



March 2025

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

The Voter

It's Program Planning Time!

Saturday, March 15, 2025

10:00-11:30 a.m.

Chavez Library, Stockton

Program Planning is the League's grassroots process of recommending issues for study, education, and advocacy.

We continue to support the "Making Democracy Work" program selected by the national and state Leagues. That program includes voting rights, improving elections, redistricting, and money in politics. Now more than ever, these issues need our attention.

In addition to national and state programs, local Leagues also adopt their own programs. In the past, the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County has selected and studied issues including child care, local education, mental health, the unhoused population, and why people don't vote and what we can do about it, among other issues.

This February, all LWVSJC members received an emailed announcement of our annual Program Planning meeting. Members also received a request for ideas to be voted on at the March meeting. Check your email if you haven't yet had a chance to respond.

Program planning is an important process, and we would love to see as many members as possible participate.

Email your ideas for program topics or questions to Christeen Ferree at bcferree@gmail.com.

Plan to join us on March 15th!

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Program Preview

April 12, 2025

Homeless Resources Fair:

Nonprofit Services for the Unsheltered:

Chavez Library
Stockton

Find out what our community is doing and how you can help.

League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County
P.O. Box 4548
Stockton, CA 95204

Email: LWVSJC@gmail.com
[Our website](#)

March is Women's History Month

Women's History Month is a month dedicated to reflect on the often-overlooked contributions of women to U.S. history. One such woman was Emma Nakuina.

Emma Ka'ilikapuolono Metcalf Beckley Nakuina was a judge and cultural writer born in Hawaii's Manoa Valley prior to the US overthrow of the Hawaiian government. Her father was a New York sugar planter and her mother was a descendant of the ali'i (hereditary nobility) of Oahu. She was extensively educated as a young woman. She was ordered by Hawaii's King Kamehameha IV to study traditional water rights and customs. She was appointed as curator to the Hawaiian National Museum and Government Library. In this role, she established herself as an expert on Hawaiian folklore and history. Because of her knowledge of water rights, she was appointed Commissioner of Private Ways and Water Rights. In this role, she is often regarded as Hawaii's first female judge.



When Queen Lili'uokalani was overthrown in 1893, Hawaiian women lost the right to vote. In response, Nakuina co-created the National Women's Equal Suffrage Association of Hawai'i. This organization used publications, public speaking opportunities, and social functions to advocate for women's suffrage.

Nakuina also worked to preserve Hawaii's culture and history as colonization threatened to eradicate it. Her book *Hawaii, Its People, Their Legends* translated several Hawaiian stories into English so that non-Hawaiians could better understand her homeland's culture. She passed away in 1929 at the age of 82. In 2017, *Hawai'i Magazine* listed Nakuina among the most influential women in Hawaiian history.

[From LWVUS article and a brief quote from Wikipedia]

Remembering Jimmy Carter

On December 30, 2024, the League of Women Voters issued the following statement on the passing of former President Jimmy Carter :

“Jimmy Carter was a man who defined peace and reconciliation. As governor of Georgia and then president of the United States, Jimmy Carter became known as a staunch advocate for advancing democracy and human rights. His efforts to find peaceful solutions to the world's greatest conflicts awarded him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

“The League's connection to Jimmy Carter was with the presidential debates of 1976 and 1980. The League also worked with the Carter administration on the passage of major environmental bills, including the *Clean Air Act*. In 1972, President Carter addressed the League of Women Voters' national convention, emphasizing the League's dedication to being nonpartisan while underscoring that this commitment doesn't mean being non-political.

“As an advocate for women's rights, in 1980 President Carter issued a presidential proclamation naming the first week in March Women's History Week, which years later, became Women's History Month. In his proclamation, Carter additionally called for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, which would achieve ‘equality of rights under the law’ for people of all sexes in our Constitution. Jimmy Carter once famously said, ‘I want to see us once again have a nation that's as good and honest and decent and truthful and competent and compassionate and filled with love as are the American people.’ Today, we echo these words, as we reflect on Jimmy Carter's legacy and continue our work to create a better democracy for all.”

