs Street Theater*
September 19 (Saturday)	3:30–5pm	Flockworks in F.B.	*Flower Making workshop*
September 20 (Sunday)	2–5pm	Little Lake Grange	*Candidate Forums for Willits area elections*
September 22 (Tuesday)	5pm	Zoom	*Voting Threats discussion*
September 26 (Saturday)	3–7pm	downtown Ft. Bragg	*Fiesta Latina*
September 27 (Sunday)	t.b.a.	downtown Ft. Bragg	*Longest Table community meal*
October 1 (Thursday)	6–7:30pm	Town Hall/Zoom	*Fort Bragg City Council Candidate forum*

The public is welcome at these public events. Please invite your friends and neighbors.

City Council Member Tess Albin-Smith and League President Charlene McAllister recognize Women's Equality Day (story below)

President's message ...

Some Important Considerations

by Charlene McAllister

As the November election grows closer, I would like to share some reminders about voting procedures, and about resilience in the face of the threats which our democracy faces. First, as ballots get ready to be mailed out, there has been a great deal of concern over mail-in voting rules and what might happen. Recently, a federal court granted a temporary restraining order (TRO) blocking USPS from implementing its newly finalized mail ballot rule for 14 days while the parties brief the League and its co-plaintiffs' pending motion for a preliminary injunction. **This puts implementation of the rule on pause again, and right now, nothing has changed for voters or voting by mail.** Voters should continue to make their voting plans, follow the rules and deadlines in California, and return mail ballots as early as possible. Rather than mailing through the post office, Mendocino County Registrar Katrina Bartolomie reminds us to return it in a Ballot Drop Box—that way, only election officials touch your ballot; plus, it saves the County (postage) money. For a list of where to find Drop Boxes go to the county website.

Secondly, the U.S. League reminds us: "The 2026 elections are a defining test of whether our democracy works for the people it is meant to serve. Voters are navigating changing rules, attacks on trusted election infrastructure, misinformation, and efforts that could make participation harder. The League of

Women Voters is meeting this moment nationwide, helping people register, understand what is on their ballot, protect their freedom to vote, and turn out in every election. We will continue working with voters, election officials, partners, and our state and local League network, so every eligible voter can participate and every ballot is counted."

Mendocino League News

Roster Changes

Due to the sudden resignation of Treasurer Olga Agnew, and the prior resignations of Vice-Presidents Sydney Grange and Jess Green, the Mendocino County LWV Board made some changes to its roster of officers and directors at its program year organizational meeting on Aug. 11. Pat Dunbar is the new 1st Vice-President, and will continue to lead Voter Services for our unit. Kathy Wylie has accepted the position of 2nd Vice-President, and will now assume Pat’s former position as Communications Chair. Susan Warner, currently the Treasurer for the Mendocino Coast Healthcare Foundation and formerly active in the Sonoma League, agreed to take over being Treasurer for LWVMC, as well. Pam Duncan, who is interested in Youth Outreach, and Scott Miller, who already coordinates League activities inland, were both officially appointed Directors at the meeting.

Data Centers

Also during August, in response to a request from Supervisors Haschak and Williams that the League support their proposal to put a temporary moratorium of at least 45 days on the permitting of data centers in Mendocino County (a period of time during which the Board of Supervisors and County staff would develop a public policy establishing conditions and requirements for any data center development), the League Directors approved the following letter from President Charlene McAllister to the Supervisors:

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County advocates for strict environmental reviews with rigorous utility accountability, transparent public discourse, and robust consumer protections regarding the rapid development of digital data centers. We support the proposal currently before the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors for a temporary moratorium of at least 45 days on the permitting of data centers in Mendocino County. Thank you for your consideration, and thank you for your support.

Women’s Equality Day

Finally, at its Aug. 24 meeting, Fort Bragg City Council Member Tess Albin-Smith read a proclamation recognizing Women's Equality Day and the 106th anniversary of the 19th Amendment. Charlene McAllister accepted it, and told the council that protecting voting rights “requires vigilance, participation, and a commitment to inclusive policies.”

—The editors thank Elise Cox for her report and wording on this item.

Election Information

All about Ballot Curing

by Pat Dunbar

Because of all the recent to-do over the length of time it takes California to verify its vote totals, I recently discussed the process with County Registrar of Voters Katrina Bartolomie. All registered voters in Mendocino County will receive a ballot in the mail for the November election. When returning this ballot, a voter signs it, and submits it to the county registrar's office, where the signature is checked against the one on file for that voter. If the signature matches, the ballot is verified and will be counted on election day. She explained to me that the style of the signature is what is examined, not the exact signature, because the style stays the same over time.

