



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

August, 2019

Cindy Plank and Nancy Kleiber, Presidents

Jary Stavely and Lee Tepper, Editors

4th of July Parade

League Marches with a Message: We All Count in the 2020 Census

text and photos by Becky Bowen

An estimated 2,000 people celebrated the 2019 4th of July in a parade that wound through the streets of the town of Mendocino. The parade is famous (and popular) for political spoofs, but many participants carried signs and performed music that included thought-provoking messages about the future of democracy and the planet.

Local League members marched for the first time in 25 years, with a message to raise awareness about the importance of the 2020 census. Every person counts in this decennial enumeration that will impact political redistricting as well as the availability of public funds for local healthcare and other critical services. *(More information about the census is on p.3, in the annual meeting article.)*

Our marchers also celebrated the 100th year of women's right to vote in the U.S. and the beginning of the 100th year of the League of Women Voters. LWV members Cindy Plank, Nancy Kleiber, Dorine Real, Lee Tepper, Meg Courtney, Bob Bushansky, and Paula Cohen marched, along with support from neighbors, family members and census workers. Many thanks are due to the Planks' son Adam and grandson Ben; Plank neighbors Allison, Martin (and daughters Nora and Anna), and Janie; and census workers Julie and Donna for turning out and joining in.



"What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages."

— Frederick Douglass

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 through education and advocacy.

How I Spent my Late Spring: at Convention

by Cindy Plank

The recent LWV of California Convention 2019 was an inspiring experience. Dorine Real, Lee Tepper and I attended, and we came away with many good ideas and perspectives.

Check out this website: <https://lwvc.wordpress.com/2019-documents/>. On the right hand side, you can view the convention workbook, with details about such things as current positions, new positions proposed through consensus, and programs of emphasis for the coming two years. On the left you can scroll down to view convention documents and workshop materials.

Here are a few “teaser” topics to inspire you:

- “Great League Ideas” has wonderful info for those interested in a variety of topics such as Civics Scholarship Program, Redistricting Reform, and Campaign Finance Project.
- “Listening Across our Differences” addresses Civil Discourse: how to discuss issues with “unlikely” friends, and understanding liberal and conservative “moral channels.”
- If you are interested in more info about what LWV is all about, its history, and how it can be political and nonpartisan at the same time, “Unlocking League Secrets” is for you.

Census 2020 is such an important, critical process that will affect funding and representation for the next decade. Check out the caucus materials, and consider getting involved in the League’s ongoing partnership with Census 2020.

The Climate Emergency Resolution passed unanimously, and the “Therefore...” of that resolution goes like this: *“Therefore, be it resolved, we as delegates of California local Leagues assembled at the 2019 LWVC Convention call upon the LWVC Board, Action Committee and local Leagues to advocate for ‘Climate Emergency declarations’ and urgent relevant action by state, county, and local governments.”*

One of LWV of Mendocino County’s focus/interest topics for 2019/20 continues to be Environment/Climate. We are taking this resolution seriously and will be acting, educating and advocating as described. Please join us in this effort.

“Race, Power & Identity” was a sold-out all-day special workshop that all three of us attended. A recommended book from that workshop is *Borderlands/La Frontera* by Gloria Anzaldua:

“Borderlands people are those who live outside of the ‘normal’ center, which is white, heterosexual, able bodied, educated, etc. The center has access to resources, power, control. Borderlands people don’t have the same access. They exist because of that ‘normalizing’ center. To bring the borderlands into the center demands that it conforms to the norms of the center, and destroys its spirit. Our task is to take the center out into the borderlands. This shifts culture and the narrative of a universal ‘normal.’”

I’ll be reading this book, and will gladly loan it to anyone interested.

You can see by the numbers of opportunities that the three of us couldn’t possibly attend them all. There were many more topics of interest than there was time to participate. But this website opens up a wealth of information for us all. Is there something that strikes you as crucial? Or do you have more questions about a particular topic? Call or email me: Cindy Plank, 357-4282; theplanks@yahoo.com. Consider attending the next state convention, scheduled to take place in the heart of San Francisco May 20 – May 23, 2021. Our local League budgets money for convention costs in order to assist members to be delegates, and the California League offers scholarships.



