



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS FRESNO

Volume 78 No. 3

March 2019

Phone: 559-226-VOTE

Web site: LWVFresno.org

The *Fresno*

**VOTER**



**Tuesday, March 5**  
**Local Elections**

**Monday, March 11**  
**Regular Board Meeting**  
League Office, 5 p.m.

**PUT THIS  
ON YOUR  
CALENDAR**  
**Saturday, April 27**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**Luncheon and Speaker**

**May 31– June 2**  
**LWVC Convention**  
**Pasadena**

*All invited*  
**MEMBERS AND GUESTS**  
**WELCOME**



## New priorities chosen by members at Program Planning meeting

by Francine M. Farber

Almost 30 LWVF members and guests participated in an agenda-packed Program Planning meeting which resulted in the choice of three priority issues for the current year. The priorities are Climate Change, Get Out the Vote, and Early Education Zero to Five.

Leading the committees will be Sue Goldman and Liz Shields, in charge of Voter Services; Andrea Farber De Zubiria and Connie Young, officers of Citizens' Climate Lobby; and Kay Bertken, chair of the Education Committee. Each group will meet and decide on specific issues on which to focus for the year.

The priorities were voted on after presentations on the above issues as well as on Water Sustainability by Diane Merrill, Housing by Nyla Zender, and Homelessness by Marianne Kast. Although these issues were not among the top three, the speakers are planning to go forward with activities supporting these topics.

League members and their friends who are interested in any of these issues and want to participate in any capacity should contact Patty Campbell, Program Planning chair, at [soupsbooks5@comcast.net](mailto:soupsbooks5@comcast.net), or call 352-5192.

Our Education Committee's report on Charter Schools, which is available on our web site, has caught the attention of education personnel on the State League Board. Our membership approved adding the proposal to our existing education policy (see new language on page 5) and will be forwarded to the State League for possible consideration as a non-recommended program at the convention.

*Get Out the  
Vote*



*Climate Change*



*Early Education  
Zero to Five*



*(continued on page 5)*

## President's Message



Imagine this: You are a faithful, dues-paying League member. You admire the work of the League, but you're just not interested in Water, Education, Behavioral Health, Housing, Transportation, Land Use, or Voter Services (These are the issues we regularly have members working on).

Your issue is, say, gun safety, or maybe you volunteer often at Poverello House or Planned Parenthood. The League needs your expert knowledge and experience. Here's how you can do "your thing" and add to the strength of the League.

At the local, statewide or national level, there is likely a LWV group working on your favorite issue. There are conference calls, Google groups, newsletters, and other communications for you to be part of. When you participate with other League members, you bring expert knowledge and experience to our local League. You educate our members and encourage others to participate with you.

We are a respected name in whatever we do. Our commitment to non-partisanship and our reputation for thorough knowledge is long standing. These are values that set the League apart from other organizations that share the interest areas where we work.

Imagine the influence we could have with just 12 more members actively participating on behalf of the League, working on issues they are already committed to!

So here's my pitch:

Bring your issue to our Board. Let us get you connected to other League members who are passionate like you. We can share your work in The Voter and inform members of events in our weekly newsletter, and you can be part of an active League network sharing experiences and ideas that move issues forward.

*Marianne*

*The League of Women Voters of the United States encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.*

## MEMBER NEWS

**Please edit your roster**



It's always a good time for a gift to the League. LWVF is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization so your gift is tax deductible and gratefully accepted.