If the signature doesn't match, the voter is notified and given the opportunity to 'cure' the ballot, so it can be counted. Curing can be accomplished in a few ways, according to Bartolomie. The voter can resubmit with a new signature, make a mark and have it witnessed, or re-register with a current signature and request a new ballot. These options are included with the letter from the Registrar, advising that curing is needed.

Signatures may fail to match for several reasons—injury, age, or a stroke, for example, may change a person's signature, so that it no longer matches the one on file. If the original registration was made at the DMV (where many voters register), that is done on an electronic pad with a finger; and this may not easily match a signature done with a pen. It is important to note that signature verification is done to ensure the reliability of election results. It is never intended to prevent anyone from voting.

According to Bartolomie, if you have reason to expect your signature has changed, the best course is to re-register as soon as possible. The new signature will then be on file. Older signatures are also on file, but only the most recent one will be used when verifying the next ballot. If re-registering online, please notify the county registrar that you are doing so.

If you had no problem with submitting your ballot for the June primary, it is unlikely that you will have any issues for the November election. However, if circumstances in the meantime have caused a change in your signature, re-registration is your best option. And if you have any questions, Bartolomie and her staff are happy to help (707-234-6819).

Your vote is your voice—be sure to vote in the November election!

Third District Supervisor Race

In late July, Clay Romero, who finished third in the primary election for 3rd District Supervisor, asked that the candidate who finished second, Eric Hart, be removed from the November ballot on the grounds that he did not live in the district when he filed his candidacy, and was therefore ineligible. But in mid August, Superior Court Judge Ann Moorman rejected his petition, clearing the way for what had been expected, a two-way race between Buffey Wright Bourassa and Hart. Elise Cox filed two stories, first about the request for removal, and then about the ultimate decision. A 3rd District Supervisor Candidate Forum will be take place in Willits at the Little Grange on Sept. 20, starting at 2 pm. Co-sponsors of the non-partisan Forum include: Little Lake Grange, League of Women Voters of Mendocino County, Mendocino Women's Political Coalition, and Willits Economic Localization. Forum moderator will be Denise Jessie.

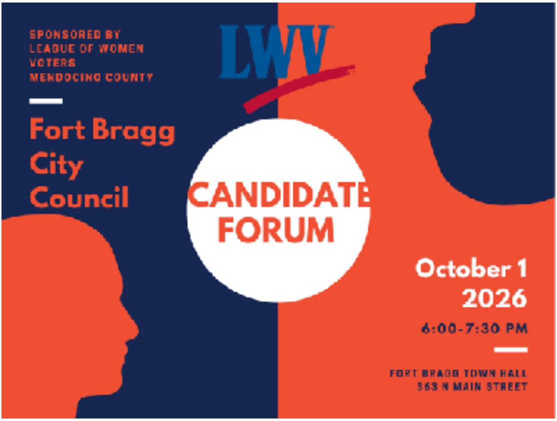
City Council Elections

Eight candidates will be on the ballot for three city council seats both in Fort Bragg [see candidate forum story below] and in Ukiah, where incumbents Susan Sher, Juan Orozco, and Mari Rodin will vie with challengers Sean White, Robert Bazzani, Mia Uribe, John Strangio, and Matt Fronenberger. The League will collaborate with the Mendocino Women's Political Coalition to hold a forum for this race, but the date and location have not yet been established. In Willits, two candidates, Robin Leler and Sherrie Ebyam, filed for two seats, and face possible write-in opposition in November. They will answer questions from the public at the Little Lake Grange election meeting to be held Sept. 20 [see 3rd District Supervisor paragraph above]. According Elise Cox's Aug. 24 article, the city missed a deadline to cancel having them appear on the ballot. In Point Arena, incumbent Barbara Burkey and newcomer Joshua Resnick filed for the two available seats, and will not appear on the ballot.

Fort Bragg City Council Candidate Forum

The League will hold a forum for Fort Bragg City Council candidates on Thursday, Oct. 1, from 6–7:30 pm, at Town Hall in Fort Bragg. All three incumbents are running—Jason Godeke, Marcia Rafanan, and Tess Albin-Smith, as well as five other hopefuls—Mary Rose Kaczorowski, Scott Mayberry, Levi Cooke, Mary Ann Schmidt, and Richard Ulveling. The forum will be recorded, and will be available on the city's facebook page.

