



Remaining Nonpartisan in Hyper-partisan Times

Colleen White shares these excerpts from a timely article from the LWVUS Blog,
February 10, 2021

The League of Women Voters of the United States is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

So many issues today are framed in partisan terms that it can feel impossible to communicate without being accused of taking a side. Being painted into ideological corners because of a stance our organization takes is not a new phenomenon.

Our founders were attacked for taking positions rooted in fact. Not much has changed. League leaders continue to face this challenge.

Issues are Not Partisan

The League's advocacy and our positions are based on careful study. One politician taking a similar position to the League on any one issue does not make the issue or the League

partisan. However, in this hyper-partisan environment, assumptions are made that aren't accurate. For instance, supporting the empowerment of voters who previously have been left out of the process and supporting the anti-racism movement does not mean we are in alliance with one ideological segment of American government; rather, it means we stand up for what is right.

Wanting every eligible voter to have equal access to the ballot box is not partisan. Wanting a robust democracy in which everyone has an equal voice and equal representation is not partisan. Wanting to see more elected officials that reflect the diverse makeup of our country is not partisan.

League members are not a monolith. We represent opinions and positions that can be found across the American political spectrum. What brings us together is our commitment to voter empowerment—especially empowering women voters—and defending democracy.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

CHRISTEEN FERREE LWVSJC President

I'm on the left here with Susan Mora Loyko, helping to paint a women's suffrage celebratory mural on the side of Lodi's downtown parking garage. Artist Tony Segale designed and painted the mural to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment, giving women the right to vote.



The idea for the mural was suggested by the Lodi Arts commission and the Lodi Arts Foundation. Volunteers were given the opportunity to help finish the mural, under the supervision of Mr. Segale, on April 9, 2022. It was an honor for me to participate, and it was gratifying to see mothers and their young daughters out there sharing this experience. Susan was also grateful for the experience, and both of us worried about painting within the lines. Susan said it was so windy that day that the paint almost dried faster than they could apply it.

This brings me to the theme of this message, which is that volunteers are the heart of any organization, and our volunteers definitely pour their hearts into furthering the mission of the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County!

Following are a few examples of the many ways our members have selflessly stepped up to help further the League's purpose:

A few members, who had gone off-board, recently returned to the board to help provide continuity and to assist with acquainting new members with League activities and protocols. A job-shadowing arrangement was developed by Donna Brown, Chair of the Nominating Committee. Under this arrangement, seasoned members are paired with newer members to help familiarize them with League functions and practices. As a result, many of our new members have been regularly attending board meetings.

Our Advocacy Committee, chaired by Mary Kenefick, has been quite active in keeping abreast of and addressing a variety of local issues. For many members, advocacy is what prompted them to join the League and advocacy is what makes them want to continue their involvement. We are certainly a group with wide-ranging passions!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued

Susan Mora Loyko, Membership Chair, reports that we acquired quite a few new members this year. In addition to keeping in continual contact with our new members, Susan is endeavoring to involve them at various public outreach events, i.e., Cesar Chavez Day and Earth Day.



Here's an Earth Day photo of Susan Mora Loyko and Anicia Hibdon with a display that Bill Loyko built. It really drew people into our booth, and it was fun to see the kids show off in front of their parents when answering the questions (or kids finding out their parents didn't know some of the answers). The event was held at Victory Park on Sunday, April 24th.

Another reason many members joined the League was because of their passion for voter education and voting rights. An excellent opportunity for new member involvement has been Voter Services. Our members typically assist with Voter Registration, Candidate Forums, and Legislative Interviews. Involvement in these activities can be in both large and small ways.

Lifelong friendships have been developed through member participation in Public Education Forums. This year, the League is planning or has held educational forums on topics such as climate change and the status of public education in our community. In the next fiscal year, public forums are being developed on a variety of topics. New and seasoned members are always welcome to serve on planning committees for these events. Serving on a planning committee is an excellent way to get to know other League members.

Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee is a newer one for the League. This committee, chaired by Terri Mercer, is currently assessing the League's past efforts regarding DEI and is in the process of planning the committee's future focus. This committee is very much in need of additional members – an excellent opportunity to become involved on this committee from the ground up.

It's obvious to me that the League's mission resonates with our members' values. Their willingness to generously donate their time and energy to work toward the betterment of our community is an inspiration and is very much appreciated.

