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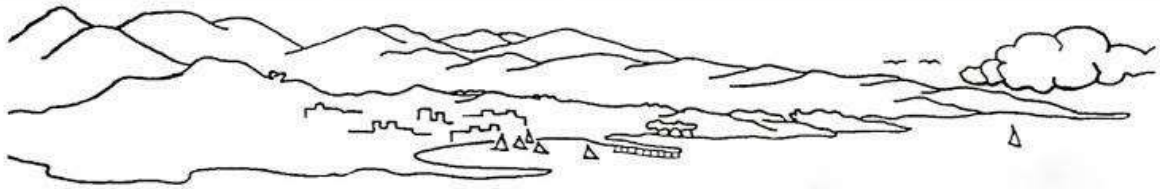
Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.



CHANNEL VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA BARBARA

Serving South Santa Barbara County



January 1, 2024



Looking Back and Ahead

So much happened in 2023 at the local, state and national levels of the League of Women Voters. And there is so much more work to do in this new year.

Our LWVSB committees have never been busier--which is why this newsletter is so long.

The Sustainable Communities Committee became the Environmental Action Committee. Its purpose is working towards a more sustainable future and fighting for environmental justice.

The important work of the Housing and Social Policy Committees and the Criminal Justice Task Force is detailed here in separate articles. In this New Year's issue of the Channel Voter you will also learn more about what the League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters of California did in 2023.

But first, since 2024 is an election year, we take a look at what our Voter Service team is planning.

Election News



A Big Election Year

The LWVSB Voter Service Team is getting ready for the March 6 Primary Election and the Nov. 6 Presidential election--starting with Candidate Forums for two contested races for the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors.

We will be having a Voter Service planning meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 9 via Zoom for those who have expressed an interest in registering and/or educating voters. We plan to hold tabling events all over town prior to the upcoming Primary Election (such as at the Saturday Farmers Market in SB), so please help us by signing up to help out! [Contact](#) Revae Moran, Voter Service Co-chair, if you are interested!

Two Candidate Forums are scheduled for those running for the seats on the Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors in Districts 1 and 3. Das Williams is the incumbent in District 1 and his challenger is Roy Lee,

a member of the Carpinteria City Council. In District 3, incumbent Joan Hartmann has two challengers: Frank Troise, a businessman and Jenelle Osborne, the Mayor of Lompoc.

The Forum for the candidates running for the seat in District 3 will be held at the Goleta Unified School District headquarters at 410 Fairview Ave. on Monday, Jan. 24 at 6pm. The Forum for District 1 will be held at the Santa Barbara Woman's Club, 5057 Mission Canyon Rd, on Monday, Feb. 5 at 6pm. Both Forums will be recorded by TVSB and Silvia Uribe of Transil-Pro will provide simultaneous interpretation in Spanish. The recordings will be posted on our YouTube channel for later viewing. Both Forums will also be livestreamed on our League's Facebook page for those who are unable to attend in person.

Revae Moran, Voter Service Co-chair



Help Move From Voter's Edge to Vote 411

Revae Moran needs a partner to work with the League of Women Voters of California to post information for all candidates running for office in Santa Barbara County on the new Vote 411 website.

Vote 411 will replace VotersEdge in 2024. We're looking forward to this change because the US League widely advertises Vote 411 on their website and elsewhere. [Contact](#) Revae to help create this new voter information guide.

How does the guide work? Just enter your address and:

- Get Personalized Voting Information
- See What's On Your Ballot
- Check Your Voter Registration
- Find Your Polling Place
- Discover Upcoming Debates In Your Area
- And Much More!

For more information, [Click here.](#)

Revae Moran and Claire VanBlaricum, Voter Service Co-Chairs

Our Committees



Year-End Review for the Housing Committee

The Housing Committee was very active in 2023, as local cities and Santa Barbara County worked on preparing and certifying their Housing Element Updates and other housing related programs and ordinances. Our advocacy and comments included:

The Local Housing Trust Fund

The Committee played a vital role in the City of Santa Barbara's proposal to use the budget surplus that was set aside at the end of 2022, at the urging of the League and other organizations, for local housing needs. Our comments, along with those from organizations like the Housing Authority and Habitat for Humanity, resulted in the Local Housing Trust Fund Draft Ordinance. ([here](#)) This ordinance is an important first step toward a long-term source of funding for deed restricted affordable housing. The ordinance is to be heard by City Council in January.