The forum will be standard League format, moderated by Pat Dunbar, with timed opening and closing statements from each candidate, and written questions submitted by the audience, with timed responses. As many questions as possible will be posed to the candidates. Candidates may provide campaign information on a table at the back of the room. We need volunteers to help with collecting questions from the audience, and a few other tasks—please contact Pat Dunbar (pdunbar@mcn.org) if you would like to volunteer.



Upcoming Events

LCP Update and Planning Review

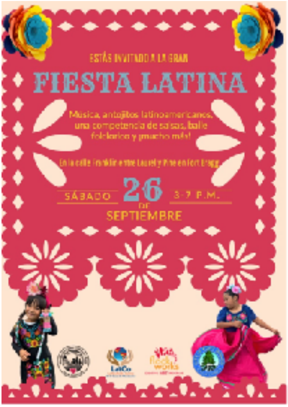
The next GRI Mendo Vision bi-monthly Coastal Planning Update meeting will take place on Thursday, Sept, 17, from 3–5 pm on Zoom. The event is expected to include discussions of offshore drilling and mining, the status of AB2494, the federal effort to decertify Coastal Commission authority over coastal waters, the recent SLR policies presented to county officials, and other LCP Update developments. The public can participate via direct link, or through Zoom Workplace (Meeting ID: 843 0866 9167; Passcode: 849166).

Coastal Cleanup

In a message to State Park volunteers, coordinator Amelia Schall writes, “This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the California Coastal Act! I am coordinating Coastal Cleanup Day for the Mendocino Coast again—it will be on Sept. 19, from 9 am to noon. A map of all cleanup locations can be found at www.CoastalCleanupDay.org. This documentary shows how the people of California came together to pass Proposition 20 in 1976, a very inspiring story: To Save Our Coast: Proposition 20 and the Creation of the California Coastal Commission - YouTube.

Know the Signs Street Theater

The next Indivisible street theater event will be held, also on Sept. 19, from 12:30–1 pm on the Noyo Bridge in Fort Bragg. The theme this month will be Corruption and Human Rights. Those holding signs about corruption will be wearing blue, while those holding signs about human rights will wear bright colors. No masks this time. Organizers are seeking 40 “dedicated volunteers” to hold 40 signs in “another awesome, riveting event.” To participate, contact Hannah-Leigh Bull via email.


ESTÁS INVITADO A LA GRAN
FIESTA LATINA
Música, antojitos latinoamericanos, una competencia de salsas, baile folclorico y mucho más!
En la calle Franklin entre Laurel y Pine en Fort Bragg
SÁBADO
26
DE
SEPTIEMBRE
3-7 P.M.

Decor for a Fiesta

The League’s sister organization, The Mendocino Coast Latino Coalition, has announced two associated community events in September. Its message to supporters states, “Join us for a free art workshop and learn how to create beautiful giant paper flowers on Sept.19 from 3:30–5pm, at the Flockworks Creative Center, 430 N. Main St. in Fort Bragg! We will provide some material, but if you can bring colorful poster board paper (available at the Dollar Store) it would be appreciated! No experience necessary. The flowers you make will help decorate downtown for our Fiesta Latina on September 26. Along the way, you'll learn a fun new craft that you can recreate anytime for your own celebrations and decorations. Be part of the fun, help brighten our community, and then join us at Fiesta Latina to see your beautiful creations on display!”

Longest Table Returns

Voter readers interested in promoting civil discourse may wish to mark Sept. 27 on their calendars, when the second annual Longest Table community meal is scheduled to be held on Franklin St. in Fort Bragg. Check the city website for details later in the month.

National League News

Updates

Unite & Rise Day of Action

On Aug. 8, the League of Women Voters concluded its nationwide “Unite & Rise for Voting Rights” Day of Action, bringing together more than 6,600 people at nearly 400 community events in all 50 states and Washington, DC. Marking the 61st anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, this remarkable nationwide mobilization demonstrated the power that has been at the heart of the League’s work since its founding in 1920: that when people take action in their own communities, they change everyday life from the ground up. Across hundreds of locally led activations, voters came together with their neighbors to learn, organize, and build relationships, preparing to bring even more people into the democratic process this November as they reminded each other – and the nation – that democracy is not a spectator sport, or a “once-every-few-years" event. Details are online.

Post Office Rule Blocked

On Aug. 27, a federal court granted voting rights organizations' emergency request to block the US Postal Service (USPS) from implementing the newly-finalized mail ballot rule for the November midterm elections. That rule would assign USPS an unprecedented and illegal gatekeeping role in the administration of mailed voting, and jeopardize the delivery of mail-in ballots to many voters. The temporary restraining order will remain in place for 14 days while the parties brief the pending motion for a preliminary injunction. If ultimately allowed, the new rule could cause major disruptions to the November elections. League of Women Voters CEO Celina Stewart said legal battles over President Trump's election executive order and proposed mail-in ballot rules are creating uncertainty just months before the midterms. On Washington DC television, she argued that the changes could complicate election planning, undermine voter confidence and discourage participation. [See Leader's Message, above.] Background and details are on the U.S. League website.

