

Phone: 559-226—VOTE

Info.lwvfresno@gmail.com

Web site:
www.lwvfresno.org

THE

FRESNO VOTER

Our 86th Year



Thursday, October 30

5:30 p.m. Stone Soup

Member Meeting—A Real Treat, No Trick

Monday, October 13
Regular Board Meeting
4 p.m.
Stone Soup in person

Thursday, October 30
Member Meeting
5:30 p.m. Stone Soup

Tuesday, November 4
Special Election

Monday November 10
Regular Board Meeting
4 p.m.

JUN Stone Soup in person

Linda Barreto is a California State Bar Certified Specialist in Immigration and Nationality Law—one of only four in the Central Valley, and the youngest and only Latina to hold this distinction.

She is Managing Director of the New American Legal Clinic at San Joaquin College of Law, where she teaches Immigration Law. Under her leadership, NALC provides pro bono services to over 600 clients each year, advancing access to justice for immigrant communities.

In 2021, she was appointed to the City of Fresno's Immigration Affairs Committee, where she served as the elected chair through 2024. She also serves as a Trustee for the University of California, Merced, continuing her commitment to higher education and community empowerment.

Beyond her legal work, Barreto co-founded The Amila Rey Foundation, a non-profit created in memory of her daughter. The foundation supports families in need and partners with local organizations to bring comfort and resources to vulnerable children and parents across the Valley.



REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED: GUESTS ARE INVITED

Co-President's Message

by Robin Chiero



When I came to Fresno State in 1997, I taught sections of a course about using computers in the classroom. At that time the course was required of classroom teachers to “clear” their Preliminary Credential. So much related to the use of computers and other technology has changed over the past 28 years. However, some aspects of its use remain the same - and are even more important now.

One such area is media literacy, which according to Britannica.com, is the “use of critical thinking to parse or create mass media especially as a consumer in an age of online misinformation and disinformation.”

One of the in-class assignments in our computer course was to provide students a website describing a fictitious city (they did not know that at the time) to see if they would recognize that it was not real. It served as a prelude to a discussion about the importance of media literacy.

The explosion of access to websites and social media, in addition to other forms of communication we view, read, or hear, requires a careful examination of something presented as fact or truth to determine whether it is, rather, misinformation (false without the intent to deceive) or disinformation (deliberately misleading information spread with the intention to mislead others).

LWV has a short online quiz to see how sharp your media literacy is (LWVS Test Your Media Literacy) and fortunately there are strategies to improve your skills. The University of Chicago Library Guide on “Evaluating Resources and Misinformation” describes three such strategies:

The SIFT method: Stop before you read or share an article or video; Investigate the Source; Find Better Coverage; Trace Claims, Quotes, and Media to their Original Context

The CRAAP test: Currency of the information; Relevance for your needs; Authoring (source); Accuracy and Purpose

The SMART check: Scope; Motivation; Authority/Accuracy; Relevancy; Reliable; Timely

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The Voter is a monthly publication of the LWV Fresno

Mailing address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710

Volume 66 No. 10 Editor: Francine M. Farber



September 2025

Membership: We have 5 new members. The orientation was successful and there will be more gatherings scheduled.

Program Planning: The director of the Immigration Law Center at the SJ College of Law is a possible speaker as is the Food Bank Director. Should our December event be a potluck dinner or a customary hors d'oeuvres party.

Voter Services: We need volunteers for the November special election to open ballots. We are ordering 500 paper Easy Voter Guides for distribution.

Climate Action: A new leader is sought to replace Carol Meme at least temporarily.

Measure C: The next two meetings will determine the percent of money allocated for each category of expenditure.

Lawsuit vs. Fresno County: The case management conference will be held on September 19. The 40,000 page administrative record will be accepted.

EcoCenCal: This group led by Radley Reep was named our partner so they can share the use of our conference room.

Rental: An annual donation of \$500 to Stone Soup was approved to support our use of the new meeting rooms.

Sponsors: Interested members may sponsor student members for our league at \$20 per student accepted.