Local Housing Elements

This year Housing Element Updates (HEUs), which provide guidance for local officials and governments on infrastructure, housing finance, and long-term land-use planning, were drafted, reviewed and approved by local cities and counties.

Housing Elements must consider local Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) to plan for the total number of new units that need to be constructed in an area, as well as the breakdown of low, moderate, and above-moderate needs within that.

During the Housing Element process the Committee commented on the following:

- The City of Santa Barbara's Housing Element Update ([here](#)), resulting in changes to the planning document to set the framework and funding plan to provide significant amounts of affordable housing in the City.
- The County of Santa Barbara's Housing Element Update ([here](#)), resulting in important changes to the document, including 1) identifying County sites for rezoning which could support 100% deed restricted affordable housing; 2) studying and developing a permanent source of funding for affordable housing; and, 3) including a local preference for all new housing developed as a result of the Housing Element.

AUD, Tenant Protection, and More...

In addition to focusing on local Housing Element Updates, the Committee weighed in on a number of additional housing-related topics, including:

- The City of Santa Barbara's Average Unit Density program to ensure that it refocuses on prioritizing affordable and workforce housing, as well as a local preference.
- Tenant protections through Just Cause Eviction ordinances before the City and County of Santa Barbara to advocate for tighter guidelines around renovictions.
- Our support for the Dignity Moves project in the Goleta Valley, and generally the continued use of County land for affordable housing projects.

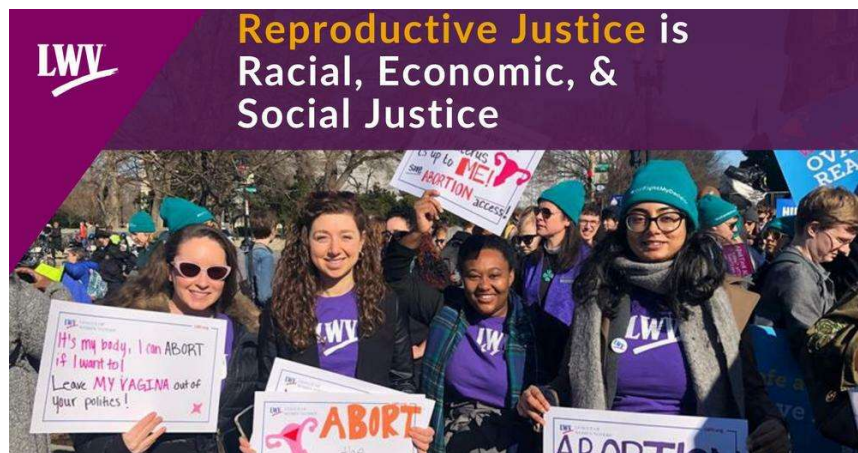
In all, the Committee drafted over 20 letters and attended dozens of meetings and hearings to advocate for affordable housing in the south coast.

Looking forward to 2024, the Committee plans to focus our efforts on the following:

- Advocating for identification of permanent sources of funding for deed-restricted affordable housing at the City of Santa Barbara and the south coast of Santa Barbara County.
- Advocating for establishing local preference, where people who live and/or work here are given preference for newly created housing.
- Advocating for varied forms of affordable housing, including varied unit sizes and ownership housing as well as rental housing. We are looking for innovative ways to create more ownership affordable housing.
- Support ways to remove barriers to the creation of affordable housing at all levels, including very low to moderate income housing.
- Continue to educate the community on housing issues. We have been working with an intern to collect data and present it in an infographic which will show why solving the affordable housing crisis is good for everyone. We plan to release the infographic in the first quarter of 2024.

If you want to learn more about our work, or attend an upcoming Housing Committee meeting, please [contact me](#).

Megan Turley, Housing Committee Chair



Social Policy Issues in 2024

How do you want to be involved with Social Policy issues this year? There is a long list of possible topics that we can explore in various ways. Updates are planned for early this year on immigration and health care with speakers from our area.