Voter Information Protected Again

On Aug. 17, the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota became the twenty-third court to dismiss the Justice Department's lawsuit demanding unlawful disclosure of private voter information. The Trump administration has sued 30 states and Washington, DC, for un-redacted voter lists containing private voter data. Courts in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Washington, DC have also dismissed DOJ cases demanding private voter data. Details of the Minnesota case decision are on the LWVUS Newsroom site.

National Voter Registration Day

August was Civic Health Month. Local Leagues reached out to hospitals/health centers to collaborate on voter registration drives. In September we continue our voter registration efforts. The League has historically been NVRD's number one recruiting partner—let's keep that trend going! Registration facilitators can receive free stickers, posters, and resources for September 15, which is National Voter Registration Day..

Statements

Court Allows LWV to Resume Registration

On Aug. 3, the District Court of Maryland temporarily blocked a US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) rule that prevented nonpartisan civic engagement groups from registering new US citizens to vote at administrative naturalization ceremonies. The Court's preliminary injunction prevents the new rule from going into effect while the case is litigated. The rule — which was issued abruptly in August 2025 and without factual basis — silenced the voices of Americans, but has been temporarily blocked following a lawsuit filed by Campaign Legal Center on behalf of the League of Women Voters (LWV) and a number of state and local Leagues. Now, civic engagement groups can continue the important work of educating and registering new Americans at administrative naturalization ceremonies — a longstanding tradition that encourages participation in the political process. The complete statement is online.

Reaction to SCOTUS Mail-In Voting 'Decision'

Aug. 24—The following statement can be attributed to counsel and Plaintiffs in *League of Women Voters Massachusetts v. Trump*: "We're disappointed by this interim ruling by the Supreme Court in the separate but related case brought by certain states. However, the district court's order in our case blocking USPS from proceeding with the Rule remains in place, and we will fight to keep it that way or to secure new relief. It is important to note that today's ruling only addresses the timing of the state plaintiffs' challenge. It does not affect any voters' ability to cast a mail ballot. The Supreme Court did not rule on the merits of the executive order, and made clear: 'If the Postal Service's final rule harms the States, they may challenge that rule.'"

SAVE Act Bad for Democracy

Aug.18 marks the anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment—a milestone in the fight for voting rights, but not the end of that fight. The amendment prohibited denying the right to vote on the basis of sex, but in practice, it did not give all women the right to vote. Women of color continued to face discriminatory laws, intimidation, and other barriers to the ballot. It took decades of organizing and advocacy—and the Voting Rights Act of 1965—to strengthen federal protections against racial discrimination in voting. That history matters today. As the SAVE Act threatens to create new barriers to voter registration, we have to remember the lessons of our history: when access to the ballot gets harder, the people most affected are often those who have had to fight the hardest to gain that access in the first place. The fight for voting rights continues. Tell your senators to vote 'NO' on the SAVE Act!

California League Reports

Serve As A Poll Worker

Looking for a meaningful way to give back while getting paid? Step up to support your local community during the upcoming election by serving as a poll worker! Registered California voters and eligible high school students 16 and older can apply to serve as poll workers. This is a fantastic opportunity to directly support your neighbors, gain valuable hands-on experience, and get an inside look at how elections are administered.

Why Serve?

- Earn Extra Income—Receive a stipend for your time and training.
- Build Your Resumé—Gain practical experience in public service and event coordination.
- Serve Your Community—Ensure local polling places run smoothly and securely for everyone.

Bring a friend or family member along and sign up together! To learn more about eligibility, local county requirements, and application steps, visit the official California Secretary of State Poll Worker Portal. You can also contact the Mendocino County Elections office at 707-234-6819 for specific guidance.

For an inside glimpse at being a poll worker, the U.S. League Blog site has an interesting first-person account from a Pennsylvania volunteer.

Ballot Recommendations

California has 14 statewide propositions on the ballot this November 3rd, and the League of Women Voters of California has done the research so you can Vote with the League. Our full nonpartisan analysis and complete recommendations are online. The Mendocino League will host a Pros & Cons discussion of the ballot measures in October.