LWVF IS A 501 C3 non-profit organization and all donations, including dues, are tax deductible. Donations are always accepted for the RBG Scholarship Fund at San Joaquin College of Law, the League's general fund, and any other purpose. Your estate planning is encouraged to consider LWVF. Please make out checks to LWVF and send to Treasurer, LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno 93710.

Climate Action

by Andrea Farber De Zubiria



The California Cap and Trade Program, AB 1207, was renewed last month through 2045.

Gov. Gavin Newsom has championed this suite of legislation as a crucial tool in the effort to address climate change and to respond to the Trump administration's environmental rollbacks. He is rebranding it "Cap and Invest". This emphasizes that the fees generated from companies that don't meet the "cap" on carbon pollution (requiring them to purchase emissions permits from other companies) will be invested to address climate issues.

Cal Matters reports that the Air Resources Board will have more oversight responsibility for the "offsets" which let companies cover their emissions by paying for other programs meant to provide compensatory pollution cuts. A study is due next year. They also report that Senate Bill 840 "provides a blueprint for how the state should spend revenues from the program, guaranteeing \$1 billion a year for high-speed rail and \$1 billion a year for lawmakers to direct through the budget, while continuing to support housing, transit, clean-air programs, wildfire prevention and safe drinking water."

Governor Newsom's office reports there will be savings on our electricity bills in a number of ways. The twice yearly Climate Credit on utility bills should increase. Electric grid reliability should improve and cut climate pollution by enabling California to share clean energy throughout the West. They report that SB 254 lowers customer energy costs and improves utility wildfire safety. It enables more affordable electric grid investments by improving utility wildfire oversight, creating an expanded Wildfire Fund and enhancing oversight of utility business practices.

The California Legislature passed Local Electrification Planning Act (AB 39). It directs local jurisdictions to identify opportunities for expanding EV charging and other zero-emission fueling infrastructure, with a focus on underserved neighborhoods. This will be critical in helping California build out the estimated 1.1 million EV chargers needed for its target of getting 5 million EVs on the road by 2030, and achieving 100% zero-emission sales for new passenger vehicles by 2035.

afarberdezub@gmail.com

Housing

by Marianne Kast



Whenever properties are sold in the State of California, a documentary transfer tax based on the value of the property is imposed on the documents that convey the property (with a few exemptions) and collected by the counties.

Transactions in the City of Los Angeles have traditionally been subject to two categories of transfer taxes, one imposed by the County of Los Angeles and one assessed by the City of Los Angeles.

In November, 2020, voters in the City of Los Angeles passed Measure ULA (United to House Los Angeles), the "LA mansion tax," a transfer tax on sales of commercial and residential properties over certain values, effective April 1, 2023. Sales between \$100 and \$5M are assessed a 0.45% transfer tax on the gross sales price just as they always have been. However, under Measure ULA, when sales value exceeds \$5M but is less than \$10M, a 4.45% transfer tax is imposed. And, for those sales over \$10M, the City collects a 5.95% transfer tax.

The monies collected through Measure ULA are directed to housing production and homelessness reduction (rent relief, eviction defense, etc.) in Los Angeles. Supporters of the measure claimed the tax would raise up to \$1.1B per year. But after more than two years, the measure has brought in only 60% of the projected revenue. A study by UCLA researchers found that high-end real estate sales fell by more than 50% after the measure took effect.

When property sales fall, significant tax revenue is not available for schools, essential public services, and the City's overall budget. The financial burden is shifted to the State, so the consequences of this local measure can be felt statewide.

And more consequentially, the tax slows the creation of housing. The ULA makes land more expensive for developers, including affordable housing developers, and discourages the sale of newly constructed properties which fuels future development.

fourkasts@gmail.com

Co-President's Message

(continued from page 2)

You might notice some common threads among the methods. Our national organization has tips on how to spot and how to keep from spreading misinformation. (LWVUS on Mis and Disinformation) Whatever method or strategy you choose to apply to information you read, view and hear, the importance of having media literacy skills cannot be overstated.

Robin



**Special Election
November 4**



Looking for something meaningful to do?
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Ombudsman Volunteer Team?