What is DEI? Beyond the Buzzwords

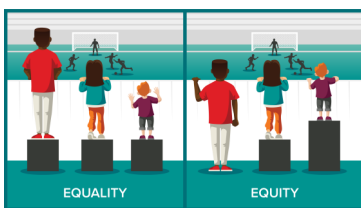
Excerpts from an LWVUS Blog by: [Celina Stewart](#)
February 13, 2025

If you've been keeping up with the news, you're probably aware of the recent attacks on "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" (DEI) policies. But what is DEI, how does it really impact us and our democracy?

What is DEI?

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are three unique concepts that are often confused with one another. The following definitions are derived from the nonprofit [Everyday Democracy](#):

- **Diversity:** The presence of multiple perspectives, identities, and cultural groups. It is the degree to which a wide variety of opinions and identities, such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, and more, are represented.
- **Equity:** Fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for people who are disadvantaged. This may look like barriers being eliminated or assistance provided that "level the playing field" so everyone can thrive.
- **Inclusion:** A context where differences are welcomed, differing perspectives are respectfully heard, and every individual feels a sense of belonging and inclusion.



trainings, even when those materials are pertinent to the nonprofits' work. As a result, several companies have scaled back their DEI efforts.

Why is DEI Under Threat?

Some seem to misunderstand the purpose of "equity" in DEI. They believe that equitable solutions like affirmative action, scholarships, or other forms of support that benefit historically marginalized groups are unfairly prioritizing certain groups.

This ignores the context in which programs like affirmative action exist. These policies were designed to expand opportunities and create more representative spaces — to even an uneven playing field rather than slight anyone. Until the 19th century, women were not allowed to enroll in college. For minority women, it was even tougher. For example, affirmative action was created in a country where many Ivy League institutions didn't allow Black or female students, regardless of race, until as late as the 1980s. Even with affirmative action in place, Black and Hispanic people were *still* underrepresented in top colleges as of 2017.

While DEI seems like a new concept, it was actually born out of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*. Activists like former League member Shirley Chisholm were instrumental in its expansion to cover gender equity. Workplace DEI programs and trainings expanded in the 21st century, and in the 2010s they became more prominent than ever. In recent years, DEI efforts have been closely linked to movements like #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter, as well as advances like the legalization of same-sex marriage.

Yet in recent years, DEI efforts have been directly under attack. In 2023, the Supreme Court struck down affirmative action programs. Upon entering his second term, President Trump released an Executive Order stopping DEI programs across the government. Government-funded nonprofits have been asked to remove DEI-related materials from their websites and

Another reason certain people opposed DEI is because of its association with the political left. Yet diversity, equity, and inclusion aren't partisan; no one side "owns" DEI. Access to multi-racial, accessible, and inclusive environments is everyone's right, regardless of who they vote for. There are millions of voters who, as women, veterans, disabled people, older Americans, religious minorities, Black and brown folks, and more, benefit from DEI.

To see the entire blog or to sign up for future installments on this topic, see: <https://www.lwv.org/blog/what-dei-beyond-buzzwords>

In reality, diversity is about difference, inclusion is about feeling valued, and equity is about fairness.

- *Psychology Today*, February 19, 2024

The League of Women Voters of the US Urges Congress to Act in New Letter

February 14, 2025

Today, the League of Women Voters of the United States and League chapters from all 50 states and the District of Columbia sent a letter to congressional leaders expressing strong concern over abandoning its duties and authorities under Article I of the US Constitution, urging leaders to address the unprecedented executive branch overreach threatening American democracy.

In the detailed letter to Congress, the League — a nonpartisan organization with over one million members and supporters across all 50 states and the District of Columbia — highlighted several recent executive branch actions that are causing significant harm to millions of Americans, including the undermining of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, attempts to end birthright citizenship, pause distribution of congressionally allocated federal funds, and dismantle federal agencies without proper congressional oversight.