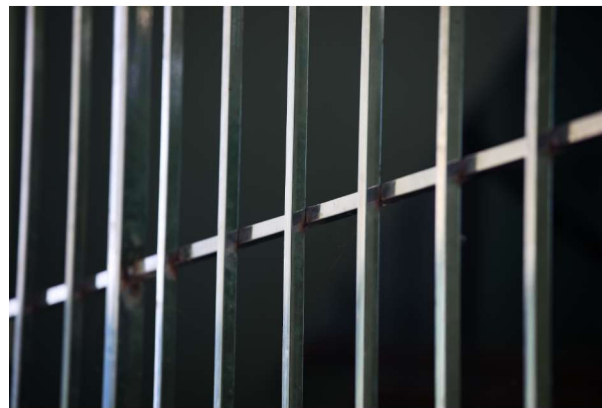
As League members renewed memberships or initially joined this past year the overwhelming favorite social policy topic was reproductive rights. Planned Parenthood continues its work in California and can update us on the national and local issues. Our nation is a long way from settling this issue.

In November Joanie Jones and Cheri Runge chaired a successful community forum at the Unitarian Society on Behavioral Wellness. We hope to bring a follow-up forum on community resources for Behavioral Wellness in 2024.

Criminal Justice Reform work continues with the collaboration our league has with the local Clergy and Laity United for Equity (CLUE) organization. Gail Osherenko chairs our Criminal Justice Reform Committee.

In planning for this year we have the challenge of where, when and how—in person, via Zoom, via email for sharing news on relevant Social Policy topics. As chair of Social Policy for our League I would love to hear your thoughts and ideas of how to bring us back together. An [email](#) would be welcome or a phone call at 805.451.4340.

Pam Flynt Tambo



A Criminal Justice Progress Report

“Since incarceration does not merely fail to reduce violence but generates violence, our investment in incarceration has been an investment in violence.”

Danielle Sered, *Until We Reckon: Violence, Mass Incarceration and a Road to Repair*

The Goal

The goal of our League Criminal Justice Reform Task Force in 2023 has been to make the jails more humane, reduce the number of people incarcerated, and lower the rate of recidivism. Many are not a risk to the community but land in jail for lack of housing and other essential services in the community. Almost 60% (or 447 individuals) in the County jail population are on the mental health caseload. Among them, over 100 have serious mental illness.

Jail only adds to their existing trauma. There is little “treatment” in our jails for mental illness, only limited programs for those who are deemed incompetent to stand trial (IST) to be prepared to understand what they are charged with and participate in their defense.

Jail Population Reduction

Over the course of 2023 the average monthly jail population in Santa Barbara County rose from an average of 752 in January to a high in September of 776, but has dropped to 732 (as of Dec. 26). See Sheriff's Data Dashboard [here](#).

Throughout the year, our League together with CLUE urged that renovation of the outdated and inhumane Main Jail in south county be limited. On May 16, the Board of Supervisors voted to limit the remodel to 128 beds sufficient only to hold those arrested until after arraignment. They also authorized the addition of only one pod to the new North Branch Jail in accord with expected reductions recommended by an expert population study. The Sheriff wanted 2 pods for a total of 984 beds in the County, but the Board opted to reduce the beds to 728, a modest reduction that is close to the current jail population.

With some innovative changes by the Public Defender, increases in diversion, more housing and community services, the number of incarcerations should drop even more. The parties to the Murray case (a federal lawsuit) are required to meet and confer regarding (a) jail population-related stressors that may impact timely Remedial Plan implementation and (b) potential jail population reduction measures. The Board of Supervisors will be looking at the new county data at their Jan. 23 meeting.

-- The Public Defender initiated a pilot project called REACH to provide early representation of their clients within days (not just minutes) before arraignment hearings. Their "holistic defense" approach is now finding housing for many unhoused clients and connecting them with community services including drug and alcohol rehabilitation, counseling, and mentoring.

-- Probation has finally hired an intake and discharge coordinator to work in tandem with Behavioral Wellness, the Sheriff's Office, District Attorney and Public Defender to promote diversion from the jail at intake and provide a "warm handshake" at discharge connecting those exiting jail with housing, jobs, medical and mental health care, and other community services.

