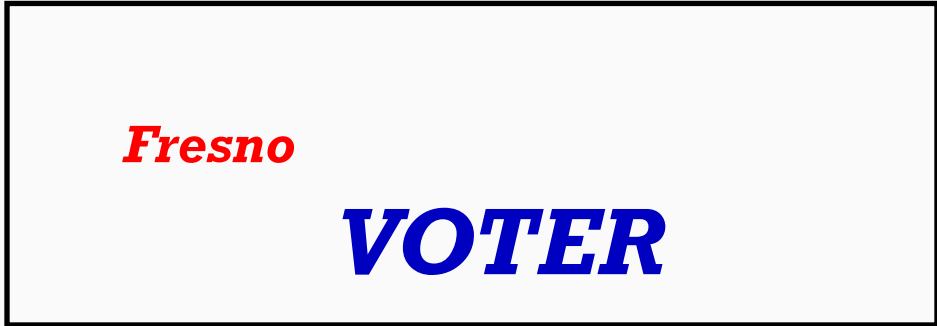


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[info@lwvfresno.org](mailto:info@lwvfresno.org)

Web site:  
[www.lwvfresno.org](http://www.lwvfresno.org)



Monday, September 14  
Regular Board Meeting  
4:00 p.m. via ZOOM

Wednesday, September 30  
PROPOSITIONS  
5:30 p.m. via ZOOM

Members and Guests  
invited to all League  
meetings and events



**Confused?**

**Perplexed?**

**Don't know what to do?**



**Don't Worry, Be Happy!**

**We have a proposition for you...**

**In fact, we have 12 of them!**

**Join us on Wednesday, September 30 on ZOOM at 5:30 p.m. for a discussion of the propositions that will be on the ballot for November. Our presenters will be Liz Shields, Voter Services VP, and Sue Goldman, Voter Services Director**

**Members will receive an electronic link to the meeting in their email. Please register in advance (no cost). If you are not a member you can call Marianne Kast at 270-7937 and she will send the link to you. After registering you will receive a confirmation email about joining the meeting.**

Prop 14: Borrowing for stem cell research

Prop 15: Split roll

Prop. 16: Ending the ban on affirmative action

Prop. 17: Restoring the right to vote to people on parole

Prop. 18: Letting (some) 17 year olds vote

Prop. 19: Property tax breaks

Prop 20: Rolling back Brown-era "leniency"

Prop 21: Rent control

Prop. 22: Self-employment for app drivers

Prop. 23: Regulating dialysis clinics

Prop. 24: Stronger consumer privacy laws

Prop. 25: Ditch or keep cash bail

***Props 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 require constitutional amendments.***

***Props 21, 22, 23 and 24 require statute changes. Prop 14 is a bond.***

# President's Message



## MEMBER NEWS



Follow us on Facebook

I've attended several LWV national and statewide conventions, and written about them here. During each get-together, there are caucuses where League members build support for or provide information about proposed positions, by-laws changes, resolutions of support, budget decisions and candidates for League office. One caucus I usually attend is in support of single-payer healthcare.

The League is a great source of information on so many issues. I first attended this caucus to find out more about a concept that, six or eight years ago, was only occasionally batted about. Canada and "socialist countries" had it; it sounded like it lacked the kinds of choices Americans are used to; and in those years, our healthcare system didn't seem completely broken.

I've since joined the single-payer camp which the League endorsed in 2010. For me personally, I began a long sigh of relief when I became eligible for Medicare, and no longer had to scramble to find health insurance coverage. One of the major stressors of my work years would have been eliminated had "medicare-for-all" been realized then.

Politics seems to be the reason we've not moved toward single-payer health care here. It's not financial concerns, for our current healthcare system is the most expensive in the world, even with its less than stellar health outcomes. Those who stand to lose by the implementation of single-payer, like insurers, pharmaceutical companies and organized medicine, espouse the loudest opposition to the idea. I've read recently that a majority of physicians support single payer, though they often believe their colleagues do not. Recent suggestions that every few years we expand Medicare coverage by lowering the age of those entitled to the coverage, seems like a non-confrontational way to demonstrate its value, and build toward universal coverage.

Some argue that the government's botched response to covid-19 is further proof that single-payer health care would be equally poorly run. I don't agree. It seems that a nationwide coordinated existing healthcare system would have provided testing, PPE therapeutics and knowledge to the entire U.S. more readily than having each state or healthcare system compete with others to fulfill its needs. Further, those communities (largely of color) who have been hard-hit by covid-19 would have begun the fight against this disease with the same tools as their neighbors. Most importantly, when 30 million Americans are unemployed due to a pandemic, tying health insurance to employment just doesn't make sense.