**Checks should be sent to**

**LWVF**

**1345 Bulldog Lane**

**Fresno, CA 93710**

*Thank you*

**We're starting to plan  
for the 2020  
Centennial Suffrage  
year.**

**Want to help?  
Call 226-5455**

**The Voter is a monthly publication of the League of Women Voters of Fresno**

**Mailing address: 1345 Bulldog Lane Fresno, CA 93710**

**Volume 78, No. 3 Editor: Francine M. Farber**

## Water News

by Diane Merrill



Five LWVF members attended a Groundwater Sustainability Workshop at CSU Fresno. The purpose of the workshop was to give community members information needed to participate in the process that is currently underway for local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies to develop and finalize detailed Groundwater Sustainability Plans required by the 2014 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

The workshop provided an overview of Act requirements followed by three small group discussions to familiarize and equip attendees to participate in the planning process. The discussion topics were: Sharing your vision for sustainability, Water budget basics, and Choosing projects and management actions.

The seven planning agencies in our local Kings Groundwater Sub-basin are due to release draft plans to the public this summer.. The final plan for the Kings Sub-basin, coordinated among the seven agencies, must be submitted to the State of California by January 31, 2020.

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## Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



In celebration of Black History Month, the Behavioral Health Board began its meeting with a powerful and inspirational poem about Fannie Lou Hamer, a civil rights activist. The poem was written and read by Devoya Mayo, a cultural broker at the Holistic Cultural Education and Wellness Center.

Department of Behavioral Health Director Dawan Utecht reported on Criminal Justice Diversion and Re-entry services for individuals with behavioral health disorders. Locally, representatives from multiple agencies are meeting to plan for these services. AB 1810 allows the courts discretion to divert individuals from the criminal justice system under certain circumstance, including mental illness. The Department is working with justice partners to develop a plan to use funding from the Department of State Hospitals for diversion services; however, existing treatment funds may be used for diversion now under AB1810. Currently, the Department is working with the Public Defender on a pilot program with test cases.

There was a discussion about acute psychiatric services for children under 12 years of age. More services are available for young children in the foster care system. While the numbers will not support a local inpatient facility, the Department is exploring Short Term Residential Treatment Programs for young children and youth without involvement in the foster care system. The Board encouraged the Department to look at Respite Care for young children and their families.

Earlier this month the Board hosted an Ice Cream Social for the residents of the Renaissance Supportive Housing Projects. Due to continuing concerns about the Santa Clara site, the event was held at that location. Residents at all three sites—Trinity, Alta Monte, and Santa Clara—are happy with their homes. Those at Santa Clara are not happy with the people and activities that are outside the fence in the area of Poverello House. Residents are concerned about reduced staff, which has resulted in the reduction of supportive services and activities. The Board is hopeful that staff vacancies will be filled to provided the services necessary for residents to maintain their housing and their behavioral health recovery.

[evansalca@comcast.net](mailto:evansalca@comcast.net)

## Voter Services

by Liz Shields



County Clerk Brandi Orth made a presentation to the Board of Supervisors in February regarding the election procedures for the 2020 elections. This was a preliminary report on the possible ways to conduct the primary and general elections.

Brandi said that current equipment was more than 20 years old and in need of replacement. She indicated that the county could continue with the current method of voting or change to the Voter Choice Act procedure or do a combination of both. The Voter Choice Act procedure would reduce the number of polling places but increase the number of days that voters could drop off their ballots and eliminate the need for provisional voting. Supervisors asked for an analysis comparing the costs and benefits of the alternatives. A decision on the voting method will be made at a later date.

The Elections Department also held a series of Community Meetings in February throughout Fresno County to discuss the options related to transitioning from the traditional polling place model to the Voter's Choice Act model and to receive input from citizens. If the new model is adopted there will be additional community meetings to inform the public.

We have also started to help unfold ballots for the special elections scheduled for March 5. These include the Clovis City Council election, the Fresno County Supervisor District 2 election and the Coalinga Regional Medical Center "Measure R to Preserve Community Health Care" referendum. I have sent out a request for volunteers. If interested contact me at 578-5670 or [elizs@fresnostate.edu](mailto:elizs@fresnostate.edu).



## Program Planning Results

(continued from page 1)

In addition to discussions around issues that the LWVF Board brought to the meeting, we were also asked by LWVC to review its request to approve Making Democracy Work as the state priority for 2019 – 2021. The focus will be on voter protection, money in politics, redistricting, and an inclusive 2020 Census. Program planning participants unanimously approved the state's request.