Our Annual Meeting: Looking Ahead to the 2020 Census

by Jary Stavelv

Twenty-five members attended the Mendocino County League's Annual Meeting on May 14, which included a pot-luck lunch and a presentation by Paula Cohen regarding the 2020 census in Mendocino County. After assurances by Treasurer Lee Tepper that the unit's finances were stable, the annual budget was approved. Officers and Directors were elected as follows: Co-Presidents—Nancy Kleiber & Cindy Plank; Vice-President—Dorine Real; Secretary—Jane Person; Treasurer—Lee Tepper; Elected Directors—Pat Dunbar, Carol Czadek, Sharon Gilligan and Meg Courtney; Appointed Director—Jary Stavelv. It was noted that two members were stepping off the Board, Babs Levine and Patricia Marien (*see p.4*).

The areas of program focus chosen at the February meeting

(Climate/Environment, Democracy/Civics Education, and Local Behavioral Health) were formally adopted for the 2019–2020 fiscal year. After a favorable report from ad hoc committee chair Charlene McAllister, approval for Consensus on the new Criminal Justice position to be considered at the State convention was also given.

Member Paula Cohen is on the board of the Mendocino Community Foundation and is Secretary for the Mendocino Complete Count Committee (MCCC). She gave an overview of how the census will be conducted, and of her committee's efforts so far.

To begin with, the accuracy of the census is crucial to the distribution of federal funds, more than \$800 billion per year allocated to state, local, and tribal governments based on the populations they serve. Undercounted areas will receive less than their fair share. Next year's count will be undertaken in a variety of ways—through the internet, by telephone,

using a traditional paper form, and through in-person interviews. For those with no home internet, public access points will be set up at libraries, schools, colleges, and grange/guild halls, to name a few.

One barrier to accurate counting is the policy against sending registration forms to post office boxes.

Mendocino County has over 17,000 of them, not

counting those offered by private businesses.

However, the Census *will* send postcards or letters to P.O. boxes explaining the other ways to report. Census "enumerators" will also be sent out to homes for in-person interviews.

Other barriers to accurate counting include locked gates, non-traditional homes, especially those off-the-grid, and dislike/distrust of

government in general. Officials have identified 5 tracts within the hilly rural areas of the county with no-return rates ranging from 30–46% in the last count. The list of those who are hard to count includes non-English speakers, non-citizens, the homeless, the disabled, and many more.

The MCCC has received a grant of \$75,000 to work to ensure that the hard-to-count people in our county are reached. State officials have told the committee that Mendocino County is ahead of most others in its preparations and organization. Census job applications have come through at 118% of what is needed. It is currently working on making contact with community groups like churches and senior centers to continue to disseminate information and make the process easier for those who may fear it.

Paula asked that people with questions, information, or interest in helping contact her at 707-367-5315 (her cell), 937-1914, or by email: pcohen@mcn.org.



Paula Cohen, who spoke at our meeting about the Census, also marched with us in the Independence Day parade in Mendocino.

Babs Levine Leaves Board

The LWVMC board honored retiring long-time local League member, officer, and director Babs Levine at their meeting on June 11. She was presented with a card and a gift certificate for dining at a favorite restaurant. Jane Person also gave her a League clock, so she can keep track of the time now that she doesn't have to attend 9:30 Board meetings at the Fort Bragg Library.

According to Susan Mitchell's profile in the *Voter* several years ago, Babs was Secretary of the Mendocino League for many years, and was also Observer at the Mendocino Historical Review Board. "As she told me," wrote Susan, "at the last meeting of the Historical Review Board someone actually said, 'I wouldn't say this on tape.' We are all lucky to have her there trying to get them to operate correctly under the Brown Act."



Babs and Sam Levine working the check-in table at 2019 Meet and Greet Photo by Becky Bowen

Although she and her husband Sam permanently moved into their Little River home in 1998, she joined our unit of the League many years earlier due to the persuasion of Mildred Benioff. Babs has promised to continue to provide her beautiful flower arrangements at League events.

To read the entire profile, visit our Facebook page or send an email to us at voter@mcn.org.

LWVMC Schedule for 2019-2020

Plans are shaping up for this year's member programs. All will take place on Tuesdays at the Caspar Community Center, with the exception of the traditional Friday evening Meet & Greet in March. Please note some evening times.