For 2024

Our 2024 priority is to achieve a more rehabilitative and restorative approach to criminal justice.

In December, the Board of Supervisors called for increased oversight and monitoring of the jails' private medical provider Wellpath. There will soon be a full-time Public Health clinician in the jail reporting to the County Medical Officer in the Public Health Department and advising the Sheriff. The Board also asked for independent reports on the compliance measures required by the court-ordered Remedial Plan in the Murray case.

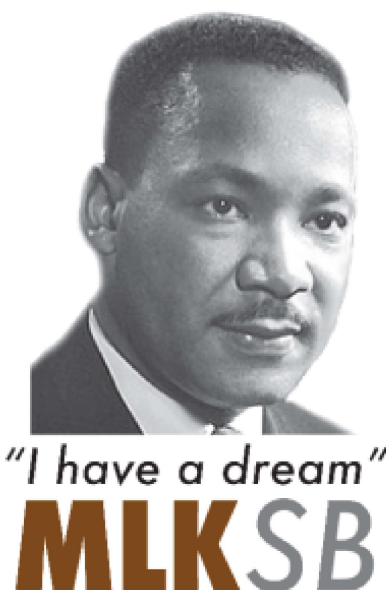
We have sought more training for custody deputies and patrol officers in crisis intervention and de-escalation. The SB City Police Department will soon add one more co-response team. These have dramatically reduced arrests in response to mental health crisis calls. We are pushing for more timely and confidential treatment of those with mental health needs. Behavioral Health Units have opened in both jails, with 54 jail residents now receiving 14 hours/week of structured time.

Currently in both jails but especially in the main jail, residents miss scheduled appointments for lack of an escort to appointments with mental health therapists, doctors, and dentists. Rethinking allocation of jail staff and a more enlightened approach to hiring new staff could reduce inefficient and overtime costs. We look forward to discussions with the Sheriff and County Supervisors to address mental health needs and make our criminal justice system more humane.

If you would like to be more involved in the League's criminal justice reform work, please [contact](#) me.

Gail Osherenko, Criminal Justice Task Force Chair

Community Events



Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Celebration

Our League supports the 17th Annual Holiday Celebration for Martin Luther King, Jr. Please join us in attending one or all of the events held on Monday, Jan. 15, starting at 9am.

WHO: Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee of Santa Barbara (MLKSB)

WHEN: Monday, Jan. 15, 9am – 12:30pm in-person:

9 – 10am De la Guerra Plaza program; 10am Unity March up State Street; 11am – 12:30pm MLKSB Program at Arlington Theatre

INFO: info@mlksb.org

ABOUT: The morning program will start with an opening prayer, followed by music, school winning essay/poetry readings. After the March at 10am, the program at the Arlington Theatre will feature music, dance and children's choir and more will begin at 11am.

THE MISSION: To foster positive relationships between many diverse groups in the Santa Barbara community and the surrounding areas; to sponsor programs and events which exemplify the teachings of Dr. King; and to observe, and celebrate the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. Learn more and donate [here](#).

Joanie Jones



Sojourner Kincaid Rolle Celebration of Life

On the afternoon of Martin Luther King Jr holiday please join us to remember and honor our dear friend Sojourner Kincaid Rolle who passed away on Nov. 13. She was instrumental in having the MLK Jr Holiday recognized by the City of Santa Barbara in 1988 and worked on many aspects of the event over several decades.

As Jordan Killebrew shared in [this Independent article](#), Sojourner wore many hats after moving to Santa Barbara in the eighties including “playwright, producer, poet, author, advocate, historian, and teacher, among several other distinguished titles.” She answered the call of the community on many important occasions to share words including her poem “We The Women, Free At Last”, which she created for a LWVSB event in 2011 commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Women’s Right to Vote in California.

Sojourner’s Celebration of Life will be held the afternoon of Martin Luther King Jr holiday, 1:30-3:30pm, Jan. 15 at the First Methodist Church.