### Concurrence issues

In an unusual segment of the program, members were asked to review four requests for concurrence from other state leagues that put forth proposals that they hope will come before the state convention in May. Concurrence was agreed to on a proposal from San Luis Obispo County which would promote civil discourse as part of an already existing government policy. Concurrence was also approved for a proposal from San Diego County on homelessness.

Two concurrence proposals which were denied by our league were from Los Angeles County on Criminal Justice Reform, and Voter Representation from Sacramento County; it was thought that both of these required broader study for local applicability. If you are interested in learning more about these four concurrence issues you may do so at each of the appropriate League's websites.

[jmfurber@hotmail.com](mailto:jmfurber@hotmail.com)

### WHAT'S YOUR PASSION? YOU NAME IT!

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**Behavioral Health**

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**Water**

**Land Use**

**Criminal Justice**

**Housing**

**Homelessness**

**Anything Else!**

# Climate Change

by Andrea Farber De Zubiria



Hasn't the view of the snow-capped Sierras been a treat for the past few weeks? The cooler weather has made it easy to have a false sense of security about our Valley's air quality and climate change risks.

But despite the recent snow and rain in our area, climate change is real and it is here. Experts say we have a mere 10 years to significantly decrease the levels of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere in order to avoid some of the most dire effects of climate change. Throughout our nation, these include monster storms and fires, air pollution/lung disease, drought, sea level rise, melting permafrost, damage to agriculture, increased disease from mosquito and tick proliferation, loss of animal habitats and more.

## Some sectors more vulnerable

Our infrastructure and economy are not prepared for unpredictable temperatures and water management issues. People of lower socioeconomic means are more vulnerable as they have less optimal shelter, working conditions, and ways to heat, cool or filter the air in their homes.

The LWVC supports many actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Some of these include:

- ♦ Promoting energy conservation and efficiency in transportation, buildings and infrastructure, including energy efficiency stand-

ards and land use policies that reduce miles traveled.

- ♦ Promoting carbon pricing by market mechanisms such as cap and trade and carbon taxes
- ♦ Promoting a clean, low carbon energy economy
- ♦ Promoting solutions that ease consequences of climate related hardships for low and moderate income households
- ♦ Promoting public access and involvement in the decision-making process

## Carbon fee endorsed

Last year, LWV Fresno endorsed a carbon fee and dividend approach to climate change. The good news is that there is currently a bill in the House of Representatives that aligns perfectly with League positions. The bipartisan Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act outlines a specific plan that many economists, scientists and policy makers believe will stimulate the transition to cleaner energy sources and business practices.

It calls for a starting fee of \$15/ton of CO<sub>2</sub> on oil, gas and coal, based on the greenhouse gas emissions they produce. The money from the fee would be allocated equally and directly to all American households as a monthly rebate or "dividend."

This bill is still expected to decrease greenhouse gases by 40% in 12 years and 90% by 2050, while allowing businesses and individuals the ability to innovate and adapt..

## Toolkit available

To learn more about the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act, visit [energyinnovationact.org](http://energyinnovationact.org).

*Andrea is the Media Team Leader for the Citizens' Climate Lobby*  
[afarberdezub@gmail.com](mailto:afarberdezub@gmail.com)

## CHARTER SCHOOL PROPOSAL

### APPROVED BY MEMBERS

The following proposal from our Education Committee was approved by members at Program Planning to add to the LWVF position on education, and also to forward to LWVC for possible inclusion as a non-recommended item at the convention in May.