September 17	Kickoff (6 PM)
October 8	Behavioral Health (6 PM)
November 12	Civics/Census (10 AM)
January 14	Elections (10 AM)
February 11	National and Local Program Planning (10 AM)
March 20	Meet and Greet (5 PM)
April 14	Schools and Communities First initiative (6 PM)
May 12	Annual Meeting (10 AM)

Patricia Passes the Cookies

Retiring board member Patricia Marien has been even better known for her hostess function, both at our annual Meet and Greet and at our member meetings. This role goes much deeper than beautifully presented and tasty snacks: Patricia has been a culture keeper who modeled the old-fashioned virtue of graciousness, exemplifying the attention and support our members offer each other. Board meetings have been pleasanter and more productive because of her influence. Now you can take time to have some of that nut bread yourself, Patricia.

Carbon Drawdown in the News

George Reinhardt provided us with a link to more information about carbon sequestration in the soil: <https://climateneutralnetwork.net/carbon-farming-can-slash-co2-emissions/>. Our local farmers (*see May '19 Voter*), as he points out, are not alone.

Southern California journalist Jacques Leslie published an op-ed about the state government's relationship to carbon farming:

<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-leslie-regenerative-farming-california-20190513-story.html>

Hospital Receives Takeover Bids

Coast Hospital interim director Wayne Allen recently announced that two proposals had been received in response to the board's invitation to five outside groups to operate the local facility. American Advanced Medical Services of Modesto and Adventist Health each offered to lease the MCDH, with a long-term option to buy. The hospital district's Affiliation Ad Hoc Committee (composed of Allen, Steve Lund, and Amy McColley) have reviewed the proposals and have decided to reject the one from the Modesto group as 'unsuitable.' The committee is now engaged in negotiating further with Adventist Health. Then it will report its findings to the board. Any agreement between the board and an outside operator would have to be approved by the voters of the hospital district, perhaps as early as the March 2020 primary. The situation is complicated by a late June decision by the California Fair Political Practices Commission that board chair Karen Arnold and vice-chair Jessica Grinberg have conflicts of interest in making decisions about selling the hospital, as they are both employed in the local health industry, Arnold with the Mendocino Coast Clinics and Grinberg with her business, Align Orthopedics and Prosthetics. Although Grinberg may be appealing the decision, they have both recused themselves from considering the proposals, leaving just three board members — Lund, McColley, and John Redding — to make these decisions.

Our Ocean is Hurting

by *Dorine Real*

Presentations given at Caspar Shul on July 18 described two kinds of serious harm that are happening now to our offshore environment. What made these talks distinctive was that they acknowledged the emotional impacts of these harms on us humans and suggested ways of dealing with them.

The first presentation was by Thais Mazur and dealt with the U.S. Navy's current program of weapons testing/training 12 miles off our shore. Thais' main expertise is dealing with human suffering, but here she was explaining the suffering of sea creatures, specifically whales and dolphins, who are being literally bombarded with explosions and blasts of

sound every few seconds. The SONAR blasts are louder than any sound most of us have ever heard; and in the ocean there is nowhere to escape such sounds. These sounds not only utterly disrupt the animals' abilities to navigate and to interact socially, they actually cause internal bleeding. Hundreds of beachings in the areas of the testing seem to be related to it, and these are only a fraction of the animals that are actually dying. The effects on other sea creatures are harder for us to understand and empathise with, but likely profound. Comments, protests, and even lawsuits have not been able to influence the Navy's program, which is untouchable because it is part of "national security."

Thais addressed the problem of "compassion fatigue" from a personal viewpoint, saying that she chooses to hold on to the most precious part of her inner being by living in empathy and love even though it is painful.

The second presentation was by Sheila Semans of the Noyo Center for Marine Science and concerned the collapse in the last few years, of our offshore kelp forest ecosystem. This collapse has been caused by multiple factors, not well understood, but there is an identifiable "villain" in the story: the purple sea urchin. This voracious creature has destroyed 95% of the kelp, causing the starvation of a whole food chain, including the urchins themselves.

To make practical the elimination of enough urchins so that the kelp can rebound, the Noyo Center is collaborating on a project involving fattening up the urchins in tanks, developing recipes to make them a desirable food product, then selling them to support the program. Sheila emphasised that this is a learn-as-you-go project – sometimes action needs to be taken on insufficient information. At the same time, the Center is pushing forward the science around kelp forests by convening a symposium in October that will include a public education component as well as a chance for scientists to share information and ideas.