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flexible, and you will have a talented staff
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To learn more
Please call 559-224-9177, Ext. 401

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



September is National Suicide Prevention Month. Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Director Susan Holt provided suicide data for the 2024 calendar year to the Behavioral Health Board (BHB) at its September meeting.

According to data from the Fresno County Coroner there were 97 suicides during the year. Demographics have changed over the years from fewer suicides by youth to more by middle aged persons and those over 65 years of age. The Director attributed the reduction of suicides by youth to the work that has been done by the Fresno County Suicide Prevention Collaborative and the work done in and with the area schools through programs such as All4Youth. The Director expressed concern about the effects of the new Behavioral Health Services Act (replacing Mental Health Services Act by Proposition 1), which cuts funding for prevention programs, but pledged to find the funds to continue suicide prevention programs.

Wellpath, the provider of medical and behavioral health care in the Fresno County Jail, was the program reviewed at the meeting. In addition to chronic care, dental, optometric, detoxification laboratory, prenatal care, Wellpath also provides behavioral health care with assessments, crisis stabilization, individual and group psychotherapy, substance use disorder services, medication assisted treatment, and suicide prevention, as well as pharmaceuticals, discharge planning, and psychiatric care. The Sheriff's Office and Public Health Department hold the larger portion of the Wellpath contract, with DBH holding a small portion to provide for the incarcerated persons with acute and subacute mental illness and substance use disorders (SUD) requiring clinical behavioral health attention.

Wellpath also is contracted to provide physical and mental health services to youth incarcerated at the Juvenile Justice Center (JJC). This month BHB members conducted a Site Visit to the new West Annex Jail that was designed with behavioral health care in mind. There are specialized cells for monitoring acute behavioral health matters, and dedicated space for groups.

(continued on page 5)

When is a trial a trial?

When it tests a person's endurance or forbearance. As in, "*The League's lawsuit is definitely a trial.*"

by Radley Reep

The League's lawsuit against the County of Fresno challenging its February 2024 revision of the General Plan is nearly stalled.

That lawsuit, now referred to as the "Partnership" case, was filed jointly March 21, 2024 by three organizations: the League of Women Voters of Fresno, the Sierra Club and the Central Valley Partnership. The City of Fresno filed a similar lawsuit, and both that case and the Partnership case are now consolidated for purposes of trial, which means that both suits will be heard at the same time before the same judge.

In order to proceed to trial, two things must first happen. All parties must agree on the content of the administrative record (AR). The AR is the collection of documents and testimony that the Board of Supervisors considered when it made its decision to revise the General Plan. It's also the set of documents that petitioners will use to prosecute their cases and what the judge will use to render a decision. The completeness of the AR is still contested.

Secondly, all parties must first agree to a briefing schedule — the deadlines by which each litigant must file briefs with the court. The problem is that there is as yet no agreed-upon briefing schedule, Until these matters are worked out, there will be no trial.

To get things moving, the law provides for a case management conference (CMC), which is a meeting of the litigants before a judge to set a briefing schedule and pave the way for trial. To the League's dismay, CMCs for both cases have been scheduled and rescheduled several times over the past 15 months. The result of the most recent CMC, held September 19, was the scheduling of yet another CMC for December 12.

The County and City of Fresno jointly requested the continuance to December and informed the court that settlement talks were underway in earnest and that the City's case might be settled by the end of the year. Should that occur, the City's case will be dropped and Partnership's case would continue to trial — but not, of course, unless there is agreement on whether the AR is complete..

There is still disagreement over the content of the administrative record. The County has twice certified an AR and lodged the same with the court. Even though it now totals about 40,000 pages, by the Partnership's reckoning, the record is far from complete. The reason why the County hasn't prepared a proper record is unknown, but until the AR is complete, no case will go to trial.

radleyreep@netzero.net

Behavioral Health

(continued from page 4)

Board members were impressed with design of the space and with the dedicated staff of the Sheriff's Office who work with inmates with mental health needs; they showed compassion and willingness to learn how to work more effectively with this population. Likewise, Wellpath representatives appear dedicated to the work that they do with incarcerated persons.