Proposition 39

Proposition 39 on the November Ballot continues to be a major focus for the

California League. A letter to local leaders describes the situation: "Prop 39 is a Trump-inspired partisan power grab designed to make voting harder, intrude on your privacy, and throw out eligible ballots. The League is an official opponent and signed the ballot arguments against it. Check out the fact sheet. If you vote by mail, you would have to write part of a government ID number on the outside of the return envelope, next to your name, address, and signature. That is an invitation to identity theft. In Texas, a rule like this got one-in-eight mail ballots rejected over a blank field or a wrong digit. Taxpayers would pay hundreds of millions a year for it.

"If you vote at the polls, you would have to show a government ID every time. The measure never says which IDs count and carves out no exception for voters who don't have one, so a poll worker's judgment call could decide whether you get to vote. Checking an ID for every voter also slows the line at every check-in table, and disputes over which ID counts will stall it further. Longer waits fall hardest on people who can't take extra time off work. Prop 39 wants your ID. We want your story. Californians for Voting Rights is collecting short videos from voters about what their vote means to them and why they are voting no. Yours could be the one that reaches a neighbor. It takes only a minute. Record vertically on your phone, face a window, keep it under 30 seconds, and start with your first name and where in California you live."

And, "It's very important to have folks sign up for the campaign even if you don't want to make a video. Signing up will alert you to actions that you can take over the next few months to defeat this initiative. Participation will be critical to defeat Prop 39. You can sign up at bit.ly/LWVCNoOn39."

Executive Director Jenny Farrell chatted with @KPFA 94.1 about Prop 39. It can be heard at bit.ly/3p9ca starting at minute 49:00.

Legislative Updates

California Voting Rights Act

The California Assembly just passed the California Voting Rights Act of 2026, advancing this landmark legislation to the Governor's Desk. These bills will expand access to voting and create new protections against voter discrimination amidst unrelenting attacks on our vote. Thank you **Senator Sabrina Cervantes**, for authoring **#SB1164** and **#SB1360**, The California Voting Rights Act of 2026, to protect and strengthen our democracy!

Detention Facility Transparency

The California League strongly supports SB 423, the Detention Facility Transparency Act, authored by Senator Lena Gonzalez. It would require public agencies to release more records showing what happens inside California's privately operated immigration detention facilities. Specifically, it would ensure better access to 911 calls and related records, which has been crucial in many states in providing better oversight of immigration detention. The bill includes privacy protections that allow agencies to withhold certain records when disclosure would substantially interfere with an active investigation. Understand more about SB 423 by reading our co-sponsor letter.

Acknowledging Slavery

Slavery is a shameful and integral part of the history of the United States, and its legacy persists today in discrimination, racism, and disparities across health, education, and economic life. California has required some insurers to disclose slavery-era records, but most corporations have never been required to publicly account for their historical ties to slavery or the slave trade. Wealth that has been made off the backs of enslaved people has compounded, and some corporate successors of these businesses remain in operation in California today. While public acknowledgement will not undo the abuses that stem from slavery and racism, it will begin repairing them. AB 2599 begins that necessary step. And you have the opportunity to help us pass this important bill. Specifically, AB 2599 would require businesses with more than $100 million in annual worldwide revenue that do business in California to search for and publicly disclose records of their own or predecessor companies' involvement in slavery or the slave trade. It would also require the California Civil Rights Department to create a public database making those records accessible. Transparency is a necessary first step toward accountability for the lasting harms whose effects persist today. By requiring companies to disclose their historical ties to slavery, AB 2599 would help hold corporations accountable and shed light on harms that occurred and disparities that endure. That accountability recognizes the dignity of African Americans and begins the long road toward repair. Read more about the need for AB 2599 in our support letter.

San Bernardino Redistricting

SB 1414, authored by Senator Eloise Gómez Reyes, would create an independent citizens redistricting commission to draw San Bernardino County's supervisorial districts. Instead of allowing county supervisors to have the final say over the boundaries of the very districts from which they are elected, SB 1414 would put that power in the hands of an independent commission made up of San Bernardino County residents. It has passed both houses of the Legislature, and awaits the Governor's signature to become law.

Bill Affecting Jackson Forest Advances

AB 2494, the demonstration state forest management revision bill which this newsletter has been following for the past several months, has now passed both houses of the California Legislature. Gov. Newsom has until Sept. 30 to act on it. Individuals and organizations in favor of the legislation, such as GRI and EPIC, are sending letters to him, urging his signature. The state League has not supported it, although, as individuals, many Mendocino League members have.