Thanks to The Climate Crew, a project of our frequent partner the Mendocino Coast Jewish Community Justice Group, who sponsored the presentations and even provided delicious snacks.

Future of the Fort Bragg Mill Site Considered

by Jary Stavelly

On June 21 and 22 the Fort Bragg Mill Site Symposium Committee held a public forum at the Caspar Community Center. More than 80 people attended the opening of the conference to hear presentations by Jim Tarbell of Caspar and Ignacio Chapela of UC Berkeley and to follow up with questions. A smaller number participated in the "invitation-only symposium" held the next day, which included a series of round-table discussions, as well as a tour of the area around the mill pond, which is now open to direct public access through the newly opened gate to the Coastal Trail at the west end of Alder Street.

Public Presentation: Cal Winslow, of the Mendocino Institute and KZYX, opened the Friday meeting. He said the recent sale of mill site properties indicates Georgia-Pacific's desire to divest itself of the site in a piecemeal way; this means it is time for the public to exert control over what happens to the site as a whole. He then introduced Mr. Tarbell, the author of a recent article on the history of the Fort Bragg Mill Site published in the June *Real Estate Magazine* (<http://realestatemendocino.com/images/REM722.pdf>.)

Mr. Tarbell reviewed the history of the mill; the City's acquisition of property for the coastal trail and the Noyo Center for Marine Science; and the sale of 77 acres to the owners of the Skunk Train (another sale of 15 acres north of Cypress Street to the owners of Harvest Market is in the works). Any development is still dependent on the City amending the Local Coastal Plan (LCP) and changing the zoning. G-P is still obligated by the state Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) to do further study and cleanup of the mill pond areas, because of risks from extreme weather and sea-level rise. He referred to Chris Calder's editorial in the June 20 Advocate-News which argues that public input has been crucial to the progress made so far on the site, and that it needs to continue. They say they now have over 4,000 signatures calling for cleanup and comprehensive planning before any development.

Professor Chapela, who teaches ecology in Berkeley and studies microbiology around the world, emphasized his optimism about the future of the planet, in spite of the challenges which global warming poses. He congratulated the audience for participating, and for wanting to concentrate on the "here and now" in our local environment.

For him, science is not something passed down *a priori*, but is instead a process of making models from the ground up to try to explain the world. The work of testing the mill site for toxins and planning for how it should be used in the future fits into his concept of what Science should be. We would do well, he said, as we try to understand environmental change over space and time, to also consider *phylogeny*, the study of how life-forms change across those dimensions.

Historically, humans have created boundaries which narrow the focus of our activities—towards making money, for example. But what we need now, in Professor Chapela's view, is the ability to grasp how an ecosystem such as the mill site is connected together—to see the interrelationships between plants, animals, people, rising ocean levels, and extreme weather. We even should be careful of lessons like those of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, which tend to focus attention on the evils of carbon dioxide, to the exclusion of the whole, interconnected picture. A focus on a particularly baleful aspect of the situation, like the rising levels of CO₂, can lead to the paralysis of hopelessness.

The professor concluded his presentation by stating that the fear (and accompanying pessimism) of a population explosion was misplaced; that, in true perspective, the total mass of human beings on earth was minuscule, and that, even though the number of life-forms may be dwindling, life on this planet is not going to end soon. He was pleased to be joining a group of people who see something they can do for the environment, and were jumping into positive action.

Symposium highlights: The roundtable discussions were attended by Araceli Rivas of the coastal Latino Coalition, who explained her group's interest in providing a voice for our community's Latino families, the adults of which are often so busy working several jobs and managing young children

that they have little time for special meetings. She said Latco supports efforts to clean up the mill site, expand the science center, open up the creeks, and provide usable open space, all of which would improve the lives of future citizens of the community, in keeping with the goals of her organization.

Josh Maize and Aryana Henthorne of the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo also attended the symposium. Aryana is a Geographic Information Systems Specialist, and Josh is the Director of Environmental Programs for their group. They stressed that their community, as descendants of the indigenous population which seasonally lived on and harvested marine life from the site before they were displaced by the lumber mill operation, must be consulted about the further disturbance of the land and any cultural artifacts that are discovered during development.