As we slowly make our way through this healthcare crisis, I hope support will continue to grow for single-payer health care for all.

*Marianne*

- ◆ *To protect member privacy,* information about new members and changes in contact information for current members will no longer appear in the Voter.
- ◆ Members will receive an e-mail periodically with updates that can be added to your roster.
- ◆ We will continue to print brief obituaries on our members.

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

**Please remember us in your estate planning.** Help us continue the fight to defend and build participation in the democratic process. You can designate a gift amount now, or state a gift as a percentage, which will automatically adjust no matter what the future may bring.



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

Mailing address: 1345 Bulldog Lane, Fresno, CA 939710

Volume 79, No. 9 Editor: Francine M. Farber

## Climate Change

by Andrea Farber De Zubiria



Our committee has been working on developing questions about climate change that would be useful to ask candidates. We hope that these will help you to clarify their knowledge of the problem and the solutions.

- ◆ The greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change also contribute to the San Joaquin Valley's air pollution and high childhood asthma rates. How would you advocate we reduce emissions?
- ◆ Developing the Valley's ability to produce clean energy can boost the local economy, provide good jobs and improve our air. What programs and legislation would you support to increase the use of solar and other renewable technologies in the Valley?
- ◆ Transportation is a major contributor to the excessive greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. What would you do to develop a cleaner, less polluting transportation system, and how would you promote urban planning that reduces driving?
- ◆ Heat waves, unpredictable precipitation and insufficient chill time for fruit trees is already adversely affecting agriculture in the Central Valley. What actions do you think could minimize the risk to this important source of employment and food?
- ◆ The covid-19 pandemic has reminded us to follow the advice of health experts. With regard to the climate crisis, what sources of information inform your views and decisions?
- ◆ Many solutions have been proposed to combat the looming climate crisis, such as decreasing the amount of food going into landfills, developing renewable energy, putting a price on carbon, and reforming land management practices. Which strategies do you favor and why?
- ◆ Major organizations and economists on both sides of the political aisle support putting a price on carbon pollution as a powerful method to address climate change. Do you support this and, if not, what legislation do you support to address this problem?
- ◆ Experts say that climate change will disproportionately impact minorities and those with lesser means. What proposals would you support to assist vulnerable groups to cope with the predicted challenges?

[afarberdezub@gmail.com](mailto:afarberdezub@gmail.com)

## Water News

by Diane Merrill



As required by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies in Fresno County recently submitted detailed Groundwater Sustainability Plans to the California Department of Water Resources. Each plan describes how the agency intends to bring overdrafted groundwater into a condition of sustainable management over the 20 year period from 2020 to 2040.

One of the foundational first steps in implementing these plans is for each agency to develop a groundwater level and water quality monitoring network that will measure and document short-term, seasonal, and long-term trends in groundwater and related surface water conditions. The goal in establishing this network is to provide the information needed to implement the groundwater plan, assess the effectiveness of the plan, and guide decision-making along the way.

The monitoring network must:

- \*Monitor static groundwater levels each spring and fall
- \*Measure the annual change in groundwater storage
- \*Monitor for water quality degradation that could impact available groundwater supplies
- \*Detect surface land subsidence caused by groundwater extraction
- \*Identify the loss of permanent connections between surface water (rivers and streams) and groundwater

Groundwater monitoring networks have been in place in the San Joaquin Valley for a number of years. The Department is requiring agencies to identify data gaps and to upgrade monitoring networks to provide for increased accuracy and a more representative sampling of groundwater conditions throughout the agency. It is also important to have consistent monitoring locations over the twenty year sustainability act timeframe.

One of the offshoots of this process is that agencies are working with Fresno County to update the County's well drilling regulations and permitting processes. Agencies

## Voter Services

by Liz Shields



*Preparing for the election on November 3, the Get Out The Vote group met and planned the following activities.*

All voter registration will be online. Fresno County Office of Education is helping us distribute information on voter registration and the voting process to high schools. We will also distribute registration cards to retirement homes to register new residents and update signatures.

National Voter Registration Day is September 22 and we will be distributing posters and stickers in English, Spanish and Hmong in the following locations: Stone Soup, Housing Authority, Asian Market, Fresno Barrios Unidos, Arte Americas, Vallarta, libraries and grocery stores.

