



The Voter

April 2025

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

Homeless Resources Fair Nonprofit Services for the Unsheltered

Saturday, April 12, 2025

10:00-noon

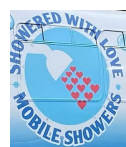
Chavez Library, Stockton

A panel of local nonprofits will present an overview of the services they offer to people who do not have secure, sustainable housing. The focus will be on action: how individuals can help to support the varied and vital services that nonprofits provide for a community of our neighbors that is continuing to grow.

Here's a partial list of panel participants:



SJPC
SAN JOAQUIN PRIDE CENTER



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Please Note

We have a new website address. It is below—and here:

<https://my.lwv.org/california/san-joaquin-county>

Please check out our website for current information on our League's activities as well as Minutes from our Board meetings and other up-to-date news.

League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County
P.O. Box 4548
Stockton, CA 95204
Email: LWVSJC@gmail.com
<https://my.lwv.org/california/san-joaquin-county>



LUNCH AND LEARN

April 8, 2025

Speaker

Krista Fiser, CEO

PREVAIL
(formerly Women's Center-
Youth & Family Services)

May 13, 2025

Speaker

Maria Elena Serna

**Lodi's Breakthrough
Project for Social Justice**

June 10, 2025

Speaker

Dottie Nygard

Impacts of Warehousing

All Lunch & Learns will
be held at

Papapavlo's
Lincoln Center/Stockton
11:30-1:00

Watch for a flyer for each
program to RSVP.

Plan to join us!

Helen Pearson Award— Nomination Time

Each year our League recognizes one of our members who has made a significant contribution to our League. The award has been given since 1978 and was named for LWVSJC member Helen Pearson, a former high school civics teacher, who served as our chapter president in the early 1950s. She was a tireless observer of the Stockton City Council and the Board of Supervisors. After serving as president, she served as historian and parliamentarian. She was active in voter service, especially in presenting the Pros and Cons.

After Helen's death in 1977, the Board created an award in her honor to recognize outstanding contributions to our local League. Award guidelines suggest considering some of the following criteria: someone who worked on a special project or action-related activity and carried it through to her/his best ability or held a Board position and performed exceptionally well in that area. The recipient will have shown a high level of commitment to our League while maintaining perspective and a sense of humor.

The award is presented each year at the Annual Meeting.

If you know a member in good standing who fits that description, send their name for consideration to a member of the Award Committee: Donna Brown, Terri Mercer, or Cate White.

Program Planning Meeting Sparks Enthusiastic Response

Christeen Ferree led a spirited discussion of issues that concern our League members and how we might want to focus our attention on these issues in the coming year.

At the close of the two-hour meeting, members chose to refer to the Board three issues to be presented to membership at the Annual Meeting as Issues for Education and Advocacy:

- ⇒ Making Democracy Work
- ⇒ Women's Rights
- ⇒ Immigration

Breakout groups focusing on each topic started the conversation about issues within each topic that are of greatest concern and ideas about how to bring elements of each issue to our membership and the public at large in both informational and action-oriented events.

Each committee invites other League members who are interested in these issues to join the committees planning activities for the coming League year. Contact the first convener of each group via lwvsjc@gmail.com to be included in future meetings:

- **Making Democracy Work:** Donna Brown
- **Women's Rights:** Colleen Foster
- **Immigration:** Yvette Remlinger

Our League *Speaks Out* Against Voter Suppression

In a letter dated February 13, 2025, Supervisor Paul Canepa, Chair, sent a letter to Governor Gavin Newsom on behalf of the Board urging the governor to support a voter identification requirement for residents to receive and cast any ballot, as well as for eliminating same-day voter registration in California. This action was on the Board's Consent Calendar, an agenda placement for 'routine' decisions—twice.

At the January 28th meeting, a supervisor asked to see the actual letter being proposed before voting on the item. To comply with that request, the letter was included on the Board's February 11th agenda, again on the Consent Calendar, where it passed unanimously.