During the "What About Toxics?" discussion, Prof. Chapela pointed out that one aspect of the contamination remaining in the millpond is that, with rising sea levels, the toxins may be pushed farther and wider inland in the expanding water table, a spread not readily apparent from the surface. He also suggested that much more work could be done to learn how toxins are metabolized and changed, as they are incorporated into the plants and animals they impinge on. It was proposed in the ensuing discussion that expanded sampling and analysis might involve citizen participation, perhaps under the auspices of Mendocino College.

The previous G-P proposal to put a fence around the pond area and wait for natural diminution of the contamination reflects the delusion that "dilution is a solution to pollution." It was pointed out that pollutants don't just disappear, whether they're left in place or hauled away (as some mill site contaminants already have been, to Concord).

NHUDG has proposed a wildlife corridor to connect Soldier's Bay (where the creeks come to the ocean) to the state park on the north. This concept is already seriously threatened by the proposal by the Skunk Train to run a spur line out to Glass Beach.

George Reinhardt led a walk on the middle portion of the Coastal Trail. He pointed out the ocean berm at the inner portion of Soldier's Bay that has sunk considerably during the past 10 years. As the sea

continues to rise, the berm looks likely to be breached during king tides in the near future. From the north side of Soldier's Bay the group could also see the "north dam" of pond 8 and the outfall from it. It was reported that Georgia-Pacific reached agreement with the DTSC in the middle of June to do further sampling in Ponds 7 and 8, in order to satisfy the requirement that it prove the site is safe in spite of likely extreme weather and sea level rise.

George suggests that even though the city seems to fear the cost of daylighting Alder and Maple Creeks, funding could be available from three possible sources—the state carbon offsets program, directly from Caltrans, and through "climate-change adaptation" grants.

Gayle McLaughlin, former mayor of Richmond and recent candidate for Lieutenant Governor, told the symposium how a grass-roots organization called the Richmond Protective Alliance gained control of the city council, curbed the influence of a large corporation (Chevron), and managed to effect the cleanup and responsible development of a superfund site on the shores of San Francisco Bay. They were able to work through the DTSC to the highest standard of cleanup for the 86-acre site. She was struck by the similarities between their situation and the one in Fort Bragg.

Leslie Kashiwada, of the local state Fish and Wildlife office, was prominent in many discussions during the symposium. She suggested that one factor not yet being considered by planners and developers is how the wind onto the headlands is funneled up city streets, disseminating a dusty mix of substances.

Bill Lemos, who has been active in the working Stakeholder Group for the local Marine Protection Area, noted that Fort Bragg has some current infrastructure deficiencies which would dictate a slow pace of development. Its elderly storm drain system contains transite, which has asbestos in it. The drains regularly back up during storms, and development on the headlands will not improve its functioning. There are also limitations on the amount of water which the city's water system can provide—so new water sources may need to be found for new development.

Recently elected city councilwoman Tess Albin-Smith suggested that the best way to guarantee any

kind of desired development is to buy the property in question.

John Gallo, of the Fort Bragg Headlands Consortium, announced that his group has been awarded a grant of \$5K by the Mendocino Community Foundation (out of \$10K requested) to plan for the mill site future.

They need to raise another \$5K from the community and in other ways. His group made a presentation to the city council on July 20, and presented the petition signatures it had collected. More information about this group, including its mission, principles and immediate objectives, can be found online at fortbraggheadlandsconsortium.org/.

An article about the parcel purchased by the Skunk Train can be found at <https://www.advocate-news.com/2019/06/15/skunk-train-execs-say-mill-site-purchase-finalized/>.

Video of the whole conference was made by Mendocino TV:

<http://mendocinotv.com/2019/06/14/public-forum-on-the-future-of-the-fort-bragg-mill-site/>.

Young People's Climate Change Case Faces Latest Challenge

On June 4 a three-judge panel of Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments in *Juliana v. United States*, the case about whether young people have a right to be protected from climate change. No decision in the hearing about whether the case can proceed is likely for awhile, but readers can learn about the oral arguments themselves in a story from the NY Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/04/climate/climate-lawsuit-juliana.html>

League Condemns Xenophobic Attacks on Members of Congress

On July 18 League of Women Voters board president Chris Carson and CEO Virginia Kase issued the following statement:

"The racist rhetoric and attacks on Rep. Ilhan Omar and other female members of Congress are deplorable, they dishonor the office of the President, and frankly, they are un-American.

"The escalating hate and xenophobic tweets are a distraction from the real problems facing our democracy, designed to further divide the American people.

"We must not let these racist outcries distract us from the important work of building a more inclusive democracy.