Candidate forums will be on Zoom. It was decided that five-minute interviews with candidates for each race would be more sensible in a virtual mode than debates with all candidates online simultaneously. The questions and the time limits would be identical for each participant. Further details for the interview procedures are under discussion. All races including local ones will be posted on Voters Edge and there will be a link from Voters Edge to YouTube.

Distribution sites for Easy Voter guides will be similar to ones for the posters. The front page of this issue describes the Zoom meeting on the propositions with League members on September 30. We are currently arranging Zoom meetings with retirement homes and other groups. If you know a group that would like to have a Zoom presentation on the propositions please call me at 559-298-5183 or email [elizs44@yahoo.com](mailto:elizs44@yahoo.com)

Ballot unfolding will begin earlier this election due to the large number of ballots that are expected to be returned early. It is anticipated that we will begin unfolding around October 12. Precautions will be in place to protect staff and volunteers. I will be contacting all our usual helpers as well as new volunteers.

Non-partisan lawn signs are still available for \$10. On one side the sign urges people to vote and the other gives the web site for [votersedge.org](http://votersedge.org). Please call 559-226-8683 or email [info@lwvfresno.org](mailto:info@lwvfresno.org)

**If you would like to help with the distribution of voter registration forms, posters for National Voter Registration Day, Easy Voter guides and other voter education materials, please use my contact information above.**

## Behavioral Health

by Carolyn Evans



The delivery of mental health services is holding steady during the pandemic, according to Director Dawan Utecht of the Behavioral Health Department. There is only a slight decrease, but services for substance use disorders, however, continue to see a substantial drop-off. Data is derived from billing of service providers, which results in some delayed reporting, but the trends seem stable.

The director reported on state hospitals that primarily serve individuals who have committed felonies and are found not guilty by reason of insanity, and those who are found incompetent to stand trial due to their mental illnesses. The disturbing fact is that the waiting list for admission is approximately 1200 individuals, who must wait in local jails until a bed is available.

The state is responsible for treatment of these individuals so has provided funds to counties to develop diversion programs for those with mental health disorders that played a significant role in the commission of their offense. **A diversion program allows the offender to join a rehabilitation program to help remedy the behavior leading to the arrest.**

Fresno County Mental Health Diversion Court began in June, 2020, and meets bimonthly. District attorneys, public defenders, probation officers, and service providers work together to assure that individuals receive outpatient mental health services that they need. Defendants are assigned to Full-Service Partnerships that provide Assertive Community Treatment. Diversion is limited to two years. Upon satisfactory completion of the program, the court may dismiss criminal charges. The Board hopes that this new program will keep some individuals with mental illnesses out of the county jail.

This month the Board had a virtual site visit of the Turning Point of Central California's Vista Full Service Partnership. Services are provided to adults with serious mental illness who are frequent users of crisis services, homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless and/or incarcerated. Currently this program provides comprehensive specialty mental health services to 300 clients. During the pandemic some services are provided remotely; however, with this population service providers also see clients in the office or in the community.

You are invited to attend the next Board meeting on September 16 at 3:30 pm via Webex. To be added to the distribution list, email Jeannette Dominquez: [dominja@fresnocountyca.gov](mailto:dominja@fresnocountyca.gov)

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

# Education

by Kay Bertken



**Board Meetings: September 2  
(workshop), September 9 and 16**

Some school districts across the country have opened, only to send students home again when they test positive for the virus. Other districts are still planning to open, buoyed by groups concerned about the education and social-emotional well-being of children and/or the needs of the economy. Other districts are going virtual.

Around the country there are stories of well-heeled families avoiding the whole issue. In California some groups of parents hiring teachers away from school districts to teach their children in small “pods” in a home.

All schools in Fresno County were relieved of a face-to-face option when the Governor determined in July that monitored counties with high or growing levels of covid-19 infection could not open face-to-face instruction

## Student and parent training

Online school in Fresno Unified began as scheduled on August 17 with preparation time for teachers, followed by daily virtual instruction for all students. Students have received 60,000 laptops and tablets along with thousands of hotspots, which enable sharing wifi connections with electronics other than computers. All students will be trained in the use of their devices and software early in the year. That training will also be provided to parents. “Grab and Go” breakfast and lunch are being distributed at 63 school sites from 7 a.m. until 9 a.m.

All school days begin at 9 a.m. for students. Attendance is being taken, and the district has plans for reaching all students to be sure they are connecting. From 8 till 9 teachers are available for “office hour” meetings with students or parents or engaged in professional learning. The day for TK/Kindergarten students is divided into three half hour class/small group sessions with their teachers separated by half hour nutrition/play breaks. The class sessions end around noon followed by time for interaction with parents and students who might require additional help. In partnership with PBS, the PK-3<sup>rd</sup> graders have the option of additional educational opportunities with FUSD teachers on television from 7:30 a.m. until school starts at 9.