Then, at its March 13th meeting, the County's Election Advisory Committee agendized a discussion to recommend to the Board that they support and forward to state officials a recommendation to eliminate voting by mail and to decrease, if not eliminate, ballot drop boxes. (Note: San Joaquin County had 26 ballot drop boxes in the 2024 General Election. Early discussions of the issue elicited the suggestion that the county should not have more than the state-required 13.) Community members and organizations concerned about voter rights mobilized to make their concerns known at the EAC meeting. Our League was among those who spoke out.

LWVSJC President Mary Kenefick delivered cogent comments in defense of voter rights:

"The League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County opposes unnecessary voting restrictions that could disenfranchise voters," she began. "Stricter voter ID laws disproportionately affect marginalized groups. Studies show that nearly 21 million U.S. citizens lack a non-expired driver's license, with Black and Hispanic communities being most impacted. The elderly, disabled individuals, students, and people who have changed their names face additional burdens in obtaining valid IDs." President Kenefick continued with references to League positions that support voter protections and spoke against barriers to voting.

LWVSJC sent an alert out to our League members via our gmail account and several of you emailed your comments about your concerns over the EAC proposal. **Thank you to each of you who took the time to make your voices heard.**



**Is it Voter ID
OR VOTER SUPPRESSION?**

The Election Advisory Committee seemed not to expect pushback on their proposal, possibly because most speakers at their meetings in the past have favored these and other restrictive measures. The vote on this agenda item was deferred to an April 10th meeting. Please be prepared to voice your concerns again at that meeting, either in person or via emails to the EAC or with calls to your supervisor.

This saga didn't end there, however. The Lodi City Council's March 19th agenda included discussion of a resolution to require an ID to vote and ending election day voter registration. The City Council also proposed to send letters to that effect to the Governor and the President, duplicating the letter the Board of Supervisors sent to the Governor in February.

Before the Lodi city council meeting, Mary Kenefick received a call from a KOVR reporter who asked her to speak on camera on the issue before the Lodi council. Mary Kenefick and Jane Wagner-Tyack met with the reporter and Mary's comments were featured in a three-minute segment of the news that evening.

Members of the Lodi community appeared before the council to speak on this issue—over 90 minutes of public comment were presented, with residents voicing their concern, outrage, or alarm at the proposal. League members were among those who voiced their objections to the proposed action and, once again, President Kenefick stated our objections about voter suppression.

In the end, the Lodi City Council removed the item from the evening's agenda and no action was taken on the proposal.

Speaking out makes a difference. Showing up makes a difference. Vigilance and calm, thoughtful resistance is an important part of Making Democracy Work.

What does voter suppression look like?

Voter suppression is a term used to describe policies and tactics that place an undue limitation on the ability of citizens to cast countable ballots in an election. In recent years, there has been debate about what policies and tactics constitute voter suppression or serve to promote and preserve election integrity.

- Ballotpedia



LWVUS is at the forefront of the most important federal and state cases across the United States. Our legal team works tirelessly to oppose all forms of voter suppression, including:

- Discriminatory voter ID laws;
- Attacks on voter registration;
- Last-minute Election Day barriers;
- Elimination of voting locations in underserved communities;
- Unjust voter purges; and
- Attempts to limit access to early and mail-in voting.

Some specific tactics could include

- Reducing polling place availability (locations or hours)
- Shortening window to apply for a mail ballot
- Imposing harsher voter ID requirements for in-person voting
- Limiting early voting days or hours
- Banning snacks and water to voters waiting in line to vote
- Restricting assistance in returning a voter's mail ballot
- Making it harder to remain on absentee voting lists

March 31: International Trans Day of Visibility

In a recent email, LWVUS President Dianna Wynn recognized the International Trans Day of Visibility.

“On this day, we uplift the voices and celebrate the lives of transgender and nonbinary people. Unfortunately, we’re witnessing elected officials at the state and federal level promote hate and disinformation, pushing for policies that target transgender and nonbinary people's ability to live their lives openly and safely. **I want to be clear: today and every day, we stand in solidarity with trans and nonbinary individuals.**”

Her email continued with a link to Advocates for Trans Equality web site (<https://transequality.org>) which hosted an article *Supporting the Transgender People in Your Life: A Guide to Being a Good Ally*. The article offered several thoughts, among them:

- **You don’t have to understand someone’s identity to respect it.**
- **There is no “one right way” to be transgender.** Some transgender people choose to medically transition, and some don’t. Some transgender people choose to legally change their names or ID documents, and some don’t.