Of particular concern is the creation of an unofficial "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE) with unlimited access to sensitive government systems and the power to summarily remove 17 inspectors general without the required congressional notice. Additionally, DOGE employees who lack security clearance have gained access to the Treasury Department payment systems and other sensitive data from different departments. These unauthorized personnel have prevented federal workers from entering their offices and can manipulate or stop payments to federal agencies, including USAID, the Con-

sumer Financial Protection Bureau, and the US Department of Education.

"The dismantling of our sacred democracy on full display for the world is one of the most horrific events in modern-day politics," said Celina Stewart, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States. "When the executive branch egregiously signals it will defy court orders and neglect the welfare of citizens, that is when Congress must be reminded of their duty to defend the Constitution. The League demands Congress act to prevent threats to the very fabric of our Republic."

"This is a critical moment for congressional oversight, and Congress must do its part to ensure that our great democracy is preserved and protected," said Marcia Johnson, chief counsel at the League. "The outcry from Americans speaking out against the impact of these executive orders should be all that is needed for Congress to stand in its authority and restore stability to our system of government."

The letter emphasizes that while federal courts have already enjoined several of these executive actions, Congress has not exercised its constitutional oversight. The text of the letter can be [accessed here](#), if you did not already see it in the lwvsjc gmail note sent to members on 2/20/25.



We live in perilous political times, where many of our most fundamental rights are at risk.

One very troubling issue that might fly under the radar is the call for a Constitutional Convention. Holding one would present an incalculable threat to Constitutional protections that safeguard the rights of Californians. A Convention could rewrite our Constitution, opening the door to agendas that threaten voting rights, civil liberties, and equality.

That's why the League of Women Voters of California is sponsoring Senate Joint Resolution 1 (SJR-1) to shut down this potential attack on our democracy.

The stakes couldn't be higher. Thank you for being part of this fight.

— Excerpted from an email on 2/10/25 from LWVC Interim Executive Director Helen Hutchison.

California Water Release from Federal Dams

— Jane Wagner-Tyack,
LWVC Position Director and Legislative Analyst, Water

Within a week of his inauguration, on January 20, President Trump issued an executive order titled “Putting People Over Fish: Stopping Radical Environmentalism to Provide Water to Southern California.” The objective: “[to] route more water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to other parts of the state for use by the people there who desperately need a reliable water supply.”

The President supports the argument that efforts to protect “a certain 3-inch fish” (the Delta smelt, now virtually extinct) are the main reasons that stand in the way of getting water to growers in the Central Valley and to Southern California to do things like fight wildfires. But in fact, more water has been promised for all uses in California than Nature reliably supplies, even without considering climate change.

In the case of the Delta, careful management of Delta freshwater flows protects Chinook salmon and other fish as well as protecting water quality for in-Delta users and reducing the salinity of water exported to farmers in the southern Central Valley and to cities in Southern California.

On January 30, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that it would be releasing water from Corps dams at Kaweah and Success lakes on the east side of the southern Central Valley that store water for use in Tulare County. A spokesperson at the Corp’s

headquarters in Washington, D.C., said in an email to the news site SJV Water that the water was released to help fight wildfires.

The aftermath of the water release saw a surge of concerns from various stakeholders. Senator Padilla accused the Corps of insufficient coordination and notification regarding the unscheduled water releases. Local water managers echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the legal complexities surrounding California water rights and the impracticality of using river water from Tulare County for wildfire suppression efforts in Southern

California.

Congressman Jim Costa of Fresno, who represents parts of Tulare County, was among those who voiced serious concerns over this action. “An unscheduled release of water at this time of year, when there is little demand for irrigation water and a snowpack that is below average, poses grave threats to reliable water supply this year,” he said. “This could increase the cost of water for farmers for this crop year exponentially due to dry conditions anticipated.