"Our great country is made stronger by the diversity of the people living in the United States. There is more that unites us than divides us.

"These attacks are wrong, and we must call them what they are: blatantly xenophobic."

Tuesday, August 13, 2019, 7 pm

Caspar Shul (in front of Caspar Community Center)



- ❖ **What's really happening at our southern borders?**
- ❖ **What organizations are helping refugees?**
- ❖ **How can we help?**

Come hear Judy Stavely, who has walked the Migrant Trail and worked at the border, report back about these experiences



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This is a free event. All are welcome!

Sponsored by the
Mendocino Coast Jewish Community (MCJC) Justice Group

Contact Your League

Mail: P.O. Box 1128, Fort Bragg, CA 955437

Website: <http://mendo.ca.lwvnet.org>

Telephone: 937-4952 (messages)

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/LWVMendo1/>

Voter: voter@mcn.org

Citizens' Redistricting Commission Needs You

by Helen Hutchison, former LWVC President

The initial phase of applications for the next California Citizens' Redistricting Commission is now open. League members are both encouraged to apply, and to encourage others to apply. Think about the people in your circles who would make good commissioners, and reach out to them. You are welcome to adapt the following sample email for contacting potential members. The important thing is to get a broad representation of Californians to apply for the commission.

Subject: A rare opportunity to shape California's future

Dear (name),

I hope this email finds you well. (Personalize your greeting here....).

An opportunity to profoundly impact our state's future is here. Once every ten years, California goes through a process called redistricting, which involves redrawing political districts at the federal, state, and local levels. This process is important to our lives as Californians because it helps ensure that we have a chance of electing political representatives who will be responsive to our needs and concerns.

In California, we redraw federal and state districts through the Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC). The CRC is an independent commission of 14 Californians who are neither legislators nor public officials. Through a public process and technical assistance from the state, the CRC develops and approves new maps that reshape the districts of our congressional representatives, state senators, state assembly members, and members of the Board of Equalization.

I believe you should be on the CRC. We need to ensure that the commissioners truly reflect the demographic and geographic diversity of our state and that they ensure a fair line-drawing process that strengthens the representation of communities, especially traditionally marginalized and underrepresented communities.

The initial application window is June 10, 2019 through August 9, 2019. Do you have time to discuss in person or via phone why I believe you are an ideal candidate for the CRC? If so, let me know what days and times are convenient for you. Materials with more information about the application process and candidate criteria are attached to this email, and here is the link to the CRC online application: <http://shapecaliforniasfuture.auditor.ca.gov/>. I am happy to discuss those with you as well.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

(Your name)

California League Works for State Legislation

Our State League is working hard to pass ACA 6, the Free the Vote Act, which restores voting rights to every person on parole.

We support AB 849, the Fair Maps Act, which has passed out of the Assembly and is on its way to the Senate. This bill will combat partisan and racially-discriminatory gerrymandering.

SB 72 has passed out of the Senate and is advancing to the Assembly. Upon passage, it will bring Election Day Registration to every California polling place in 2020.

We also support SB 139, the People's Maps Act, which has also passed out of the Senate, and is one step closer to giving people – not politicians – the power to draw the lines.

There's more online

The LWVUS website, www.lwv.org, has more on the California issues we cover here. Start at <https://lwvc.org/>. For national issues, see www.lwv.org/blog/.

From the U.S. League office

LWV Acts for Voters in the Courts, Congress, and the Press

Legislative Practices: On June 21, the Wisconsin Supreme Court reversed a lower court decision (in a case brought by LWV of Wisconsin and others) against the Wisconsin Legislature, thus restoring the laws enacted during the outgoing legislature's notorious lame-duck session to limit the power of newly elected officials following the 2018 midterms. Changes to legislative rules and practices are being used in many legislative bodies including the U.S. Senate to entrench partisan power.

Supreme Court Punts on Political Gerrymandering:

On their last decision day of the term, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in *Rucho v. League of Women Voters of North Carolina* that no fair test exists for courts to determine when partisan gerrymandering has gone too far. This decision is a disappointment, and the Court missed a crucial opportunity to strengthen our republic. But, while this decision is a setback in the fight for fair maps around the country, the fight is far from over. We must redouble our efforts outside the courtroom to put the voices of voters first. Independent citizen-led commissions have been highly successful in ensuring that district maps fairly represent the population. While some states are taking a proactive approach to gerrymandering with ballot measures, a wider solution exists in Congress. The *For the People Act*, already passed in the House, would create fair redistricting standards for the entire country. If you haven't done so, please contact your senators in support of it.