Grades 1-6 have a virtual school day broken into four 45 minute sessions of instruction lasting until 1:45, followed

by time for individual supports till 2:30 and teacher planning after that. Those schools that have a negotiated longer school day to meet the needs of their populations will have an additional half hour of instruction time.

Middle and high schoolers are on block schedules, with half of their courses on alternate days. They will have three one-hour classes per day, separated by nutrition/fitness breaks. An afternoon 7<sup>th</sup> period enrichment from 2:15 until 3:00 will provide time for counselling supports, enrichment classes—music, art, languages, coding, athletics and clubs, and tutoring.

## State defers payments

The Board noted the state will be deferring payments to school districts. For Fresno Unified this means that 32% of its revenues will not be received this year. The District chief financial officer suggested that the district would most likely resort to short term borrowing. Details of that plan and an update on the district’s multi-year budget will be discussed at an October Board meeting.

The Board unanimously passed a resolution in support of the development of an ethnic studies course as a requirement for graduation. The state has been working on a curriculum for such a course, as well as a team at FUSD, with the prospect of an eventual K-12 curriculum.

## Cultural training for staff

Incorporating that resolution, the Board received a report of plans from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Collaborative to provide four components to students and staff: cultural proficiency, cultural experiences, culturally responsive practices, and social action opportunities.

All staff will receive cultural proficiency training, with advanced levels trainings for selected staff. Cultural experiences include the new ethnic studies course and development of social justice standards for all students; school-wide multicultural events; assemblies and activities available on a school or grade basis; and school-chosen course offerings, conferences and clubs.

The Board meeting ended with a unanimous vote (except for the abstention of Trustee Slatic) to extend his censure for a year. Trustees concluded that Slatic had not made any notable changes in his behavior and had recently engaged in another inappropriate interaction, this time with a minister whom he called a racist. [kayb@csufresno.edu](mailto:kayb@csufresno.edu)

# Health Care

by Richard Bertken, M.D.



revolution in health

Since March 17, I have practiced rheumatology exclusively by phone. I initially did this from my work desk at home. In early June I transitioned to scheduled phone visits at my usual locale, the Family Healthcare Network in downtown Fresno. This allowed me to resume mentoring residents, to reconnect with badly needed support staff, and to bill for my efforts.

## Virtual home visits

The experience was, and continues to be, chaotic, difficult, and wearying. It was for me also transformational. I marveled at the power of unscheduled (and later, scheduled) phone visits to engage and ultimately improve the mood of patients and doctor alike. These encounters, to some degree, brought back to life the historic doctor home visit.

Stimulated by the pandemic, telemedicine emerged from its cocoon as a niche activity for dermatology and post-operative care to a full-scale commercial enterprise. Already there is competition among health management companies promoting suites of secure, home-based health monitoring and treatment services. Most, but shamefully not all, health plans are approving and reimbursing telemedicine visits.

The potential advantages to both patients and doctors are driving a

care delivery. But a lot of expensive infrastructure and research will be needed to walk us down this path.

## Many advantages



Some of the advantages are obvious. Access to specialty care for rural patients could be dramatically improved. All patients with limited transportation options could get improved care. Some patients would be able to get health care while at work. In multiple participant video sessions, appointed health care partners—friends or family members who assist with the medical encounters—could participate without taking time off from work or childcare. They could also perform some aspects of the physical exam.

## Continuous monitoring

Among the most important advantages of the telehealth revolution is the tightly linked concept of continuous monitoring of key outcome measures, such as vital signs and blood pressure, activity

levels, strength and endurance measurements, disability indexes, cardiograms, perhaps even hearing and vision—and so on.

A few phone apps that record such data, sometimes with the assistance of affordable electronic devices, already exist, sending data to “the cloud” for down-

loading and graphic display in the electronic medical record. Many more have been envisioned and designed but await testing for accuracy, durability, and affordability. We will need to perform large-scale clinical

research studies to validate the value of continuous monitoring modalities.

The culture of medicine is profoundly conservative. The eliciting, recording, and display of medical data has changed very little in 150 years. It would be overly optimistic to believe that telemedicine will necessarily be a force for integrating and unifying our health care system.

## Access needed for all

There is some danger that our profound inequality of access to the high-speed internet services necessary for telemedicine could further undermine health outcome disparities between rich and poor. We cannot let that happen. We need governmental action to secure excellent internet service for all our residents.

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