Linda Honikman

The photo above is of Sojourner, right, doing voter registration with the League. Also pictured, from left, are Karena Jew and Janice Rorick

Women's March Plans Vigil

A vigil at sunset on Saturday, Jan 20 is being organized by the Women's March to support women's rights.

Spanish interpretation will be provided. The location and other details will be available soon. Look for more information on this [website](#). There will be inspiring speakers, and no violent imaging or rhetoric will be allowed. A similar event will be held in Ventura on the same day at 10am.

This is the message from vigil organizers:

"Women Rise Up! In defiance of history, polls, and pundits, the story of women's resilience rewrites the narrative. Women's lives encompass more than Roe. Our vision of reproductive freedom transcends it. In January 2024, we unite to send an unequivocal message: Our resolve is unyielding. Our movement is not just about Roe; it is about safeguarding the rights and freedoms for all, now and for future generations. We are the majority, and our voices will be heard."



LWVUS Accomplishments

Some people refer to the years without midterms or presidential elections as “off-years.” The term implies that these years — like 2023 — lack the activity or urgency of their counterparts. With 2024 looking us right in the eye, we’re not going to deny that national election years are extraordinarily busy. But as 2023 showed, our “off-years” aren’t nearly as “off” as the nickname suggests. In fact, in 2023, Leagues across the US worked diligently to achieve a remarkable number of wins in litigation, voter registration, civic engagement and education, and more.

Reaching and Registering Millions of Voters with [Vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org)

LWV works year-round to make sure all eligible Americans have opportunities to register and vote. 2023 was no exception. In one day alone — September 19, National Voter Registration Day — Leagues hosted 500+ nationwide registration events, registering an estimated 100,000 voters. During the other 364 days of the year, Leagues registered young and first-time voters through our Youth Voter Registration project. From January to June, 86 of our 750+ Leagues registered over 19,000 young people to vote.

Power the South and More

2023 marked the second year of LWV’s Power the South campaign, where Leagues and local partners gather to strengthen their people-powered organizing as an antidote to the rising threats to our democracy. Leagues defended voters’ rights in all 50 states and DC and saw many important wins! Administrators on VOTE411, our digital one-stop-shop for election information in English and Spanish, outdid themselves by providing information on more than 20,000 local races and 46,000 candidates.

Going to Court

Like 2022, this year brought harmful decisions from the Supreme Court (SCOTUS) in cases like *Creative 303, LLC v. Elenis* and *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*. Yet it also brought victories for fair maps and voter protection.

Women's Equality Day

For our second annual Women's Equality Day campaign, LWVC partnered with nonprofits, media outlets, and everyday people to demand that Congress:

1. Pass voting rights legislation;
2. Add the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution; and
3. Restore reproductive rights to women and those who can become pregnant.

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

BUILDING A MORE EQUITABLE CALIFORNIA FOR ALL

The League of Women Voters of California is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization working to protect and expand voting rights, build grassroots power in our communities, drive policy change on the biggest challenges facing our state, and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy.

Learn More

NEW WEB SITES ARE LIVE!

Before you explore, take a moment to donate.

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

Your Vote, Your Voice.

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR POWER.

DONATE TODAY

www.lwvc.org
www.cavotes.org

LWVC: Democracy Works

2023 marked yet another exciting and dynamic year for the LWVC, leading many important efforts, arm in arm with our statewide and community partners.

[Read](#) our Year in Review, Democracy Works!

Here are some highlights:

-- The LWVC led an impactful year of work to support voters in California. We commissioned two redistricting reports, participated in numerous coalitions and task forces, and supported federal climate policy efforts. The influx of new legislators also resulted in the introduction of 2,632 bills – the highest number in over a decade. Of those, the League took positions on 77 bills, a 13 percent increase from the same period in the previous legislative session.

-- We won an important victory for fair local redistricting when Governor Newsom signed our sponsored bill, AB 764 (Bryan). The new law will prohibit the consideration of incumbent protection as a factor in drawing the lines, ensure that the safeguards of the Fair Maps Act extend beyond cities and counties to educational and special districts, and make the process more transparent and equitable overall.

The State League also got a new [website](#). Check it out!

Keep Up To Date On Action Alerts

For LWV, [click here](#). For LWVC, [click here](#).