***The League of Women Voters of Fresno supports the concept of educational choices for parents and students within the public school system, including charter schools.***

- ♦ The League supports the implementation and enforcement of academic, equity, and financial standards for the authorization and renewal of charter schools.
- ♦ A public charter school should be authorized and under the oversight of a locally elected district within which it resides. It should not be governed by an entity without ties and accountability to the community whose students it serves.
- ♦ Charter schools should be required to report the same academic and financial data to the state and the public as any other public school and school district.
- ♦ Expansion of an existing charter to new sites should trigger an evaluation of the charter school's effectiveness and compliance with its contract.



# Education

by Kay Bertken



The Civic Education Partnership has established a non profit corporation to promote civic education. They are in fund-raising mode. Its Democracy Schools project continues to expand as does the Operation Protect and Defend curriculum.

## Civic engagement projects

The first of these engages middle school (for the most part) social science classrooms in civic engagement projects that begin with research into a chosen problem and culminate in an activity that often involves appeals to a policy making body. The second engages students with an important Supreme Court case that they debate in their classroom with a judge in attendance.

The Children's Movement got a report of the Cradle to Career Partnership's "agenda for improving the lives of children and their families." The blueprint defines the stages of a child's trajectory from birth through school through citizenship, productive employment and successful parenting. At each stage it defines the necessary conditions for success and a map for community engagement.

## More state revenue for FUSD

The Board has begun discussing next year's budget. Governor Newsom's budget proposals suggest increased revenue to FUSD, some of which will be offset by increases in retirement contributions that represent a progressive transfer of respon-

sibility from state to local funding. The governor has proposed some one-time funds to help cover those costs which would translate to \$1.9 million for FUSD. The governor is also proposing an increase in funding for special education. How those dollars would be allocated across districts is as yet unspecified. The governor's proposals for increased attention to preschool do not promise new money to FUSD.

## Reserve funds decreasing

Fresno Unified's reserve—now at 8.4% of it budget (\$8.5 million) is projected to be down to 4.9% by 2000—21.

There has been news of districts approving new contracts with teachers that their revenues do not support and suggest

looming financial difficulties—Los Angeles and Sacramento were called out. Fresno is not in that difficulty though it is drawing down reserves to pay for the new contracts. The FUSD Chief Financial Officer has always been careful to remind the Board that one-time funds cannot be dedicated to pay increases or new personnel, which require an ongoing funding stream. Los Angeles has evidently used one-time funds to support contracts.

This month the Board also received an update on implementation of the English Learner Master Plan. The

**Next Meetings March 6 and 20**

**In person or streaming on line**

district is currently serving 13,509 English learners, 19% of the district enrollment. Another 14,000 current district students have been served by EL programs and have progressed beyond that support, which is called redesignation. The number of un-redesignated EL students has been steadily declining since 2014.

The district currently has named 13 schools as "lab schools": 9 elementary, 3 middle and one high school. Chosen because of high numbers of EL students and a willing staff, these schools have received special training and support for their teachers. Improvements in achievement scores in English and math in those schools have been significant.

## More English Learner programs

The district has also expanded after school programs for EL students, including tutoring for students who are at risk of becoming long-term English Learners and thus unable to access the regular curriculum.

There is also work being done with the Early Learning Department to support dual language learning for pre-kindergarten and younger students. Three elementary schools have had these programs for more than 20 years—Ewing, Leavenworth and Sunset. In the last four years, programs have been introduced in 11 additional sites including Yosemite Middle School and McLane High School.

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# ***Democracy is not a spectator sport***

## JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS!

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**MISSION:** The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of interested individuals and influences public policy through voter education and advocacy on issues. The League does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.

**DIVERSITY POLICY:** There shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the LWVF on the basis of race, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or socio-economic level.

**What do you get when you join the League?** All for one fee, you become a member of the Fresno, California and National Leagues and receive their newsletters. You may participate in League studies of issues; receive leadership training; hone your public speaking skills; become knowledgeable about local and state issues; learn more about government, natural resources and social policies as your time and interests dictate. You will also meet some interesting and friendly women and men who represent diverse backgrounds but find common ground in keeping abreast of current issues.

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