Learning Opportunities

Primary Election Reform

Continuing through the summer, the Calif. League and Common Cause are hosting a webinar series on our primary election reform work. Each webinar features coalition members leading an educational presentation on the importance of primary election reform and how our proposed policy would improve voter participation. This information will help you take action in your communities, educate others, and build local support for primary election reform. Join us for the third webinar in the series on Sept. 2, from 6:30 til 8 pm. Register here.

Discussion on How to Increase Voter Turnout

Join us for the California Democracy Summit 2026 on Sept. 14, from 9 am til 3 pm at the Sierra Health Foundation in Sacramento, or online. The California Democracy Summit will bring together non-partisan state and local experts to confront key challenges, and leverage emerging opportunities, in order to increase voter turnout in California. By addressing the barriers that drive the racial and ethnic turnout gap, the summit aims to help build a multi-racial democracy that advances more inclusive and equitable outcomes for the state's communities. It will be hosted by the Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID), in partnership with the California League, and several other organizations. Register at the CID website.

Healthcare Affordability Webinar

A webinar entitled The Health Care Affordability Crisis: Reforms We Needed Yesterday will be held Wednesday, Sept. 16, from 7–8 pm by the League of

Women Voters, Roselle/Bloomingdale. Polls consistently show that healthcare costs remain a significant concern for voters. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, family premiums for employer-sponsored health insurance increased 9% in 2025, reaching an average of $26,993. At the same time, Americans experience a shorter life expectancy than residents of many other wealthy nations, while proposed federal policy changes continue to spark debate over access to healthcare coverage. This program will examine factors contributing to rising healthcare costs and explore policy reforms proposed by advocates across the healthcare spectrum. Register to attend. Can't attend live? Register anyway to get the recording.

Threats to Voting

The Santa Clara County League is holding an online event entitled Protecting Our Elections: How to Prepare for Attacks on the Right to Vote: As we head into the November elections, many are concerned about potential threats to voting rights. Join us to hear from voting rights experts from the Brennan Center for Justice and Common Cause California on Tuesday, Sept. 22, from 5 – 6:15 pm via zoom. The speakers will discuss current threats to voting rights nationally and in California, efforts to safeguard our rights, and steps you can take. Please register for the program.

Shasta County Update—Success

Last month, the League of Women Voters of California filed an amicus brief in support of the state of California's request for an injunction to prevent Shasta County from implementing Measure B in the November election. Measure B would require every voter to present government issued ID in order to vote, would require all ballots in Shasta County be hand counted, and would force all elections procedures to be conducted in one day with limited voting by mail.

Well, good news—we won! Earlier this month, the Court granted our request for a preliminary injunction, noting that Shasta's status as a charter county does not mean it can ignore state law and make its own election rules. This means Measure B will not go into effect for the November midterms. In its ruling, the Court made several references to arguments we made in our amicus brief (e.g., that even if facially-neutral, Measure B will uniquely disenfranchise vulnerable voters). This is a great example of how LWVC participating in this kind of litigation, including through the filing of amici briefs, can have a real and immediate positive impact on the rights of voters throughout communities in California.

State vs. Federal Authorities

The federal review of how California manages its coastal waters [reported on in the August Voter*] generated several stories, both before and after an in-person hearing on Aug. 10, in Santa Monica. Here is the background, as presented by Erin Stone, of LAist, the home of Southern Calif.'s largest NPR station:*

Hearings being held this week could decide whether California continues to have a say over what happens in federal waters off the state's coast. It's part of the Trump administration's efforts to supercharge industrial activities, including offshore drilling, rocket launches and desalination plants along California's coast. At a hearing Monday at a Santa Monica hotel and at a news conference beforehand, speaker after speaker decried any effort that would allow the federal government to revoke California's ability to manage its coast.

A federal law called the Coastal Zone Management Act gives states with coastlines the right to review and object to projects that may conflict with state policies and economies. The law was signed by President Richard Nixon after a devastating oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara and is credited with launching the modern environmental movement.

More than 50 years later, the federal government has called for a detailed review of California's compliance with the 1972 law. In a May social media post, the Trump administration said California is standing in the way of economic progress and called the state's coastal management practices 'obstructionist' and 'environmental extremism.' California officials, including state Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot, dispute that, saying the state approves federal initiatives 96% of the time.

"Never before in the five-decade history of this federal act has this sudden baseless review taken place on any state's coastal management program, and never before in the history of this act has a coastal management program ever been revoked,' Crowfoot said at a news conference in Santa Monica on Monday. 'This federal administration is bent on industrializing our coast." Her complete story is online. A YouTube video of the rally outside the hearing is also available.