Check out the link to access the full article.

San Joaquin County Civic Alliance

Our League has worked with a group of community organizations to present candidate forums at Delta College. This coalition has decided to continue its civic involvement by forming an ongoing, loosely-organized group named San Joaquin County Civic Alliance.

The Alliance meets monthly and is planning a town hall forum of elected officials in August or September 2025 as well as candidate forums for the June 2026 Primary Election. The candidate forum will be held in April 2026 on the Delta campus. The group hopes to hold the forums on Saturdays to encourage more community attendance.

The forums will focus on Stockton-based races. The Stockton City Council races and county officials—Board of Supervisors, District Attorney, Sheriff, and other elected department heads — are the only offices that will be up for election in June.

The Alliance plans to share their resources with other organizations that wish to hold forums in their communities.

If you would like to be actively involved in these efforts, contact current Voter Service Chair Suzy Daveluy at lwvsjc@gmail.com. Your participation would be warmly welcomed.

- Suzy Daveluy

California's Connection to Birthright Citizenship

LSVSJC Joins DEI Coalition — Terri Mercer

Birthright citizenship is much in the news lately. What is birthright citizenship and how did it come to be enshrined in our constitution?

Birthright citizenship is granted through the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which was ratified in 1858. It says, in part, in Section 1: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside."

Two Californians, one a U.S. Senator and one a San Francisco-born Chinese man, had an impact on solidifying this tenet of the 14th Amendment.

Senator John Conness

John Conness was a U.S. Senator from California from 1863-1869. In May 1866, when the intent of the Amendment was challenged, Sen. Conness made the intention of the amendment clear. In debate, he said that while many Chinese people had been brought to the U.S. illegally, their U.S.-born children were Americans. "The children of all parentage whatever, born in the United States, should be regarded and treated as citizens of the United States, entitled to equal civil rights with other citizens of the United States," he said. Conness embraced the Emancipation Proclamation and championed civil rights for Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans. In an article by Joe Mathews printed in *The Record* on February 9, 2025 (excerpted here), the columnist opined that Conness' life showed "what we do, as national leaders attack our rights, may

matter for centuries to come."

Wong Kim Ark

Wong Kim Ark was born in San Francisco in 1873 to Chinese immigrants. In 1895, Wong returned from a trip to China and was forced to remain on a steamship docked in the Port of San Francisco because the U.S. government no longer recognized him as a citizen, due to the interpretation of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

In a 6–2 decision issued on March 28, 1898, the Supreme Court held that Wong Kim Ark had acquired U.S. citizenship at birth and that "the American citizenship which Wong Kim Ark acquired by birth within the United States has not been lost or taken away by anything happening since his birth." The Court held that virtually all native-born children, excluding only those who were born to foreign rulers or diplomats, born on foreign public ships, or born to enemy forces engaged in hostile occupation of the country's territory were, in fact, citizens of the United States.

- Excerpted from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 30, 2024; legal citation from Wikipedia article on *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*.

While birthright citizenship may continue to be questioned in U.S. courts, the history involving two very different Californians has laid the foundation for the law protecting the rights of those born in the United States.

The League of Women Voters of San Joaquin is participating in the newly formed San Joaquin Coalition for DEI, or SJC4DEI. This coalition aims to bring together community groups and individuals to support and advance the ideals of DEI throughout San Joaquin County.

Barbara St. Urbain is leading this coalition. The group's goals are to create an action plan that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and addresses the actions of the current federal administration along with their local effects. We aim to recruit and unite community members who support DEI, inspire them to achieve these objectives, and facilitate communication among all coalition members. The coalition will highlight the issues affecting our community and share resources. Currently, it is organizing a trip to Sacramento for the Hands-Off protest at the state capitol on April 5th. This group will carry the message of diversity, equity, and inclusion to the state capitol.

The coalition will meet in person on the first Friday of each month at 4:30 PM and via Zoom on the third Friday of each month. There will be no meeting on April 4; instead, we will gather at the Capitol Mall.