— Christeen Ferree



FORUMS

Sponsored by **THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of San Joaquin County**

*HOW DOES LOCAL EDUCATION AFFECT OUR ECONOMY
AND COMMUNITY- AND WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?*

MAY 14TH AND 21ST

10:00—NOON

CENTRAL METHODIST CHURCH 3700 PACIFIC AVENUE STOCKTON

MAY 14TH

LOCAL EDUCATION IMPACTS OUR COMMUNITY

MODERATOR: CHRISTEEN FERREE, PRESIDENT, LWVSJC

PANELISTS

KATHY HART, President, San Joaquin Delta College (Retired)

How San Joaquin educational systems rank

PHILLIP MERLO, Historian and Lecturer

How education in Stockton has changed over the decades

TOM POGUE, Executive Director, Business and Policy Research, University of the Pacific

How education affects the local economy and government services

TORI VERBER SALAZAR, San Joaquin County District Attorney

The relationship between education and crime and the financial impacts involved

FORUMS

Sponsored by **THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of San Joaquin County**

MAY 21ST

THE COMMUNITY CAN IMPACT LOCAL EDUCATION

MODERATOR: CHRISTEEN FERREE, PRESIDENT, LWVSJC

PANELISTS

KATHY HART, President, San Joaquin Delta College (Retired)

Review of Educational Statistical Information

TROY BROWN, San Joaquin County Superintendent of Schools

How educational systems can address educational attainment

SANDRA CHAN, Parent and Lincoln Unified School District Trustee

What parents can do to foster better education for their children

BOBBY BIVENS, President, NAACP

What the NAACP can do to improve educational outcomes for Black students

MARISELA PINEDA, Executive Director, First Five San Joaquin

Why it's important to focus on the first five years of a child's life

SUZY DAVELUY, Community Services Director-City Librarian/City of Stockton (retired)

What library programs can do to help parents supplement their children's education



Get the facts before you vote this election season by visiting Voter's Edge at <https://votersedge.org/ca> And refer your friends!

The League's Solidarity and Action Statement Against White Supremacy

by Gretchen Newby

In August of 2019, in the wake of mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton, the League of Women Voters of the United States joined the Leadership Conference and other partner organizations, including Voto Latino and NAACP LDF, in condemning white supremacy and demanding real reform to combat hate. Here are excerpts from their statement:

"The tragedies of this past weekend represent a confluence of two dangerous forces: the rise of white supremacist terror and our federal government's inaction on commonsense gun safety. Both deserve sweeping and consequential action by our elected leaders. Every person in our country should feel safe while shopping, enjoying a night out with friends, attending school or religious services, or engaging in any other lawful activity. Instead, white supremacist violence against communities of color continues to escalate. [. . .]

"None of this is acceptable. None of this is normal. Our organizations are united in saying that Members of Congress can no longer look away as communities of color are murdered with impunity. We must all unite and demand accountability."



The League's Response to the Leaked Supreme Court Draft Opinion on Abortion Rights

Excerpts from a [joint statement](#) issued by LWVUS president Dr. Deborah Turner and CEO Virginia Kase Solomón in response to the leaked Supreme Court draft opinion that would overturn *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*:

"If this draft opinion holds [. . .] it not only strips women and pregnant people of their personal autonomy but opens the door to erode more fundamental rights. As an organization that believes in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy, we will fight to preserve the individual rights of women to make their own reproductive choices.

"[This opinion] will put the reproductive health of millions in danger. This opinion is also a direct attack on Black women and all underserved communities who already experience unfair barriers and limited access to adequate health care services. [We] will stand with our allies to protect women's access to care. It is critical that we show up in solidarity, and make our voices heard for reproductive choice. Our democracy depends on it."

UPDATES ON LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

Recent presentations provide insights into What's Next with Climate Change

Thanks to the Climate Change Committee, the San Joaquin County League got a lot of information about what to expect locally as a result of a changing climate. In January, we got an introduction and overview. March dealt with air quality issues and April dealt with sea level rise.

Who We Are?
A 4 million person-strong region directly dependent on the largest freshwater portion of the largest estuary on the West Coast of the Americas.

Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, Executive Director of Restore the Delta, with a presentation on the health of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Overview of Watersheds

- Calaveras Watershed
- San Joaquin River Watershed
- Mokelumne River Basin
- Farmington Reservoir

Chris Elias, Executive Director for the San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency, talked about Flood Risk Resilience: Adapting to Climate Change in the Lower San Joaquin River Basin.

If you missed these presentations, you can view them on the LWVSJC [YouTube channel](#). You can also find links to the video presentations on the LWVSJC [webpage](#).

SAVE THE DATE:

Annual Meeting

June 11, 2022

9:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Central United Methodist Church, Fireside Room
3700 Pacific Avenue, Stockton

Speaker: Mary J. Wardell-Ghirarduzzi, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Professor of Communication at University of the Pacific



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Terri Mercer

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.