“Furthermore, the rivers dammed at Terminus and Schafer, the Kaweah River and the Tule River, do not flow into Los Angeles.”

Lake Success, renamed Lake Schafer in 2019, was formed when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed and opened Success Dam on the Tule River in Tulare

County in 1961. The following year, Lake Kaweah opened after the Terminus Dam was built on the Kaweah River. Both projects help reduce flood damage and conserve water for farmland irrigation.

San Joaquin Valley water managers told SJV Water, a website that extensively covers Central California water issues, that physical and legal barriers make it virtually impossible to use Tulare County river water for southern California wildfire abatement.

Ultimately, the Corps reduced planned releases after water districts in the area expressed alarm about flooding.

The California League does not comment on individual actions such as this. However, LWVC’s Water Team works to help members understand how California’s complicated water management system is intended to work and how it’s impacted by climate change. A member of that team, Richard Garcia from Tulare County, reported to the Water Team of his county’s concerns about this action: water will now not be available for summer irrigation; districts downstream were not prepared to deal with the large flows, especially on short notice; and there is no infrastructure that could convey this water to southern California to fight fires.

Framing California’s water situation as a conflict between fish and farming may be useful for sound bites but it is no help at all in solving the state’s very complicated water management challenges.



A CHUCKLE FOR A GLOOMY WINTER DAY

According to Fox 40 News reporter Travis Schlepp (2/10/25), Danish citizens have launched an effort to purchase America's most economically prosperous state—California.



The tongue-in-cheek online petition seeking the “Denmarkification” of California has garnered nearly 200,000 signatures.

Danish citizens were told that purchasing the Golden State would provide them with “more sunshine, dominance in the tech industry, limitless avocado toast, and easy access to Disneyland,” which they would rename in honor of Danish fairy tale author Hans Christian Anderson.

The petition goes on to mention other California attractions: sunshine, palm trees, and roller skates.

So, folks, start practicing:

Godt at se dig. Hav en god dag.

LUNCH AND LEARN

March 11, 2025

Speaker

Krista Fiser

CEO

PREVAIL

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

Papapavlo's

Lincoln Center

11:30-1:00

April: TBA

May 13, 2025

Speaker

Maria Elena Serna

Lodi's Breakthrough Project for Social Justice

Papapavlo's

Lincoln Center

11:30-1:00

Watch for the announcements for these lunches and plan to join us.

Legislative Interviews

- Terri Mercer

Every year, LWVC urges local Leagues to meet with their state legislators. In February, Daphne Shaw, Margo Praus, and Terri Mercer met via Zoom with representatives from the offices of District 5 Senator Jerry McNerney and District 13 Assembly Member Rhodesia Ransom.

Both the Senator and Assembly Member are committed to addressing California's economic, environmental, and social challenges through key legislative efforts. Information on the bills they are sponsoring can be found on their web sites.

McNerney's focus is on water (resilience, recycling, composting agricultural waste) and promoting clean energy and green technology. Additionally, he's concerned about safety of artificial intelligence. McNerney is also addressing the housing crisis and homelessness while engaging with communities through town halls.

Ransom prioritizes affordable housing, cost reduction, and public safety. She seeks to lower grocery and gas prices while helping businesses remain competitive. She also aims to equip law enforcement with advanced technology to combat crime and seeks to expand career pathways in technical, medical, and trade fields. She is also working to secure funding for the **Valley Link Project**, a hydrogen-fueled bullet train connecting Mountain House, Stockton, and Fresno.

Both legislators emphasize collaboration and practical policymaking.

Meeting Calendar

Membership Meetings

Program Planning	March 15
Homelessness Resources Fair	April 12
Bylaws revision	May 17
Annual Meeting	June 21

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.

Board Meetings

March 17	
April 21	
May 19	Board/ Ed Fund Board Meeting
June 16	Annual Meeting

Minutes of Board meetings are posted on [our website](#) soon after they have been approved at the next Board meeting.

LWVSJC Board of Directors 2024-2025

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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