A broader view of the situation was presented by Maxine Joselow in the New York Times (subscription needed) on Aug. 20. Her story begins:

The Trump administration has taken a series of extraordinary steps to attack California's position as a national leader in environmental protection, enlisting at least a half-dozen federal agencies to undermine the state's efforts to pivot away from fossil fuels. The stakes are high. Because of its market muscle as the world's fourth largest economy, California's environmental regulations have influenced the manufacturers of automobiles and other consumer goods. And its green policies have spread to some other states in what's known as the 'California effect. But President Trump has marshaled the full power of the federal government to clamp down on the state's climate initiatives. He has been vocal in his contempt for Gov. Gavin Newsom of California, a Democrat and possible 2028 presidential contender ….

A related story by Rosanna Xia of the Los Angeles Times, describes how the Coastal Commission voted

unanimously against an oil company's controversial bid to restart underwater fracking operations…. The rejection of the plan comes at a time when Trump officials have sought to open the California coast to more offshore oil drilling, more rocket launches and possibly even floating nuclear reactors. The administration's latest attempt to wrest local control from California officials has homed in on stripping authority granted to the state by the Coastal Zone Management Act, or CZMA. The federal law gives coastal states the right to review and object to any project in federal waters that clashes with state policy.

Regional Stories

Eel River Dam Removal Updates

Three recent stories traced further developments in the procedures to decommission the potter valley project on the Eel River in Mendocino County. On July 31, Elise Cox reported that a "Southern California water district's bid to acquire PG&E's water rights to the Potter Valley Project hit a setback this week, when a federal agency blocked the district from intervening in the proceeding that will decide whether and how the project's dams are removed. In a one-page notice issued July 27, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission [FERC] denied Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District's motion to intervene in PG&E's application to surrender its license and decommission the century-old hydroelectric project on the Eel and East Fork Russian rivers." The full story includes a map of the Potter Valley Project area.

On Aug. 12, Justine Fredericksen described the results of a study on the amount of water which would be available to Russian River watershed consumers after the dams and reservoirs are removed. According to Mendo Local's summary of the Ukiah Daily Journal article, "New Sonoma County Water Agency modeling shows the proposed New Eel-Russian Diversion Facility would deliver a surprisingly large water supply — even in drought years — after the Potter Valley Project dams come out. Officials cautioned that capturing that water depends on new storage, most importantly raising Coyote Valley Dam."

Then on Aug. 22, Robert Schaulis, of the Eureka Times-Standard, summarized the current state of the decommissioning effort in a report on upcoming FERC scoping meetings to be held in Humboldt County Sept. 15-16. His article, which also features a beautiful aerial shot of Cape Horn Dam, was carried by the Press-Democrat and other news outlets.

Water Spotlight on the Klamath

Voter readers interested in the restoration of watersheds after dam removals may wish to go to the California League's September Water Spotlight newsletter, where they can find an in-depth examination of what is happening on the Klamath River since its dams were removed. The author, Leslie Leach, begins the story with a personal account of her encounter with the river after a fish kill caused by the dams, and proceeds through a science-based review of what is happening during its rehabilitation.

Housing Amnesty Proposed

Local housing advocates are concerned about the effect which recent County building code enforcement activities are having on elders, and on others with limited incomes. They seek to have the county adopt a Community Designed Amnesty Program, per the procedures spelled out in AB 2533, a state law supported by the California League. At a community meeting in Caspar on Aug. 13, GRI Housing Workgroup leader Geri Moriskey presented information about the effort, which is using the City of Berkeley's AB 2533 program as a model. More details and background are available at the Mendocino Housing Hub website.

Super El Niño Discussion

Voter readers who missed Mike McGuire's virtual town hall on the effects of this year's expected weather conditions may wish to read Justine Frederiksen's Ukiah Daily Journal article entitled "Super El Niño" — A Glimpse of the New Normal? "State Sen. Mike McGuire drew roughly 5,700 viewers to an Aug. 4 virtual town hall where climate scientist Daniel Swain outlined the risks of a potential "Super El Niño" for California. Swain described the pattern as a temporary warming of the tropical Eastern Pacific that can drive large-scale weather impacts."