SCOTUS Limits Political Interest in Redistricting

Cases: In June, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Virginia House of Delegates v. Bethune-Hill* affirming the lower court's decision that the Virginia legislature lacks standing to appeal in its own right. The court ruled earlier this year that the maps in question were a racial gerrymander and required new maps be used in the recent June elections. By disallowing legislators from bringing lawsuits to protect their own political interests, this decision by the Supreme Court is a victory for voters and ensures that every ballot matters in Virginia.

D.C.—the 51st State? Taxation without representation is still a very real phenomenon in the United States today. District of Columbia residents have neither representation in Congress, nor freedom to govern themselves without interference from Congress. It's time for the more than 650,000 residents of our nation's capital to be fully enfranchised.

LWVUS filed an amicus brief along with partner civil rights groups in the D.C. voting rights case, *Castanon v. United States*. The case, filed in federal district court in D.C., is a complaint by D.C. residents that they have been denied the full voting rights and political equity guaranteed to them by the Constitution

Old News on Gerrymandering: Late in April, a panel of federal district judges ruled in favor of LWV of Michigan in their First and Fourteenth Amendment challenges to the state and congressional redistricting plans, saying the state will be required to implement new maps in time for the 2020 election and before the next redistricting cycle in 2021. And in May, a three-judge panel from the District Court for the Southern District of Ohio ruled in favor of the LWV of Ohio in its redistricting case, declaring the congressional maps an unconstitutional partisan gerrymander, to be redrawn in time for the 2020 elections. Along with the ruling in Michigan, the Ohio district court's order shows that there are fair solutions to gerrymandered maps. These decisions to strike down unconstitutionally gerrymandered maps give voters confidence that they will be represented equally in future elections. (*However, the Supreme Court's Rucho decision, see top of this article, restores political gerrymandering as a viable tool.*)

Challenging New Restrictions: In May, LWV of Tennessee, along with other democracy groups, filed a federal lawsuit challenging a new state law that undermines voter registration. Tennessee ranks 44th in voter registration but, during the 2018 midterm election, the state saw a surge in registrations. Instead of providing greater resources to help election offices process the influx, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a measure that creates criminal and civil penalties against those who fail to comply with onerous requirements and turn in "incomplete" applications. The governor signed the bill into law. This new law violates freedom of speech, freedom of

association, due process, and the fundamental right to vote under the First and Fourteenth Amendments, as well as violates the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). “Voter registration surges like what Tennessee saw in 2018 should be celebrated, not penalized. We see this law as a threat to democracy and a direct violation of our Constitution,” said Marian Ott, president of the League of Women Voters of Tennessee.

More Work for U.S. League after Supreme Court Census Ruling

On June 27 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Department of Commerce v. New York* that a citizenship question in the U.S. Census report cannot proceed for 2020. The League of Women Voters of New York State was one of several named organizational plaintiffs in the case.

“We are relieved that the Court protected the purpose and outcome of the 2020 Census,” said Laura Bierman, Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of New York State. “Here in New York, we are one of the largest states in the nation by population, but we also have one of the most notoriously hard-to-count populations. An untested citizenship question would have directly harmed New Yorkers.”

Because of the impact this case will have on communities across the country, the League of Women Voters of the United States filed a friend of the court brief in *Department of Commerce v. New York*. “Make no mistake – the suggestion of a citizenship question in the census was a scare tactic designed to decrease participation among non-English speaking and immigrant communities,” said Virginia Kase, CEO of the US League. “While today’s ruling is a victory for our democracy, damage has already been done by instilling fear in the public. We celebrate the Court’s ruling and are relieved that the question will not appear in the census questionnaire; however, there is still much work to be done.”

The League will be working overtime in the coming months with a three-pronged approach — education, ‘Get Out the Count’ activities, and watchdog reporting—to ensure the most complete possible census count, with a focus on hard-to-count

communities. In addition, the League has joined the Census Project and other affiliates calling on Congress to support the funding levels for the Census Bureau appropriated in the FY 2020 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill. The legislation allocates \$8.45 billion for the Census Bureau, including \$7.5 billion in dedicated funding of the 2020 Census.