This month a representative from Wellpath at the Juvenile Justice Center spoke to the BHB Forensics Committee to provide additional information about care for our incarcerated youth. California Youth Detention Centers no longer exist, so all offenders are held in the county. Most incarcerated youth are high school age; a few repeat offenders from middle school are held. No one under 12 ½ years old is held at JJC. The number of detainees fluctuates, but at the time there were 106 youth in custody.

There are programs that stress positive growth, hold offenders accountable and prepare them for community re-integration. Staff finds it difficult to engage families for education and for discharge planning. Many families have transportation difficulties, and there no longer is a FAX bus to the JJC at American Avenue and Highway 99. Wellpath's contract covers only the time that youth are in custody, not allowing for follow up to determine the impact that programs have on youth.

evansalca@comcast.net

More than everything you want to know about Proposition 50

by Robin Chiero

Special Election on November 4

On November 4 California voters will be deciding whether to approve Proposition 50. The Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) describes the proposition as follows:

In response to Texas' mid-decade partisan congressional district maps, requires new congressional district maps as passed by the legislature in August 2025, to be used in California's congressional elections through 2030.

Directs California's independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to resume enacting congressional district maps in 2031 after the 2030 census and every ten years thereafter.

Establishes state policy supporting use of fair, independent, and nonpartisan redistricting commissions nationwide.

Yes Vote: Amend the California Constitution to allow the new maps to be used for 2026 through 2030 with the Citizens Redistricting Committee to redraw districts in 2031.

No Vote: Oppose the amendment and leave the current maps in place.

State and Local Government Fiscal Impact

According to the LAO, estimated one-time costs to counties of up to a few million dollars statewide. County costs would be to update election materials to reflect new congressional district maps.

Arguments For

Major arguments in favor of Prop 50 include that it is a necessary emergency response to a power grab to steal congressional seats, that it enables voters to approve emergency congressional district maps, and that it is only temporary.

Arguments Against

Major arguments against Prop 50 include that it is a power grab by politicians, that it repeals the 2008 voter-

approved California Citizens Redistricting Commission, and that it is not temporary.

Major Contributors

According to Power Search as of September 18, the total raised for and against Proposition 50 equaled \$75,278,932.43, with Support totaling \$39,994,606.13 and Opposition totaling \$35,284,326.30.

Support (Over \$2 million)

HMP (House Majority PAC)
\$7,590,000

SEIU (various)
\$3,500,000

CA Nurses Assoc.
\$2,500,000

CA Teachers Assoc. Issues PAC
\$2,500,000

Michael Moritz (billionaire venture capitalist)
\$2,500,000

Opposition (over \$100,000)

Charles T. Munger, Jr. (megadonor investing in both conservative and transparent government causes) \$30,094,961

No on Prop 50 Congressional Leadership Fund
\$5,000,000

To see a map showing changes in districts, visit the Statewide Redistricting Data Base. When you click on a district, you can access information comparing the current district and new map for that district with regard to Total Population and Voting Age Population for various groups.

For more information on Proposition 50, download the LWVC Education Fund's "Easy Voter Guide", available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean at easyvoterguide.org.

rchiero@comcast.net



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Mark Fagin, D.D.S., M.S. 4747 North First Street, Ste. 138
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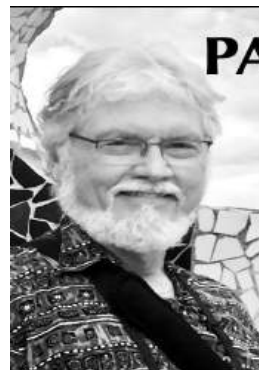
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Webmaster Robin Chiero

Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy

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Men and Women age 16 and above Making Democracy Work

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.

Yearly Dues Individual - \$75 is the recommended amount. However you can choose an amount, with \$20 being the least you can pay. Renew online at <https://portal.lwv.org/>

Please make your check payable to the US League of Women Voters, Fresno, and send to our local office at LWVF, 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 93710. with registration form below

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