California Healthcare Examined

Kristen Hwang of CalMatters published two articles in August about the overall effect of recent changes to the provision of healthcare in California as a whole. Here are Mendo Local's summaries of them, with links to read them in entirety:

"California nearly achieved universal healthcare; now, millions are losing coverage. California's insured rate hit a record 95% two years ago after the state extended coverage regardless of immigration status or income, but that progress is now reversing as millions lose coverage. Analysts project the state's uninsured rate could nearly double to almost 15% by 2030, hitting undocumented and low-income residents hardest. Read more

"Medicaid cuts stand to hit everyone (yes, even you)—here's why. Federal legislation known as H.R. 1 is expected to cut roughly $1 trillion in health care funding, potentially pushing about 2 million Californians off Medi-Cal. The story traces the ripple effects, noting how a single hospital closure in Los Angeles strained every neighboring facility." Read more

Ukiah Annexation Reports

The proposal for the city of Ukiah to annex more land along the Hwy. 101 corridor went through some changes last month. According to Savana Robinson, of The Mendocino Voice, in early Aug. the city released a revised annexation plan, dubbed "Sapling 2.0," that would add about 70 acres north of the city near the Brush Street Triangle while dropping 15 acres of protected farmland to the south. Her story may be read online. Then, on Aug. 26, the city Planning Commission voted to recommend that the City Council deny the pre-zoning that underpins the city's whole plan, which affects roughly 1,485 parcels north and south of the current city limits. An article by Elise Cox suggests that "the commissioners used the vote to send an unmistakable signal that they were not prepared to endorse the plan as drawn." Her Mendo Local article is also online.

Coastal News

City and Caltrans to Modify Hwy. 1 Fence

According to its website, "the City of Fort Bragg has heard the community's concerns regarding the new wooden fencing installed along Main Street/Highway 1 south of Cypress Street, including concerns about its height, appearance, and impact on views of the Noyo Headlands and the ocean." The city's Aug. 19 statement and press release are online. So is an article by Elise Cox.

Fort Bragg Earns Housing Funding Priority

From the City's website: "The State of California has officially recognized the City of Fort Bragg as a Prohousing Designated community, acknowledging the City's efforts to remove barriers, encourage housing production, and expand housing opportunities for people at all income levels. This designation reflects two years of focused housing work and positions the City for future state funding. Fort Bragg is one of only ten California jurisdictions to earn the designation for the first time since October 2025 and is now among just 75 Prohousing Designated communities statewide. 'I'm glad to see the State of California acknowledging our City's efforts toward supporting new housing,' said Mayor Jason Godeke. 'Our policy changes have aligned well with new State pro-housing initiatives, and we're continuing to look for ways to make it easier to build new housing of all types here in Fort Bragg.'" The full press release is online.

Other Coastal Mill Site Makes the News

The future use of what was once Louisiana-Pacific's stud mill on Gibney Lane is being considered by the Mendocino County Planning Commission. Elise Cox summarized her Aug. 18 story, What Belongs on a Contaminated Mill Site in the Middle of a Neighborhood? this way: "Mendocino Forest Products is seeking county permits to use a former 36-acre lumber mill near Caspar for forestry-material storage, private fleet parking, and a firefighter-training facility built without permits in 2022. Neighbors and nearly all 29 public commenters objected, citing the site's history as a leaking-underground-storage-tank cleanup area where petroleum has contaminated residential wells."

ICE Detention Cases Compared

An Aug. 13 story by Elise Cox followed up on what happened to two people arrested this summer in Willits and Cleone. "Two Mendocino County youth soccer coaches who faced federal immigration detention saw their cases reach the same appellate court in July with opposite results. Juan Jose Cienega-Arenas was deported to Mexico despite pending court dates, while Otis Ffriend won a court order blocking his removal to a third country." The full story is on Mendo Local.

Coastal Veterans Gain Healthcare Access

A Mendocino Voice story by Mary Rose Kaczorowski describes the opening of a new VA ATLAS telehealth site in the Fort Bragg Veterans Hall on Aug. 6. Two years of planning went into the establishment of the station, which connects patients to the San Francisco VA Health Care System without the long drive south. The full article provides photos and details.

MCC Buys Mendocino Coast Pharmacy

Elise Cox's Mendo Local News story, dated Aug. 21, gives details on the purchase, which adds a retail drugstore to the federally qualified health center's operations for the first time. The complete article is online.

Land Acknowledgement

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County wishes to honor the land we are on and its native peoples. We want to offer recognition and respect; to counter the “doctrine of discovery” with the true story of the people who were already here; to support larger truth-telling and reconciliation efforts; and to remind ourselves that colonization is still happening. We acknowledge that the land where we live and work is un-ceded territory of indigenous peoples since time began. We are surrounded by the traditional, ancestral territory and current homeland of many indigenous nations.

Contact LWVMC

By mail: P.O. Box 1128, Fort Bragg CA 95437

By email: voter@mcn.org Message phone: (707) 937-4952

Our website: lwvmendo.org

Our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/LWVMendo1

LWV Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization,
encourages informed and active participation in government,
strives to increase understanding
of major public policy issues, and influences public policy