The Census is scheduled to launch on April 1, 2020, and its results are to be distributed to states in time for the upcoming redistricting cycle in Spring of 2021.

Maine Senate Votes to Join Electoral Compact

The following report is from CNN:

On May 16 Maine's lawmakers passed a bill that would give the state's electoral votes to the presidential candidate who won the national popular vote, taking a step toward becoming the 15th state to enact such a law. The Maine Senate voted 19-16 to join the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, which would give all committed states' electoral votes to the winning popular vote candidate should the group accrue the 270 votes necessary for an electoral majority.

California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington state, and the District of Columbia have all committed to the pact. The most recent addition, New Mexico, put the total at 189 electoral votes.

Maine is currently one of two states (along with Nebraska) that splits its electoral college votes instead of adhering to the winner-takes-all policy most states follow. Should the Maine House pass and Gov. Janet Mills sign the bill, Maine would contribute another four votes towards the 270.

The Electoral College effectively results in voters casting ballots not for their desired presidential candidates, but for 538 electors who in turn select candidates. The mechanism clinched President Donald Trump the 2016 presidential victory despite Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton winning a popular vote majority by nearly 3 million votes.

HELP Separated Children

In a June 24 statement, LWVUS condemned family separations and inhumane conditions of detention on our southern border, and called on Congress “to pass comprehensive immigration reform that includes a long-term plan for asylum seekers and a commitment to all refugees seeking freedom in our great nation.” We have opposed two current harsh reform bills.

Now the League has joined more than 150 organizations in support of the Humane Enforcement and Legal Protections (HELP) for Separated Children Act and Help for Separated Families Act (H.R. 3451/H.R. 3452). The two bills would help mitigate the harm to children impacted by interior immigration enforcement actions. The joint letter:

Dear Member of Congress,

The undersigned organizations are writing to express our strong support for the Humane Enforcement and Legal Protections (HELP) for Separated Children Act (H.R. 3451) and the Help Separated Families Act (H.R. 3452), introduced by Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard, which codify protections for children who may be separated from their parents by immigration enforcement actions in the interior. As organizations committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families, we stand united against the administration’s harsh immigration enforcement agenda and the harm it is imposing on more than a quarter of children in the United States, the majority of whom are U.S. citizens. These companion bills represent a critical step toward mitigating the harm of enforcement actions on children.

There may be no greater threat to children’s emotional security than the fear of being separated from a parent. Research consistently demonstrates that family separation has harmful effects on children’s psychological and physical well-being. Children whose parents are detained or deported often suffer from physical and mental health difficulties, including irregular sleeping or eating habits, developmental regressions, and increased anger and withdrawal. These outcomes are most pronounced when children witness a parent’s arrest and when they experience long periods of separation from their parent. Children who are left behind

following separation from a parent are also at greater risk of entering the child welfare system.

The *HELP Separated Children Act* includes provisions that would help to mitigate some of the stress and instability of immigration enforcement on children by allowing parents to arrange for the care of their children prior to being taken into custody and prior to deportation; supporting continued contact between detained parents and children; and ensuring parents are able to fully participate in child welfare proceedings. The bill also seeks to minimize trauma for children who are present during enforcement actions by requiring agents to undergo training and to refrain from interrogating parents in front of children or using children as translators.

Meanwhile, the *Help Separated Families Act* includes critical provisions to address barriers that may prevent children in the child welfare system from being able to reunify with a detained or deported parent or to be placed in the care of a family member. For example, the bill prohibits immigration status alone from being a factor in placement decisions and permits certain forms of foreign identification for purposes of a background check. The bill also seeks to prevent unnecessary permanent separation by allowing child welfare agencies to delay the process for terminating parental rights in cases when a parent is detained or deported, unless certain conditions are met.

These important bills could not be timelier following the administration’s recent announcement that they will be undertaking massive raids in communities around the country. Children are increasingly feeling the effects of the administration’s interior immigration enforcement policies, including making every undocumented immigrant a priority for deportation and scaling back the ability of immigration officials to exercise discretion when making decisions about detaining or deporting parents of U.S. citizen children. As a result, millions of children are increasingly vulnerable to being separated from a parent or loved one.

No child should have to live in fear of losing a parent. We urge you to stand with children and families by co-sponsoring the *HELP Separated Children and Help Separated Families Acts*.