Find the latest Action Alerts on the climate crisis, voting rights, the ERA, fair redistricting, racial justice and more.

LWVC also has several different interest groups, including Advocacy, Communications, Voter Service, Climate Change, Criminal Justice Reform, Healthcare, Homelessness, Immigration, Money in Politics, Program Planning, Redistricting and Water. For details, [click here](#).

For Your Calendar



For information, registration and contact information, click on the event in the website calendar [here](#). Meetings are via Zoom unless an in-person location is listed.

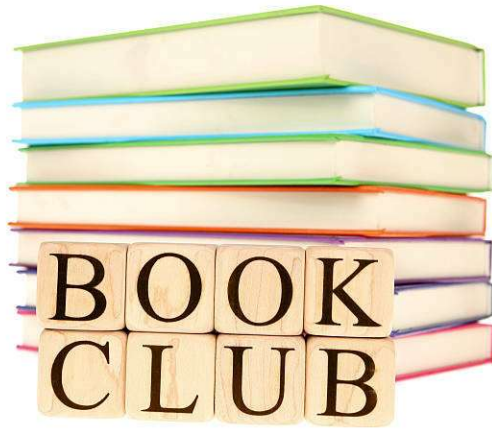
Tuesday, Jan. 9, 5pm - **Voter Service Team Meeting** - Zoom

Saturday, Jan. 13, 10am - **Board Meeting** - Zoom

Friday, Jan. 19, noon - **Housing Committee** - Zoom

Wednesday, Jan. 24, 6pm - **Candidate Forum 3rd District Supervisor** - Goleta Unified School District Headquarters, Board Room, 401 N. Fairview, Goleta

Monday, Feb. 5, 6pm - **Candidate Forum 1st District Supervisor** - Santa Barbara Women's Club, 5057 Mission Canyon Rd., Santa Barbara



TITLE: *The Chancellor: The Remarkable Odyssey of Angela Merkel (a biography of the German Chancellor)* by Kati Marton. All who have read this book rave about it.

DATE: Thursday, Jan. 11, 1:30pm via Zoom

TITLE: *The Power of Crises: How Three Threats - and Our Response - Will Change the World* by Ian Bremmer.

DATE: Thursday, Feb. 15, at 1:30pm via Zoom

Free copies of the book are available - call Elaine at 949-355-5413.

[Contact](#) Book Club Chair Elaine Rudin for more information.

Videos



Videos of the oil pipeline and housing forums--as well as recordings of election and other community forums in both English and Spanish--are on our YouTube Channel: [watch here](#). Subscribe to the channel to be notified of future videos.

Closing Office Free Items Available

After having an office at 325 E. Carrillo Street for many years, the LWVSB Board has decided it is time to leave. We will instead store League materials at a storage unit at 130 Garden St. When meeting in person, we will rent space to serve the needs of the meeting. The League's Environmental Action Committee has been meeting at the Community Environmental Committee's hub.

The Board took this action after carefully weighing the costs and benefits of maintaining an office. We felt it was prudent to eliminate the office expenses because of changes in its use since the pandemic.

We are in the process of clearing out the old office and have a lot of things we want to make available to members. We have a little of everything: a large desk, several file cabinets, tables of various sizes, numerous folding chairs and other chairs, books, office supplies, hospitality items (cups, platters, coffee makers, carafes), decorations, and miscellaneous items.

Please come to the office on Wednesday, Jan. 17 between 2-4pm if you would like any of these items from the office.

Help Us Continue Our Work

As you can see from the hard work of our all-volunteer organization, we have done a lot in 2023 and are getting ready for a busy 2024.

If you made a donation last year, we thank you. If you didn't, your support will help LWVSB keep educating and advocating on the many issues that you read about in this Channel Voter.

Please help us continue "Making Democracy Work." To make your gift, send a check made out to "LWVSB" to: LWVSB, 328 E. Carrillo, Suite A, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. Or click on the Donate button to make your donation with PayPal or Credit Card.

With Gratitude,
Your LWVSB Leadership Team
Vicki Allen, Dianne Black, Anthony Moran, Pam Flynt Tambo



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