



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

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Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

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President's Message

It is February and it feels like spring. It is time to think about our Spring activities and things left to do before the new League year begins with a new Board, dues, Annual Meeting, finishing our local Water Study and the Higher Education Study from the State. As far as the Water update to our local positions a summary of the State positions was handed out at the Program meeting in February with ideas to bring back and come to closure (hopefully) at a Water Study meeting to be held before the next regular Board meeting at 6:00PM on March 11th at the Rhine's home. If any of you would like the handout please contact me. The next Lunch & Learn will also be related to the Higher Ed. Study. A consensus meeting will be held at a later date.

If you have served as a Financial Advisor for our Finance Campaign in the past and are wondering why you were not asked to do so this year there is a reason. We have not changed this policy but due to health issues the letters for the drive were postponed until early February. In order to expedite the mailing the Board decided to forgo the personal notes at this time. Hopefully, things will be back on schedule in the fall.

We are still looking for YOU to serve on the Board next year. Please contact Ann Krabach if you can serve. It is essential to have a mixture of seasoned and new people on the board and in off-board positions.

Work is already underway to have a forum for the local assembly candidates, hopefully in May. Stay tuned for more information.

Seena Rhine, President LWVSC

Position on Constitutional Conventions under Article V

Based on the consensus reports from Leagues across the country, including ours, the Board adopted the following position: The League is concerned that there are many unresolved questions about the powers and processes of an Article V Constitutional Convention. The League believes such a convention should be called only if the following conditions are in place:

- a) The Constitutional Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret. The public has a right to know what is being debated and voted on;
- b) Representation at the Constitutional Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote, and delegates should be elected rather than appointed. The delegates represent citizens, should be elected by them, and must be distributed by U.S. population;
- c) Voting at the Constitutional Convention must be by delegate, not by state. Delegates from one state can have varying views and should be able to express them by individual votes;
- d) The Constitutional Convention must be limited to a specific topic. It is important to guard against a "runaway convention" which considers multiple issues or topics that were not initiated by the states;
- e) Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Constitutional Convention should be called. Counting state requests by topic ensures that there is sufficient interest in a particular subject to call a Convention and enhances citizen interest and participation in the process; and
- f) The validity of state calls for an Article V Constitutional Convention must be determined by the most recent action of the state. If a state has enacted a rescission of its call, that rescission must be respected by Congress.

Thank you to everyone who participated in our local study and consensus meeting. The position adopted by the national board matches our consensus report.

Mary Giventer, Vice President

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***Lunch & Learn: Julie Johnson, Campus Compliance Officer,
Deputy Title IX Coordinator at CSU Stanislaus***

Title IX states that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Title IX started out as a gender equity law related to sports but has expanded to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation in employment, educational programs and activities. Harassment including sexual violence and domestic violence occurring on campuses must be addressed under Title IX. Title IX is enforced by the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

Julie used examples from several cases of sexual violence that have occurred on college campuses across the country to demonstrate that universities are not doing enough to protect students. Legislators are trying to change that by imposing fines and penalties on universities who do not comply with federal law. In one case the reported assault was not investigated for a year although the law only allows 60 days. The consequences of sexual violence on campuses include: poor grades, depression, PTSD, increased alcohol and/or drug abuse, contemplating suicide, and dropping out of school. Social media has only increased the consequences as the incident goes viral and the victim is forced to relive the trauma. One in five women and one in thirty three men are estimated to be victims of sexual violence. The actual number may be higher due to reluctance, especially of males, to report. Only 4-6% of victims choose to report to the police/legal system.

In 2013 President Obama signed the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act which broadened the range of abuse to include domestic violence, dating violence and stalking (including cyber) and required transparency, accountability, education and collaboration in the handling of sexual misconduct on college and university campuses. In 2014 the results of an audit conducted in California to determine how UC campuses were handling sexual violence was released. As part of the audit, students at UC Berkeley and UCLA were interviewed and reported a lack of response by the administration. The audit resulted in recommendations on response and reporting, prevention, community, student and staff education, communication strategies, an advocacy office and data collection. CSU Stanislaus has increased required training for dormitory residence assistants in recognition, response, and reporting and provided training for staff and faculty to ensure that the Title IX coordinator is the first point of contact. All students must complete a mandatory on-line program addressing sexual violence issues, stalking, bullying, alcohol and drug abuse. The campus now has a victim's advocate. Julie noted that there is a strong likelihood that the perpetrator will abuse again if the incident is not handled. The campus administration can take action much more quickly than the police/legal system. They work closely with the campus security police and put out a timely warning to all students within 24 hours of a reported incident as required by Title IX. Each party, the accused and accuser, have the right to appeal to the office of the chancellor and have due process.

Ruby Hennessey, Lunch & Learn Coordinator

Program Planning Meeting

The annual program planning meeting was held on February 10 at the home of Seena Rhine. LWVUS positions were reviewed for consensus and input.

In a cover letter LWVUS recommended that no new study be proposed but suggested a focus on action. The proposal is that the League focus on Making Democracy Work with emphasis on voting rights and access, redistricting and money in politics at all levels of government. LWVSC concurred with this.

Colorado League has conducted a study and developed a position supporting behavioral health access and services. They asked our support in requesting that the LWVUS Convention adopt this position by consensus. We agreed to support this request.

Minnesota League requested including in the LWVUS action program the topic Sustainable Planet, Sustainable Democracy to incorporate issues associated with climate change. Although LWVSC supports action on climate change, we did not feel this fell comfortably under the Making Democracy Work action focus and did not support this proposal.

Finally, there is a proposed bylaw change in the membership category. Currently voting members must be U.S. citizens and 18 years of age. Other members are Associate Members. The proposal is to eliminate the two categories with the result that all LWV members would be eligible to vote. We questioned the implications of this and after some discussion it was determined that our delegate to the National Convention should hear all the discussion at convention and make her/his own decision.

LWVSC Local positions will be further discussed on March 9 at 6 PM at Seena Rhine's home. At that time we will consider updating our position on water by making it a stand-alone issue rather than part of our Land Use position. All members are encouraged to attend.

Higher Education Study

The *LWV California Higher Education* study began in January with an overview of accessibility, affordability and student preparedness for California's public higher education system. If you would like to be part of a study group which looks at these issues more closely in preparation for a consensus meeting in April, please contact Mary Giventer, mgiventer@pacbell.net or 535-6136.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

[\(Check Website for Updates\)](#)

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| Wednesday, March 10th 6:00pm-8:00pm | Local Positions review and Board meeting Hosted at Seena Rhine's. Please call (209) 524-1698 for directions or for a ride. |
| Thursday, March 31st 12:00pm-1:30 | Lunch & Learn: Judy Sly, retired Modesto Bee "So Many Words, So Little Wisdom" on distinguishing fact from fiction as a well-informed citizen. Ridgways Restaurant. Chef's Choice, \$13.00. |
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The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.