The coalition invites you to bring your energy and join the group. Contact Barbara St. Urbain at bsuatmjc@aol.com or (209) 603-5365 for more information.

Pulitzer Prize-Winning Journalists Speak on Reporting Stories That Matter

Three Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists spoke on February 13, 2025, to over 200 people at the Tillie Lewis Theater on the Delta College campus as part of the Pulitzer on the Road program. The evening was co-sponsored by Delta College and its Journalism Department and *Stocktonia*.



Left to right: Journalists Caitlin Dickerson, Anna Wolfe, and Nicole Carroll

Caitlin Dickerson, staff writer at *The Atlantic*, received the 2023 Pulitzer for Explanatory Reporting for her “deeply reported and compelling accounting of the Trump administration policy that forcefully separated migrant children from their parents, resulting in abuses that have persisted under the current administration.”

Anna Wolfe, *Mississippi Today* reporter, received the Pulitzer in 2023 for Local Reporting “that revealed how a Mississippi governor used his office to steer millions of state welfare dollars to benefit his family and friends, including NFL quarterback Brett Favre.”

Nicole Carroll attended in her capacity as a Pulitzer Board

member. She previously won the 2018 Explanatory Reporting as a staff contributor to *The Republic* and USA Today Network for “vivid and timely reporting that masterfully combined text, video, podcasts and virtual reality to examine, from multiple perspectives, the difficulties and unintended consequences of fulfilling President Trump's pledge to construct a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico.”

All three women said they see local journalism as the “cornerstone of democracy” and view the current intimidation of journalists as a threat to providing informed reporting to the public. Wolfe said that two days after her story received the Pulitzer Prize, the former Mississippi governor filed a lawsuit against her. Her story wasn’t just about illegal funneling of welfare funds but about the effects of criminalizing pregnancy, when women who should be helped during their pregnancy were instead incarcerated for child endangerment because they were addicted to a drug, legal or otherwise. After the story broke, women who were imprisoned were released. This was a stark example of what each said their stories were trying to accomplish: make them real so they can affect policy decisions. When asked, each journalist said she would file her story again, regardless of harassment. That is the job they are dedicated to. In response questions about disinformation today, they agreed: it’s up to all of us to call out false information.

Legislative Interviews: More Information from our Legislators

- Terri Mercer

In February, during our legislative interviews, the staffs of Assembly Member Rhodesia Ransom and Senator Jerry McNerney sought to provide League members with additional ways to stay abreast of their work and to tell us what services their offices can provide.

Melissa Santos, District Director for Assembly Member Ransom, informed us that her office is prepared to assist constituents with many issues. They can help navigate issues related to state agencies like the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), issues related to unemployment and disability insurance, state taxes, and Medi-Cal/Covered California, along with veterans' benefits, consumer complaints, and foreclosure prevention programs. They can also assist in finding information and resources about state services and programs. This support is accessible to all constituents, regardless of party affiliation.

For a complete list, please visit <https://a13.asmdc.org>, where you can also sign up for updates. Her Stockton office can be reached at (209)948-7479.

Senator McNerney’s staff invites you to sign up for his newsletters at <https://sd05.senate.ca.gov>.

Meeting Calendar

Membership Meetings

Homelessness Resources Fair	April 12
Program Planning Committees	May 17
Annual Meeting	June 21

Board Meetings

April 21	
May 19	Board/ Ed Fund Board Meeting
June 16	Annual Meeting

Board meetings are the 3rd Monday of the month, except as noted above. They are held at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Members are invited to attend Board meetings. If you wish to attend Board meetings, please contact Jane Wagner-Tyack at lwvsjc@gmail.com for the Zoom link to the meetings.

Minutes of Board meetings are posted on our website (<http://www.sjc.ca.lwvnet.org>) soon after they have been approved at the next Board meeting.

LWVSJC Board of Directors 2024-2025

Officers

Mary Kenefick, President
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 Colleen Foster, Secretary
 Yvette Remlinger, Treasurer

Voter Editor: Colleen Foster

Directors

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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.

The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

Informed citizens are democracy's best defense.

- Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law